

TEN PROVEN SUCCESSFUL STEPS

FOR INTRODUCING A NEW CAT OR KITTEN TO YOUR HOUSEHOLD

1. Prepare a safe room for the new arrival where they will stay for a minimum of 10 days before being introduced into their new home and family. Put a litter box, food and water and make a cozy, warm bed for them to sleep in. Toys are always good. If possible, bring bedding with their smells they have accumulated from their previous location. This will make them feel safer and also help with cross scenting for a better introduction to the other cats. A floor scratcher or scratching post is A MUST and a window for sunshine (be sure all screens are secure). Playing classical music very low on a radio will also help to soothe them.
2. Visit as much as possible every day. Groom and pet them often. Then pet the cats that you would like to introduce to your newcomer. Cross scenting is an invaluable way of helping the cats get acquainted. They will get to know each other through the door by putting their paws underneath and doing things that cats do to become acquainted. With the door closed no one feels threatened.
3. Exchange food bowls and water dishes. Give the same amount of attention to the cats in the household that you give to the newcomer. Everyone should feel loved and secure with a stranger in their midst. We also rub our hands in some tasty dry food and then rub the smells on the cats. Having good quality and delicious food will also help with the transition. Offer everyone the same food!
4. If you have a screen or some type of transparent barrier you can put up temporarily at the door, this will definitely help. Then you can open the door and they can also see one another. If this is done several times a day, it can be a good way to introduce newcomers. However, this should only be done under supervision. Having a large dog crate in the room with the other cats gives them good way to interact. Cats like to make eye contact and do body language. The crate should be covered on three sides and the top and either a carrier or cardboard box inside for hiding if necessary along with food, toys and other goodies. If you are taming a feral cat or an older kitten, the length of time in the crate will need to be increased, after which you need to make the determination as to how frightened the cat remains and if when letting out, it will bolt and hide. This may happen, but it does not necessarily mean the cat will not adjust. Give a feral cat time and under most circumstances they will become very loving and grateful friends.
5. When you are ready to let your new cat/kitten into the household to interact with the other cats (you must be present), the best time is after everyone has eaten and preferably when they would normally take their naps. They will be more relaxed. Follow the cats and watch over them carefully for the first 24-48 hours. Keep all of the newcomer's things in their room until the transition is complete, as you may need to put them back into the room (or crate) at night. It will also be their familiar safe haven. Go at a slow at a comfortable pace. There is no hurry, as this is a permanent home for the newcomer and he or she will be there for their lifetime.
6. GOING THROUGH ALL OF THE PROCESSES SLOWLY AND WITH EASE WILL PAY OFF IN THE LONG RUN WITH A HAPPY AND WELL-ADJUSTED HOUSEHOLD. **NEVER BRING A NEW CAT OR KITTEN INTO A HOUSEHOLD AND LET THEM LOOSE WHEN THEY ARRIVE.** This type of introduction will not be successful and the cat and/or kitten will

probably find a hiding place and be difficult to remove. Cats are creatures of familiarity.
INTRODUCTION MUST BE SLOW AND EASY.

7. CATS ARE VERY SENSITIVE TO CHANGE AND NEED TO BE FAMILIAR WITH THE HOUSE, ITS SMELLS, WHERE THE LITTER BOX IS, WHERE THE FOOD IS AND MOST OF ALL THE OTHER ANIMALS AND PEOPLE IN THE HOUSEHOLD UNTIL THEY FEEL COMFORTABLE.
8. At first when they are out in the household WITH THE OTHER CATS, there may some hissing or growling or running and hiding from one another. It is their way of communicating a complicated language that we do not understand. It has been our personal experience that if the introduction is done properly, you will have wonderful satisfying results and the cats will live together in harmony. OF COURSE ALL OF THE CATS IN THE HOUSEHOLD MUST BE SPAYED OR NEUTERED.
9. Do not reprimand them if the situation becomes tense. Pick up one of the cats and remove them from the area and place in a less confined space, but do not place the newcomer back behind a closed door, once you have taken the food, litter box and their bed out. It will appear that they are being punished. A good way to relieve tension is with an interactive toy OR SOMETHING TO DISTRACT.
10. Food is always a good tension breaker. Keep something everyone likes a lot and this can have a calming effect. There are also Bach Flower Remedies like Rescue Remedy, which we use in many circumstances, from rescuing to helping in stressful situations.

ONE LAST PRECAUTION: SINCE THE CAT OR KITTEN WILL BE INDOORS ONLY – WATCH THE DOORS TO THE OUTSIDE. IF A CAT OR KITTEN ESCAPES INTO A NEW AND THREATENING TERRITORY, YOU MAY NEVER SEE THEM AGAIN AS THEY WILL BOLT AND HIDE OR WORSE! If your have an adventurous cat, keep a spray bottle with water by the door and use it when leaving and entering to discourage them. If they escape, take immediate steps to get them back!

Experienced and dedicated persons in our organization created the information in this document. We are available for any questions. Contact us by phone or through our Website www.feralcatcaretakers.org