

BRINGING HOME A NEW CAT OR KITTEN



Prepare a safe room

Start your new cat off in a bathroom or possibly a small bedroom where they can become familiar with the sounds and scents of its new home. This safe room must have a door and ceiling, and should be a quiet, safe place for your new pet. If you've adopted a shy cat, we recommend a safe room without large items of furniture such as beds and dressers where a cat may become inaccessible.

Provide food, water, and litter

Place food and water on one side of the room and an open (unenclosed) litter box on the other side. Shyer cats may not eat much during the first 24 to 48 hours and may experience temporary diarrhea from stress. If your cat has not eaten in 48 hours, you may want to consult your veterinarian for advice. **Water consumption should be heavily monitored in young kittens as they can become dehydrated very quickly.**

Spend time with your new cat

Visit the safe room frequently. Visiting can mean play time or petting, or quietly reading a book or chatting on the telephone in the same space as your new companion. Shy cats may retreat to their hidey hole and not come out when you're around at all. They may only come out at night when the house is quiet. If your cat is nervous, sit on the floor and let them come to you when they're ready.

Cat-proof the safe room

When your cat is acclimated to your home, you may be surprised to find him on top of the upper kitchen cabinets, so make sure there's nothing on display there or on other high shelves that can be damaged or knocked off. Look for holes or registers that leave ductwork accessible and cover them up. A kitten can easily slither into one of these.

Give your cat something to do

Put a new scratching post (at least 3 feet tall) inside the safe room. Scratching is a natural and comforting behavior for cats. It's also important that the scratching post is new and has not been used by other cats. Your new cat does not want to be stressed by the smells of other cats while they are first adapting to their new surroundings. You should also provide a couple of toys such as jingle balls or mouse toys.

Transition beyond the safe room

When you and your new cat have established a trusting relationship, the cat is ready to begin exploring the house. Be sure to begin this process when you are home to supervise. Close most of the doors so the cat begins its orientation in stages. Too many new spaces at once can be stressful and frightening. If you've adopted a shy cat, take this stage slowly.

Give them a hiding spot

New cats are often nervous and like to hide. Cardboard boxes, open cat carriers, or sheets draped over chairs make ideal hiding spots when you first bring your new cat home. Even when your cat becomes accustomed to its new environment, you'll find they still love finding any kind of hidey hole to curl up in.

Introduce your new cat to its human family

Ideally, you would restrict the cat's exposure to the whole family on the first day, but naturally, everyone is going to want to see them. Only allow one or two visitors to the safe room at a time, and remind children to be very quiet and not to chase the pet. For information on introducing your new cat to its animal family, see [How to Introduce Cats via Jackson Galaxy](#).

Be patient with your new cat

Remember your new cat is in totally unfamiliar territory with unfamiliar people and animals. It may take them two to three weeks to adjust to their new environment. Be patient with them and make sure they continue to have a safe space to escape if they need it. Don't force them to experience new pets, people, or situations before they are ready.