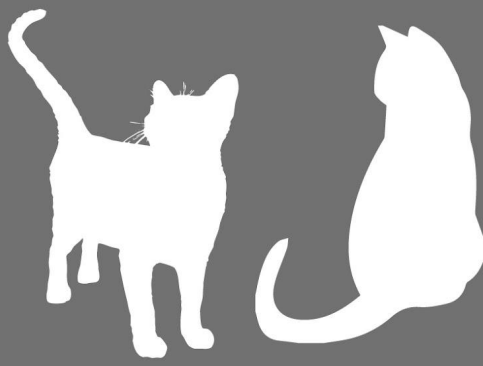


# CATS



## CAT TO CAT INTRODUCTIONS

Introducing two cats can be very stressful for everyone involved. To set them up for success you will want to take each step very slowly, only moving forward when both animals are comfortable. It is easy to move too quickly, which may increase stress and ultimately prolong the process. Be patient and know that it often takes several weeks to a couple of months to complete the introduction process.

The best way to determine both cats are relaxed and comfortable throughout the process is through their body language. If you would like to learn more about feline body language, see our Cat Body Language handout. If you start to see tension or negative body language, **stop** and go back to the previous step

The following steps will give your cats the best chance to make a good first impression.

### STEP ONE: SET UP A QUIET HOMEBASE FOR THE NEW CAT

If the cat is new to the household, set them up in one room with all their necessities. Let them get used to that area and wait until they are walking around confidently before proceeding to the next step.

### STEP TWO: SWAP SCENTS & SPACES

Swap the blankets so that the resident cat gets a blanket the new cat has laid on and vice versa. Put your resident cat in a room out of sight and let your new cat explore another room. You may choose to let your resident cat explore your new cat's room.

### **STEP THREE: VISUAL CONTACT**

Feed them on opposite sides of a closed door. Preferably something they really enjoy like wet food and a few treats. Once they are eating comfortably on opposite sides of the door, you will want to give them some visual contact. Baby gates work well for allowing visual contact in a small, controlled fashion. Open the door and allow the cats to see each other while feeding both the cats favorite treats. Keep this visual short and close the door after a few seconds of treat giving. After the doors are shut, think about how both animals' body language was. Were they scared, aggressive, or friendly?

### **Troubleshooting**

- If you don't have a baby gate, propping the door open just an inch or two can work as well.
- If you are worried about one of the cats jumping the gate, you can try stacking two in the doorway.
- Depending on the personalities of the cats, you can also try feeding them on opposite sides of a neutral territory, like the living room.
- Get creative and find a solution that will work for your household.

### **STEP FOUR: SUPERVISED CONTACT**

If all body language from both animals is friendly, allow the cats to approach each other at their own pace. Make sure to always closely supervise them and separate them if you need to leave the house. Again, keep interactions short at first and gradually increase them.

### **STEP FIVE: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER**

Continue to monitor their interactions and separate the animals when you are not home. Avoid leaving them home alone together until you have monitored them for several months and feel comfortable doing so.