



CAT-CAT INTRODUCTIONS

Bringing a new cat into your home can be an exciting time. If you already have a cat at home, it may take time for them to get used to one another and become friends. Cats are territorial animals and introductions to other animals, especially other cats, should be done slowly to ensure they get off on the right paw.

Cat introductions happen in stages, rather than a fixed timeframe. The length of each stage will depend on how the cats are responding to each other. Everyone should be relaxed and showing calm behavior before moving on. Moving too fast is the most common problem that arises during introductions, so patience is the key.



KITTY'S FIRST ROOM

Provide your new cat with his own room to relax and get adjusted to the home. He should have food, water, a new litter box, toys, a scratch post, and

something cozy to sleep on. Spend time with your new cat a few times a day playing, petting or just getting acquainted.

Smell is very important to cats and familiar smells help them feel more secure. Getting them used to each others' smell before they meet will aid in a smooth first meeting.

- Swap towels or bedding between the cats.
- Put food bowls with an added tasty treat near the door that separates them to create positive associations.

When both cats are showing relaxed behavior and are eating, drinking and using the litter box well, you can move to the next stage. If there's growling or hissing from either cat, stay at this stage and work on creating positive associations between them.

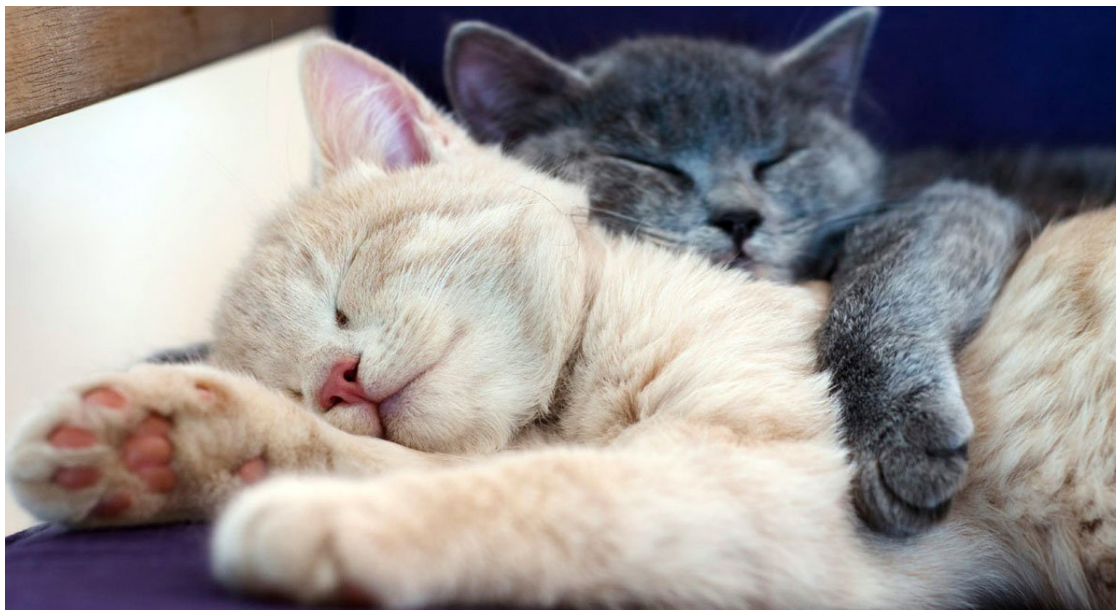
ROOM EXCHANGES

Put your resident cat in "Kitty's First Room" while your newcomer explores the rest of the home. Start with just a few rooms, so it's not too overwhelming. Continue to provide food on either side of the door. If either cat seems uncomfortable, stay at this stage and swap cat locations every few days. When both cats are using the others' food and water dishes, resting spots, toys and freshly scooped litter box, they have shown they are relaxed and are ready to move on to the next stage.

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I SEE YOU

At this point, having a barrier, such as baby gates (one on top of the other), is recommended to prevent them from any unwanted physical contact. Distract both cats with interactive play or treats when in view of each other to help them relax and build on positive associations. Neither cat should be held or confined to force an interaction. They need to be able to feel like they can avoid contact if they wish. Signs of a big problem include litter box lapses, growling and hissing, severe fighting, lethargy, and lack of appetite.

SUPERVISED CONTACT

If both cats are behaving, eating, drinking, and using the litter box normally, you can allow them to meet. Try not to interfere too much and let them communicate amongst themselves. If they choose not to interact, that's actually a good sign. Relationships take a while to develop and the first step is to be able

to be around each other comfortably.

If a fight breaks out – don't try to pick up the cats. Use a heavy blanket or large thick towel to cover and remove one of the cats. Cats can seldom work things out on their own and allowing them to fight it out can result in extreme stress or a serious injury.

LEAVING THEM ALONE TOGETHER

Until you're sure that the cats are getting along, it's best to separate them when you are not home. Once the supervised interactions are going well and both cats seem relaxed in each others' presence, you can start leaving them alone for short periods of time and build up.

GOOD LUCK AND REMEMBER: It's not cruel to leave a cat in a bedroom by himself and it never hurts to take things slower if anyone is unsure. It's better to have a good first meeting than to spend twice as long mending fences.