



# Cat to Home Introductions

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Introducing a new cat into a household shouldn't be a trying experience for either the cat or adoptive parent. Felines are most likely to adapt to new living arrangements and homes with or without resident pets if a few precautions are taken. No single plan will work equally well for all cats due to their different nature added to this, the same kitten may react differently to two different living situations. However, kittens are most likely to successfully adapt to a new home, with less stress, if the following arrangements are made prior to introducing the cat.

## INTRODUCING YOUR NEW CAT TO YOUR HOME

- **Find a room the kitten can use as “home base”** for the next several days. The room should have a door, or some other way to make the room private from the more active hustle and bustle of the household, including infants, children and other pets.
- **Litterbox Placement.** Put the litter box in a corner opposite the door.
- **Place fresh water and food** in a separate corner or as far away from the litter box as possible. You may wish to place a plastic carpet runner beneath both the feeding area and the litter box for cleaning purposes.
- **Select another corner for kitty to sleep**, away from the litterbox; you will probably have to change this location to the kitty self pro-claimed sleeping area later.
- **Place the kitten in the room with you, with the door closed.** Allow the kitten to discover where everything is. Do not take the kitten to the various locations, and do not place the kitten in the litter.
- **Be passive.** Allow the kitten to discover the rooms' strong points like window ledges to look out of, a comfortable couch or bed, tables to jump up on, and anything else in the room that might be used as an “escape route” should one be needed.
- **You may wish to leave the kitten by itself** when it appears it is ready to take a nap, or when kitty appears relaxed and confident in its new surroundings. If kitty chooses to nap in your lap, consider yourself lucky. Of course, you can always try to place kitty in the sleeping area you've selected, and then leave the room.
- **Let your kitten decide when it's ready to take on the rest of the house.** It's more important that you allow the kitten to do this on it's own speed. A cracked door just large enough for kitty to enter or exit from its room is a good starting place.
- **Keep other pets and family members from kitty's room.** Introductions to these individuals should be well controlled. Again, allow the kitten to approach and withdrawal from people or other pets that remain passive to it.
- **Once kitty has become familiar with its new home** and household members, you'll become aware of its preference for playing, eating, sleeping and other activities. At this point you may begin to gradually change the location of the litter box and food bowl to areas preferred by both you and the kitty.
- **In general, the litter box should always be placed away** from other motivationally important areas, such as sleeping, feeding, and playing areas. The box should be placed in an area that affords the kitten both privacy and escape potential. NEVER punish the kitty for missing the box by rubbing its nose in it, shaking it or placing it in the box while upset. Instead, think about what might have made the box an unattractive place to use “wrong” place a more attractive place, from kitty's point of view. Make the necessary changes. Call your local certified animal behaviorist if you think your kitten needs professional help!