



Introducing a New Cat to Your Current Cat



As a species, cats tend to need more time to adjust to changes in their environment, and, like us, they can vary in their social personalities. When introducing one cat to another, consider things such as energy level, history with other cats, and/or behavior when viewing another cat. None of this can ever predict 100% your cat's reaction when you bring home another friend, but it could give insight into how they might react when they smell or see another animal in your home.

Step One: Separate at first for long term success

The first impression between two cats matter because it can set the mood for the entire relationship. We are not entirely different from cats in this regard. If the first time you meet someone they say something unpleasant to you, it can take some time to shake off the first interaction. To aid in a successful first meeting, it is best to **separate** your resident cat from the new can when first brought home to control the initial introduction.

While separated, the two cats should be able to smell and hear each other, but not see or touch to prevent any negative interactions. This can be done either by placing your new cat in a spare bedroom, laundry room, a walk-in closet, or even a bathroom. To prevent negative touch, a baby gate is highly recommended to place in front of any door, but also a towel underneath can substitute for this. During separation, each cat should be provided with their own necessary items (food and water, litter box, scratching post, bed and toys) to alleviate any stress. Play with and feed the cats near the door that separates them, so they can learn that being near each other is a good thing.

After a few days, we recommend allowing the cats to rotate between the two rooms. This allows your new cat to be able to explore, but also lets your two cats separately investigate the other's smell. Play around with removing the barrier that has been preventing touch at this point and notice if either cat's reactions to each other under the door is positive.

Step Two: The View

Once you begin to see no aggression (swatting, growling, etc.) between the two cats under the door, you can begin to introduce the cats to the sight of each other. A tall baby gate can be extremely helpful here, or even to rotate time in an extra-large wire crate if you have an agile cat.

Step Three: Meeting and Friendship

After viewing each other without any direct swatting, you can open the door to allow for the cats to interact with each other. Do not force the cats to interact, allow them to approach each other on their own terms. It is normal during this time for cats to hiss at or low growl at each other. However, they should not charge at or bite each other. If this happens and the cats begin to fight, do not attempt to pick them up or grab them. Try to separate them by using your voice or something that you can put in between them. You can also prepare yourself with a spray bottle filled with water. Once separated in their own rooms, go back to Step Two or even Step One to work on a slower integration process.