



What You Need to Know: Introducing Adopted & Resident Cats

A little planning and preparation will go a long way in building amicable relationships in a multi cat household. Keep in mind, this process could take several weeks or months.

01

Prior to Adoption

Things to Consider:

Age & Temperament: Select a companion that will be compatible with your resident cat's personality and energy levels.

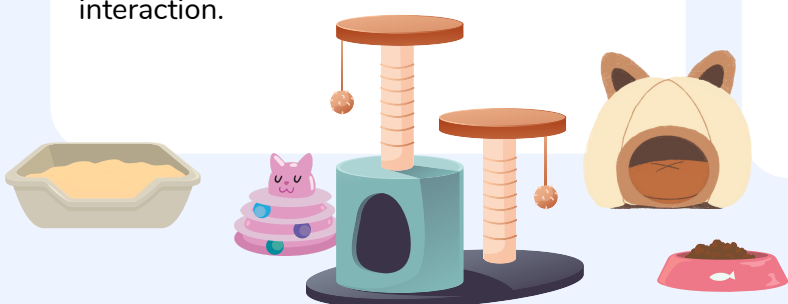
Space: Is there enough space in your home for each cat to exist independently of each other if they choose not to interact?

Resources: Are you able to provide multiple separate resources for each cat?

Preparing For a New Cat:

- **Create a private and comfortable space for your new cat to settle.** A bedroom or office with a door that closes is ideal.
- Set up all the amenities your new cat will need to feel safe and secure: food, water, bedding, large litter tray, a scratching surface, toys, vertical spaces to perch, and multiple accessible hiding places.
- Ensure that your resident cat does not have access to your new cat's safe space.

Tip: Aim to maintain your resident cat's routine as much as possible, and provide them with plenty of enrichment and positive interaction.



02

Bringing Your Cat Home

First impressions matter!

Rushed introductions may result in fearful or territorial behaviours. Resist the urge to let your cats see or smell each other when you bring your new cat home.

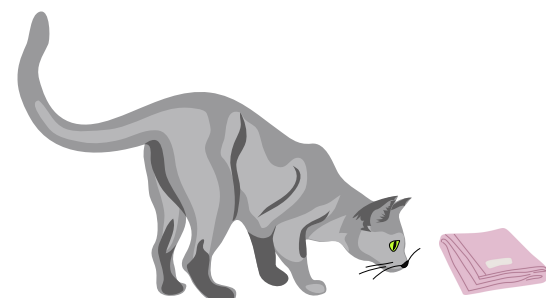
- **Cover your newly adopted cat's carrier with a blanket or towel while traveling,** this will help them stay calm.
- Keep the carrier covered when you enter your home and **take your new cat straight to their private space.**
- Open the carrier and let your cat choose whether they wish to exit – avoid forcing or luring your cat out of hiding at this stage.
- **Give your cat plenty of time to get acquainted with their new space,** it may take several days or weeks for your cat to feel comfortable in their new home.

Tip: If your new cat is choosing to hide, try not to take it personally. Avoid forcing physical contact or moving them from their hiding spot. **Build positive experiences** by offering high value treats and providing a predictable routine.



03

Scent Swapping



- Once both pets are comfortable in their own environments, you can start swapping scents to build familiarity.
- Place a washcloth or similar in each of your cat's preferred resting places. After a few days place this item in the other cat's space.
- Avoid placing these new scents too close to your cat, **allow each cat to approach** the scented item when they are ready.
- **Monitor your cat's response:** If either cat shows signs of stress or fear, remove the item and try again in a few days.
- Repeat this for several days to help build familiarity. If both cats are showing a positive response to the other's scent, you may choose to rub the cloth on other items in their spaces to help create a **group scent**.

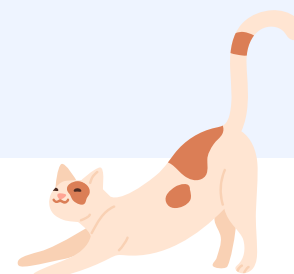
04

Time Sharing

Allow your pets to explore each other's space without meeting:

Lure your cat to another area using treats or play and allow the other to explore their space. If confining your cat to a room give them something fun to do like a treat trail, forage box, interactive play, or something else they enjoy.

Important: Only move to the next step in the introduction process when both animals are calm and showing relaxed body language.



05

Visual Introductions

- Use a **baby gate or similar barrier** to let your cats see each other from a distance. Cover part of the gate with a towel or blanket so the cats can hide if they choose.
- Try doing these introductions at similar times during the day to make interactions more predictable.
- Ideally there is one person present with each cat to help manage interactions.
- **Ensure each cat has access to something they enjoy** like high value treats or a string toy. This will serve as a pleasant distraction and reduce the likelihood of your cats fixating on each other.
- **Keep these interactions short and reward calm behaviour.** If either cat shows signs of stress or fear, end the session.
- Over time you can reduce the distance between your cats.
- Continue to monitor your cats' body language throughout these interactions and positively reinforce calm behaviours.

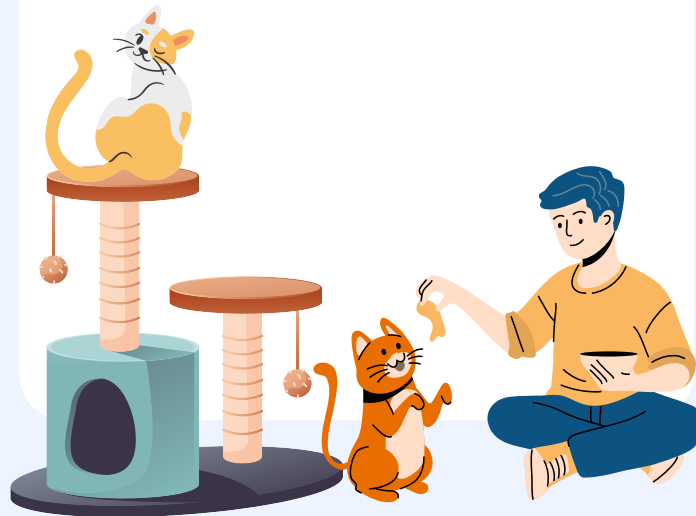
Tip: Always ensure both cats can retreat from the interaction if they choose. Cats will appreciate access to hiding spots and vertical spaces .



06

Supervised Time Together

- When both cats are **consistently** relaxed and calm on either side of the barrier, you may wish to let them meet in a neutral space.
- **Ensure that each cat has access to multiple escape routes and vertical spaces.**
- Continue to have high value treats, toys, or other **positive activities** available to each cat to avoid fixation.
- Your cats may benefit from becoming familiar with **target training** or pattern games prior to meeting.
- Lure your new cat back to their safe space using food or play.
- **Be patient** and avoid picking up or forcing your cat to move.



07

Unsupervised Time Together

If both animals are consistently **relaxed and calm** during extended periods of supervised time, they may eventually share spaces without your constant supervision.

Tips for Success:

- **Be patient** and proceed at a pace that both cats feel comfortable with.
- **Resources, Resources, Resources.** Ensure there are multiple and separate resources for each cat. This includes multiple litter trays, water bowls, feeding stations, perching and resting areas, hiding spots, scratching surfaces, and toys in different locations. This will reduce competition and help increase the likelihood of a peaceful relationship between cats.

When Things Don't Go as Planned

If one or both of your cats are showing signs of high stress such as persistent growling, hissing, physical altercations, or toileting outside of their litter trays please **get in touch with our behaviour team for further support.** We're here to help!

The Lost Dogs Home Animal Behaviour & Training Team:
03 8379 4470

Additional Resources:

<https://icatcare.org/advice/introducing-an-adult-cat-to-your-cat/>

<https://www.fundamentallyfeline.com/training-the-whiplash-turn-pattern-game-with-cats/>

Cat School Clicker Training - Target stick training for cats: Three methods to start (youtube.com)

Bradshaw, J. and Ellis, S. (2016). The Trainable Cat. Penguin UK.