



INTRODUCING CATS TO CATS

Some people say cats are like potato chips – you can't have just one!

When bringing a new cat into your home with a resident cat, the introduction process should be controlled and gradual. If you rush into things and attempt to "force" a relationship, you might inadvertently sabotage a relationship that could have otherwise worked out. Here are 4 simple steps that can help you ensure a successful introduction:

1

TRADING SCENTS

By exchanging the cats' scents with one another, you will be introducing a very important identification and communication signal right off the bat.

While your newly-adopted kitty is acclimating in his/her "sanctuary room" for the first few days, **swap fabrics such as blankets/towels** and give it to the other cat at least once a day. In addition, **feed both cats on a schedule near the door** so they have a chance to associate each other with something positive: food time. Do not free feed any of the cats.

2

LOCATION SWAP

When both cats are eating well and appear calm and relaxed on their respective sides of the door, then it's time for the big exchange: location.

Bring the **resident cat to the room** and shut the door, while the **new cat is allowed to roam** the house. Each cat should be allowed to use the other cat's (clean!) litter box, food and water dishes, beds, and toys, so the only thing being exchanged are the cats themselves. Allow them enough time to explore and inspect everything they want to before putting them back in their respective locations. Close bedroom and bathroom doors at first. Do this as many times as necessary and continue scent trading and feeding on the opposite sides of the door.

3

VISUAL INTRO

If everything seems to be going well, everyone is acting, eating, and using the litter box normally, they are ready to make visual contact.

While you **crack the separating door slightly** (not enough to let them through), let them see each other and approach on their own. If you have baby gates, you can stack two on top of each other and open the door all together. Offer praise and treats every step of the way if they are behaving well.

4

SUPERVISED TIME TOGETHER

When all other 3 steps have successfully taken place, they are ready to meet.

Until you are confident they are getting along, do not leave them alone together. This step is to **ensure you see all their interactions**. Stay close by watching carefully, give lots of praise and treats, and use an interactive toy to play with both of them. There may be some hissing or swatting, but if it doesn't escalate, do not worry. This is how cats express discontent and establish boundaries. If a real fight occurs, go back to STEP 1 and repeat the process a few more times. If all else fails, we ask that you give us a call to schedule a consult with our Cat Behavior Counselor.