

HELPING YOUR CAT ADJUST TO NEW HOME

Coming into a new home can be a very stressful experience for a cat. Patience, time and some helpful guidelines can go a long way in helping your cat to settle into their new home.

Reducing stress and providing positive experiences is the goal of helping your cat adjust to their new home.

- Car ride home - Riding in a car can be traumatic for cats. Always have your cat or kitten safely confined in a carrier during the ride home. Place the carrier in an area of car where it is not likely to slide. Never put a cat in the trunk of a car or bed of a pickup truck. Keep your cat in carrier until you are safely in home to avoid any escape attempts.
- First day home - Introduce your cat to his new home gradually, restricting him to one room at first. Allowing your cat to have a quiet space of their own reduces stress and allows them to take in the sounds and smells of their new home safely.
- Wait to introduce resident pets – Keep residents pets separate from your new cat during the first few weeks.
- Always supervise children around cats and be sure they can interact using a calm voice and gentle touch.
- Have the litter box ready when you remove the cat from the carrier. Show them the location of the litter box. If your cat is afraid to leave carrier, you can leave it open and facing the litter box.
- Have food and water available but do not be concerned if they are not initially interested.
- Remember that your cat is likely stressed and confused on their first day home, allow them to explore and interact at their own pace.
- Keep all windows and doors to room closed. A highly stressed cat may look to escape or hide. Cats may hide in bed box springs, on top of tall furniture or other spaces that make them feel more secure. If you find your cat in an unusual or undesired place, do not shout at them or attempt to move them. They will come out of hiding once they feel more comfortable.
- Allow each adult in home a chance to spend time in the room with your new cat over the first few days. Sitting on floor and speaking calmly to a cat allows them to approach when they are ready with no pressure to do so. To encourage interaction, you can bring treats along to toss around the room.

Adjustment Period

It is very common for cats to need several weeks to adapt to a new situation. During this time, it is important to provide them with calm friendly interactions, and food while not forcing them to engage.



- Limit the number of new people your cat meets to those living in the home.
- Avoid having home improvements done to reduce exposure to loud noises and additional foot traffic.
- Artificial pheromone sprays can be used to reduce stress for cats.
- Cats can be picky about their preferred food, if your cat is not eating after the first few days, try introducing a different brand of food.

When to Seek Help

While it is normal for a cat to take a few weeks to adjust to a new home there are situations that may be more complex. If your cat is not eating or drinking after a few days, not using litterbox, biting or scratching people, or injuring themselves trying to escape you should consult your Veterinarian, a Certified Veterinary Behaviorist or a so they can evaluate your situation and develop a plan that is appropriate for you and your pet.