

If your kitty is shy around strangers, invite a friend over for a quiet cup of coffee to help you change your cat's perception of new people. Reward any attempt on your cat's part for investigating the new person, such as entering the room. You may want to attract your kitty to the room with an open can of tuna. Don't make any attempts to force your cat to socialize. Repeat this scenario frequently. After a few sessions with a few different people, your cat will associate visitors with "good stuff" and become less fearful of them.

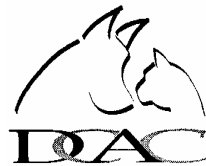
Cats and Dogs

Cats and dogs can easily co-exist in your household. Dogs like to chase cats because cats will run when approached, making it *fun* to chase them! Dogs will not chase cats that stand their ground and swat them away. If your cat runs from your dog, you need to train your dog to behave properly around the cat.

Do not allow your dog to chase or bark at your cat. Keep your dog on a "houeline" (a short leash or cotton cord). Give your dog a collar correction for bothering the cat. Reward the dog for ignoring the cat or engaging in some other activity while the cat is around (such as chewing a bone).

Once your dog is trained to leave the cat alone, your cat will slowly realize the dog is no longer a threat and become less fearful.

By boosting your cat's confidence with training and associating "scary" situations with pleasant experiences, you can help your cat become less fearful and shy.



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Fearful Felines



Learn How To:

**Train Your Cat To Boost
It's Confidence**

**Make The Scary Stuff
More Pleasant For Your
Cat**

**Encourage Cats And
Dogs To Co-Exist**

Shy, fearful cats are wary of strangers, unfamiliar objects and new situations. Making the above pleasant experiences, along with boosting your kitty's confidence with training, will help your cat overcome her shyness.

Cats may develop fears and phobias early in life. Just like other animals (including humans), these early experiences shape adult behaviors. It is much more difficult to change behaviors that result from early experience. If you have a kitten at home, socialize him early by creating lots of new, pleasant experiences for him. Following these guidelines will *prevent* shy behavior in adulthood.

Provide your cat with a safe place of his own to get away from things that may frighten him. His open carrier, a box, or a pillow on a high, sturdy place make good refuges.

All cats have their own distinct personalities. Like people, some cats are much more outgoing than others. A very fearful cat will probably never become a bold, outgoing individual. Accept that there is only so much you can do to change your cat's personality.

Training will Boost Kitty's Confidence

Start by training your cat. It is important to use *positive reinforcement* when training. Positive reinforcement is something that you have that your cat really wants. The most reliable reinforcement is a food treat. You use positive reinforcement to reward good behavior. Small pieces of dried liver, little chunks of canned chicken, bits of tuna and other tasty morsels will work well. *Never* use punishment to train any cat! Punishment teaches avoidance. If you are the source of the punishment, your cat will learn to avoid you. Punishing a fearful cat will make her even *more* fearful.

The most useful command is "come when called." A cat that comes when called won't become lost if he slips out the door, and can be called away from other potentially dangerous situations.

To teach your cat to come when called, start when the cat is near you. Make a "kissing" noise to get her attention and say "Kitty, come!" in a happy voice. When she looks your way, go give her a treat. Soon, she'll come running to you when she hears you call her to receive her treat. Gradually start increasing the distance she has to travel to receive her treat. Then start calling her from out of sight (the next room). Gradually make it more difficult to find you

by calling her from upstairs, behind the couch, etc. Give your cat a treat *every time* she comes when called until she does it reliably. Then, gradually reduce the frequency with which you give her treats for coming when called. She'll be more likely to come when called when she's *not sure* if she'll get a treat, or what that treat might be!

For more information about training your cat, consult our "Clicker Training" handout, which explains how to teach your pet other commands.

Making the Scary Stuff More Pleasant for Your Cat

If your cat associates strangers, novel items and other "scary stuff" with pleasant experiences, she will no longer be afraid. Always allow your cat to investigate new things on her own time.

Start by introducing her to novel, non-threatening things, such as the vacuum cleaner (turned off), a carrier, a box, etc. Quietly praise and treat her (using really tasty morsels) for investigating.