



Introducing your new cat to your existing feline family



Lifelong bonds take time to form. Feline friendships are no exception. Introducing your new cat to your existing cat(s) might take weeks or longer depending on how your cats respond. They might become fast friends, or they may not be compatible – not all cats like to share their homes and many cats find change difficult. Take it step by step and most importantly be there to support and guide your cats through this transition. They will need you to be ready to step in to keep everyone safe.

Becoming familiar with **cat body language**, and carefully observing for any changes in behaviour will help you gauge how your cats are coping with the change. Watch closely for signs any of your cats are upset, especially if they hiss or hide. If this happens at any point in the process, intervene immediately, take a step back and try again at an even slower pace.



Before introducing your cats to one another, set your new cat up in their own space separate from your existing cat(s), preferably in a space your existing cats do not usually use. Make sure all your cats have all their basic needs like food, water, scratching posts, litter trays, hideouts with soft bedding, and opportunities to climb and play. Plenty of enrichment with their favourite smells, sights, tastes, and fun games and toys is also important. When everyone's happy and settled in their own space, take your time following this gradual five-step process.



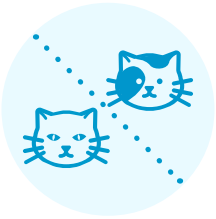
Step 1: Scent swapping

Allow your cats to get used to each other's smell before they see one another. Take a piece of each cat's bedding and place it the other cat's bed. If they seem upset by the scent (e.g., avoiding or even hissing at it) slow down, maybe try again in a few days. Once the cats are relaxed with each other's scents, return the bedding to each cat so their scents mix to form a combined scent.



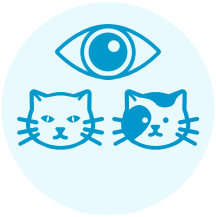
Step 2: Investigating each other's areas of the home

When your cats seem relaxed around each other's scents, let them explore each other's areas of the home without the other present.



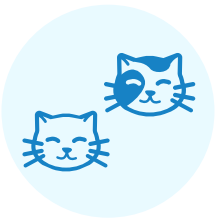
Step 3: Supervised visual contact

Start with short sessions (5-10mins) of supervised visual contact behind a barrier (e.g., children's safety gate). Your cats can just go about their own activities, glimpsing or sniffing one another occasionally. If your cats are comfortable try gradually increasing the time they can see each other.



Step 4: Supervised physical contact

If your cats seem relaxed, begin short sessions where the barrier is removed. Start with a few minutes, then 5 minutes, then increase by 10-15 minutes at a time. If they're happy doing their own thing, that's fine. They don't have to make direct or constant contact. You can use synthetic pheromone spray/diffusers to help cats feel more comfortable. If anyone is upset, re-install the barrier and go back to Step 3.



Step 5: Free access without supervision

While you're away, the cats will play! If supervised physical contact goes well, start with short periods of unsupervised contact. Let your cats spend more and more time together unsupervised but make sure they always have access to their own space and resources.