

When you bring home your new cat, set him up in a separate room as described on the opposite page. However it will probably be more convenient to use a bedroom rather than the bathroom since it will be for a longer period of time. Keep him in a separate room for up to seven days. This is very important. The current cat needs time to become accustomed to the scent of the new cat before seeing him. The new cat also needs time to acclimate in his new environment. This is also a good time to assess the health of the new cat without jeopardizing your current cat's health.

Once you feel most of the tension has passed between the cats, allow them to see each other through a screen or a small opening in the door. Continue to do this for a few days. When the hissing has turned to interest it's time to introduce the cats face to face.

Make sure you are home on the day you decide to introduce the cats. Don't leave them alone together. Do not restrain either cat in any way. This does not allow the cats to feel they have a choice to run away or to stay. It may make them defensive and a fight could break out. Instead, let the new cat out of isolation and let the cats encounter each other on their own. Expect some hissing, growling, swatting, and general nastiness. You are best not to interfere unless the cats are causing severe physical damage to each other. At that point break up the cats by squirting water at them or

throwing a pillow at them. Do not punish either cat. They are doing what is normal for cats who are strangers to one another. You also do not want them to associate punishment with the other cat.

It is all right to leave the cats out together when someone is home, but when they are to be alone it is wise to separate them again. It may be several weeks before you feel comfortable leaving them alone together. The first time you do, leave them alone for a short period and gradually increase the time as they get along better.

Each cat should have their own litterbox and food bowl, but a communal water bowl is fine. Signs of a big problem include litterbox lapses, severe fighting (in which blood is drawn), lethargy, depression and lack of appetite. In this case you may need to consult a professional.

These cats may become great friends or they may learn to just tolerate each other. Whatever happens, feel confident your cats will work things out one way or another. Be aware that even cats who are well bonded to each other, sleep together and groom each other can still have an occasional spat. Be patient and it will pay off in the long run.

Information provided by The ASPCA

Bringing Home Your New OR Second Cat



Whether Your New Cat
Is Coming From A
Shelter, A Home Or An
Urban Street, The First
24 Hours In Your Home
Are Special And Critical

Whether your new cat is coming from a shelter, a home or an

urban street, the first 24 hours in your home are special and critical. Before you bring a new cat into your life, it helps to understand a little bit about how cats relate to their world.

For the cat, territory is of paramount importance. A cat views his territory the way most of us view our clothes; without them we feel naked and vulnerable. Place us naked in a room filled with strangers and most of us would try to hide. It is common for cats to hide in a new territory. Very sensitive or under socialized cats often hide for a week or more. YOU know that this cat is now a member of the family, but the cat doesn't.

You can help make the transition to a new home smoother and easier by letting your cat get "dressed." If possible, start by preparing your home before you bring in the cat. If circumstances

require that you bring in the cat before your home is ready, keep him in his carrier until you have his room set up. He will be fine in there for a while longer.

Choose a room for the litterbox; a bathroom usually is preferred. Set the litterbox up with one to two inches of litter and place it in a corner, if possible. Now create a "safe haven" for the cat to hide in. You can buy a covered cat bed but a cardboard box turned upside down with two "doors" cut in it will

work nicely. Why two "doors"? Many cats seem to feel more secure if they have an escape route. Get a box big enough for the cat to stand up, turn around, stretch out and lie down in - but it shouldn't be much bigger. Place the box next to the wall or in a corner where the cat can see the door to the room. You don't want the cat to feel trapped. Place a scratching post next to it and, if possible, clear off a shelf for the cat to perch on. Opposite from the litterbox, place a bowl of fresh water.

After the room is set up, place the carrier in the bathroom. Open the carrier but DO NOT pull the cat out. Allow him to come out on his own and begin to explore his new home. Now, leave the room. Yes, leave.....remember you are giving him time to "get dressed."

While you are giving him this time, cat-proof the other rooms of your home. Is there a high surface on which you can allow the cat? If the answer is "no," make one. Cats need to be able to jump up and survey their territory. Do you have valuables that are easily broken? Put them away until your cat is happily moved in. Check out all the nooks and crannies. Are there places that could be dangerous for the cat to explore or hide in? If so, block them off.

Come back to the bathroom after 15 minutes and place a small

amount of premium quality cat food next to the water bowl. Do not reach for the cat. Let the cat come to you. If he doesn't approach, come back in 15 minutes. If he still doesn't approach, pick up the leftovers and leave.

Do not be surprised if he doesn't eat. It is common for re-homed cats to show no interest in eating, often for several days. Come back in a couple of hours with a fresh meal. If the cat is openly soliciting affection, eating and not hiding, you can open the door and give him one more room. Do this SLOWLY until you have introduced the cat to all of his new home.

Remember to let the cat set the pace. Be patient. Some of us take weeks to pick out an outfit for a special event. And moving into a new home is certainly a special event.

**Turn over for
information on
Introducing a Second
Cat**