

Introducing Your New Cat to Your Resident Cat

Cats can be wonderful companions to each other. However, if you have an older cat that isn't used to being around other cats, it may take them a while to get used to your new furry friend. Younger cats may only need a few days, but an older cat may take weeks or months to get comfortable with a new cat in its house. Cats are territorial animals so the introduction should be taken slowly so they can get used to each other before actually meeting face to face. This prevents aggression and fearful behavior from developing.

Step 1

Keep your new cat in a room with their litterbox, food, water, and a bed. Have your cats eat on opposite sides of the door to this room. This will establish a positive association with each other's smells. Don't put the food so close to the door that the cats get too upset to eat. Gradually move the bowls closer to the door until they can both eat calmly.

Step 2

As long as neither cat is sick, you can switch blankets or beds between your cats so they can get used to each other's scent. You can also rub a towel on one cat and put it underneath the food bowl of the other. This step should be done with all cats in the home.

Step 3

Once your new cat is becoming comfortable in their safe room, let them explore the rest of the house while putting your resident cat in the new cat's room. This also allows them to experience the other cat's scent without meeting face to face.

Step 4

Have the cats meet in short, supervised sessions, increasing the time together based off their behavior. Try to avoid any aggression or fearful behavior. If these are allowed to become a habit, they'll be hard to change. If a cat is showing these behaviors, separate them again and start over with the introduction process to get them more used to one another. If your cats do have a small spat, don't try to separate them with your body. Try making a loud noise or throw a blanket over them. Allow them to calm down before going back to the introduction steps. Don't punish them, either. It can make things worse. If you continue to have problems, you can consult a professional to ensure the safety of your pets.



Tips

- 1 If one of your cats is sick or hurt, this can make the introduction process longer. Talk with your veterinarian to make sure all your cats are healthy before trying to introduce them to one another.
- 2 You'll need at least one litterbox per cat plus one so you'll have to clean them more frequently. You also want to be sure none of the cats are being "ambushed" by the other cat while trying to use the box.
- 3 Try to keep your resident cat's schedule as close as possible to what it was like before you got the new cat.
- 4 Be sure each cat has a safe hiding spot away from the other cats.
- 5 You can also use anxiety reducing products to help with the introductions.

Introducing Your New Cat to Your Resident Dog

Cats and dogs can be great friends, with proper introductions! Follow the steps below to introduce your new cat to your resident dog. These steps should be done over a matter of days/weeks depending on the comfort level of both the cat and dog.

Step 1

After your new cat and resident dog have become comfortable eating on opposite sides of the door, and have been exposed to each other's scents as described in the "Introducing Your New Cat to Your Resident Cat" section, you can attempt a face-to-face introduction in a controlled manner. A baby gate can be used for a good first face to face introduction.

If your dog doesn't already know commands, "Sit," "Down," "Come," and "Stay," you should begin working on them. This will help keep your dog calm in your new cat's presence.

Step 2

Put your dog's leash on, and using treats, have them sit or lie down and stay. Have another family member or friend enter the room and quietly sit next to your new cat, but don't have them physically restrain the cat. Have this person offer your cat some special treats or catnip to make them feel more comfortable. At first, the cat and dogs should be on opposite sides of the room. Remember, many of short visits are better than a few long visits. Don't drag out the visits so long that the dog becomes uncontrollable. Repeat this step several times until both the cat and dog are tolerating each other's presence without fear, aggression, or other undesirable behavior.

Step 3

Next, allow your cat freedom to explore your dog at their own pace, with the dog still on-leash and in a "down stay." Meanwhile, keep giving your dog treats and praise for their calm behavior. If your cat runs away or becomes aggressive, you're progressing too fast. Go back to the previous introduction steps.

You may want to keep your dog on-leash and with you whenever your cat is free in the house during the introduction process. Be sure that your cat has an escape route, high perches, and a place to hide. Keep your dog and cat separated when you aren't home until you're certain your cat will be safe.

Dogs like to eat cat food, so keep the food out of your dog's reach. Investigating the litter box and eating feces is also a common behavior in dogs, so keep the litter box in a place where your dog cannot access it.