



Introducing a new cat to a multi-pet household

First area of introduction

This should ideally be:

- A smaller room
- Somewhere quieter and away from high volume of traffic
- Not a preferred area of any animals already occupying household
- Setup ahead of introduction to household

Method of introduction

- Cover the carrier and take the cat/kitten straight to area without contact from other people or animals
- Open the carrier and sit in room, allowing the cat/kitten to come out or come to you on own accord
- Allow the cat/kitten to become completely confident in settings before taking the next step
- Allow the cat/kitten to choose pace
- This process can take 1 week to several months
- If you own other animals:
 - o *At this point, do not allow direct contact with other animals*
 - o *Cats – place positive reward each side of door to encourage positive interactions through door. Either hanging a toy or a new bowl with a high reward treat, different to normal food – regularly offered*

Next step

- When there are other pets in household
 - o *Cat's only – can change beds between cats*
 - o *Collect scent from each pet on different cloths by rubbing it around facial area*
 - o *Place item in centre of the room for animals to discover themselves – DO NOT FORCE*
 - o *If it is sniffed and ignored, this is a good sign*
 - o *If given a wide berth to avoid, you will need to continue scent swapping until both cats ignore it – reward this behaviour*
- If residents can be confined without frustration, the cat/kitten can then be allowed to explore another room on own terms
- Resident pet may also want to explore the newcomer's room for short periods

Visual contact

- Only to occur once no conflict or aggression shown through a door
- The animals should be able to see each other with no physical contact. This can be achieved with:
 - o *Netting*
 - o *Perspex*
 - o *Crack in door*
- This should happen for short but frequent bouts
- This should cease if ANY stress or aggression seen and go back a step

Physical access – short, supervised visit in mutual territory

- Only proceed to this step when there is no stress or anxiety from visual contact.
- All parties need to be as calm as possible
- If there are any negative signs ie staring, tense posture, dilated pupils or ears on side stop situation
 - o *Hold up thick towel between cats to allow break in eye contact or escape*



o *DO NOT HANDLE*

- Use interactive toys and treat to disperse tensions
- Increase the time together as they become settled with each other
- Reward good and desirable behaviour
- In case of violent action stop immediately and go back a step

Physical access – unsupervised

- If no negative signs are shown in the previous step allow 2-3mins of unsupervised visits
- If all is going well, increase the frequency of unsupervised visits until contact can be ongoing.
- Between encounters, return the new animal back to its separate room

Please note:

- This is individual for all cats and timings can vary. If done carefully, these introductions can lead to a well-integrated cat/kitten that is happy within its environment.
- However, some cats/kittens cannot cope with sharing an environment with other pets. These individuals may be best suited to single pet dwellings.