



Cat Intros

Start with confinement. Keep your new cat in one room with her litter box, food, water and a bed. This confinement period is essential for cats as they're easily stressed. Feed your resident pets and the newcomer on each side of the door to this room. This will help all of them to associate something enjoyable (eating!) with each other's smells. Take it slow, gradually moving their meals closer to the door, and eventually opening the door once all pets are eating calmly in the presence of each other.

Swap scents. Switch sleeping blankets or beds between your new cat and your resident animals so they have a chance to become accustomed to each other's scent.

Meet-and-greets should be controlled. Don't allow aggressive interactions between your pets. Once this becomes a habit, it's difficult to change. If you're introducing your resident dog to the new cat, do so with the dog on leash and treats in hand to reward for good behavior. The cat shouldn't be restrained or forced to greet, but encouraged with treats or catnip to stay put or move closer to your dog. Ideally you'd have two people managing the introduction. If the cat chooses to hide, let her hide and your dog can sniff, guided by you. Don't allow the dog to chase or harass your cat.

Supervise all interactions. 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 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.

Tips for living with multiple cats.

- It's ideal to have one litter box for each cat plus one additional box that are cleaned daily.
- Each cat should have their own space away from one another
- It can take time for cats to like or even tolerate each other. Don't force interactions.
- Offering treats, affection and play time can help bond cats.

Need help? Just ask! These tips are just scratching the surface when it comes to introducing pets and sometimes you need additional help. Our staff can offer advice and also recommend professional animal behaviorists depending on the issue you're encountering with your own pets.