

How To Introduce A New Cat To Your Property

Cats tend to be very attached to their home environment. They do not immediately cope well when being relocated. If you don't want your new working cat to immediately wander away from your property than you must be sure to conduct a proper introduction.



1. Set up a safe space in the building you expect to be the cat's home.

- Ideally, there should be an enclosed room the cat is unable to escape from in this building. If there is no such room then an oversized kennel or similar enclosure large enough to house a litter box, food/water dish, and a safe bed can be substituted.
- The cat will need to be confined to this space for a few to several weeks in order to acclimate to their new home. Typically, about 2-3 weeks. The longer the cat will be confined to this space, the larger the space needs to be.
- Most cats prefer covered, den like beds during this process. A cat carrier with the door propped open works great.
- The cat will require daily care in this space, including having the litterbox scooped/cleaned, fresh food/water, and wet or otherwise soiled linens replaced. Be sure the space is set up to easily allow these chores.

2. After the appropriate time has lapsed, the door to this space can be opened and the cat allowed to freely wander in and out of this space.

- Be sure the litter box, food/water, and bed remain in place for the cat to return to should it deem it necessary.
- Do not force the cat out of this space. Allow it to leave and return on its own time frame.
- After about two more weeks the cat should be fully acclimated to its new home.
- If there are any items in this room that you prefer not to have there, now it is OK to remove those items. However, it is important to remember cats' needs. It is important that cats have easy access to all their resources. It is also important that there be as many resource stations as there are cats. If you have 5 cats, you will need 5 separate areas with food, water, beds, etc. Outdoor cats and indoor cats have the same needs in this regard.

Additional Considerations

If adopting a working cat in the winter additional consideration needs to be made for the cat's ability to keep warm.

Cats can survive cold weather well. HOWEVER, in order to do so cats must develop a heavy and thick coat and insulating fat deposits. This development occurs as a result of continued and prolonged exposure to the temperature outdoors.

Cats in the shelter are kept under climate controlled conditions and so are not typically exposed to the temperatures necessary for this development to occur.

If you are adopting a barn cat during the winter months, it will be necessary to keep it in a more climate controlled setting for the remainder of the season. This is especially true for kittens.



Once winter is over and the weather becomes more appropriate for these cats they can then be allowed access to the outdoors. As spring and summer progress into fall and winter, they will now have been exposed to the elements in an appropriate way to develop the necessary physical attributes to be kept outdoors (with appropriate shelter) during the winter months.

Fresh food and water should be provided daily, even after the acclimation period is completed.

Many believe that feeding working cats will discourage them from mousing, but this is an unfortunate myth.

Cats mainly hunt for fun and pleasure, not for sustenance. Failure to feed barn cats will actually encourage them to wander away from the property, even after the completion of the acclimation period.

To keep cats around and encourage them to do the job, they should be well fed on an appropriate diet.

