



Introducing a New Cat to your resident cat.

Some cats are very social and enjoy living with other cats, while others prefer to be solitary.

If you are integrating a new cat to other cats in your home please understand that it will take time.

Please be patient as this process may take anywhere from 5 days to 6 weeks, if not longer.

And keep in mind that it takes anywhere from 8 to 12 months for cats to develop a friendship with each other.

This of course varies from cat to cat as some cats are very social and others prefer to fly solo!

Some cats never truly become friends, however they learn how to live in peace under the same roof, by simply ignoring each other.

Most of the time you will find that the sweet resident cat you had for so many years will become somewhat aggressive and he/she will hiss, puff and pout at everyone in the household including other 4 legged kitties that they been living with him or her for years.

Even though you may be not so happy about this, this is normal behavior in the cat world and it will pass as time goes by.

There are many things on the market these days that will help in making the transition easier, we will talk about this further towards the end of this article.

There isn't really a rule of thumb for best matching cat personalities as all cats are different, nor there is such a thing as your cat will do better with a male or female or if is the new cats is ca kitten for that matter.

The resident cat will be mad at you and everyone else because there is a new pet in the house period or maybe not, it all depends how your cat takes it and as we said above slow introduction are best for a good outcome.

Some can care less who comes to your home, while others will want to stablish who is boss and really make a point that this is their home, so my home my rules!

It is very important that all the cats in your household are spay/neuter including the newcomer as this will make a lot more submissive cats.

Bringing your new best friend home.

First impressions are critical.

Letting the new cat have the run of the house from the get go, it is a huge NO NO!

It is best to put the newcomer in a in separate room or if a spare room isn't available a large crate will do.

Letting the newcomer have the run of the house from the get go can backfire later on and it may be too overwhelming for the new cat specially.

The new cat needs time to adjust to the new everything, new owner, new cat or cats, new house and perhaps other animals such as dogs if you have any.

Please put yourself in your new best friends "paws" and think about his or her feelings.

Cats are creatures of habit, they do not like change, so go slow at first. Once the cat is settled in his or her new room, first thing to do is make it easy for the new kitty to find things and for you to discover what he or she likes. Placement of his – her things is important and play a big role in introduction process later. Food and water bowls should always be placed by the door of the room where he is she is. Food plates should be shallow, as cats have sensors on their whiskers and will not dunk their faces in a deep bowl. Litter boxes should be placed always far away from the food and water dishes. Rule of thumb is 1 litter box per cat plus one, therefore there should be two litter boxes in the newcomer's room. One should be a covered litter box and the other one uncovered. Toys and scratching posts are a must for kitty to have, to occupy his-her mind and reduce stress. A comfy catnip mat will help and these days you can find on the market calming blankets and toys, too.

Now that the new kitty is settled, let the introduction process begin.

Introduction

Everything you do from this moment on should be pleasant for both cats. It is very important that the cats get to know each other by scent before coming face to face.

- First thing to do is to move the resident cat food dishes to the other side of the door of the newcomer's cat room.

At feeding time, feed both cats at each side of the door on opposite sides of course, with the door closed.

Even though they cannot see each other they will pick up the scent of food as well as each other's scent. Feeding is always a pleasant time and experience for cats, so when fed together they will associate a "good time"!

- Spend time with both cats, doing things they like.

Not all cats like brushing or grooming but most like a good rub with your hand or dry washcloth. Do that and go from one kitty to the other, so you can rub on them each other's scent to intermix it.

- After 2 or 3 days, switch the cats around, put resident kitty in the newcomer's room and let new kitty out to explore. But do so for him or her slowly, one room at a time.

Close the doors to other rooms in the home and just let him or her go to the area where the resident cat most frequents.

Switching the cats rooms, will give both cats the chance to slowly get to know each other by picking up their scent and familiarizing with each other.

After 20-30 minutes switch them back to their respective quarters.

- Playing time and interaction is very important

If the door that separates the room is high enough off the ground you can encourage both cats to play through the door opening at the bottom of the door, with a toy or a feather.

- Do the 2 steps above for at least 2 weeks.

Yes is work but it will pay off in the end!

- After two weeks you can start to crack the door and holding it open enough a few inches so they can see each other for a few minutes at a time.

Do this every day for about a week or so.

If you have somebody handy in your house or maybe you are handy yourself, you can build a door within a door out of screen, lattice or metal wire that you can find any home improvement store. This made door will set inside of the existing door frame and you can just secure it with hinges and an latch to the inside of the existing door frame.

This will give the cats the opportunity to fully interact with each other every day safely without hurting each other.

After another week or so you can remove all barriers and let the cats meet, but do so only for 15 to 20 minutes each day and then back to their spaces.

Cages although they may seem cruel to some people to put an animal in a carate, they aren't and they work very well for introductions as well as for the newcomer as cages provide a secure and safe place for them.

If you rather use a crate to introduce the newcomer.

- Place the cage out in the open where the cats can constantly interact with each other but they cannot hurt themselves.

If you can place the crate on a table, this will be better as cat feel most secure when they are up high.

- Purchase a crate that it is big enough for the cat to comfortably stand and move around and that you can fit a medium to large litter box and food and water dishes.

Kittens "play pen cages" work very well as they are big enough for a cat to move around freely and they also come with shelves to provide different levels.

- Always cover the top of the crate with a piece of cardboard and secure it with scotch tape, also place a comforter on the top of the crate.

The reason for this is because most likely your resident cat or cats will get on top of the crate to check out the newcomer or just to hang out because it is just a new place and cats are curious.

If the top of the crate isn't cover their legs can go through the bars of the crate and cause your kitty to be injured in a bad way.

- Do not keep the new cat in the cage for more than 4 weeks.
- If by the time you let the new kitty out of the crate and still the cats are not fully comfortable with each other or if a fights breaks. Repeat the process for another 2 weeks.

Meeting face to face

By now all the kitties should know each other fairly well, so it is time for the big moment to let them all meet with no barriers.

Only do this under strict supervision and just for kicks keep a water gun in hand or squirt bottle handy in case a fight breaks loose.

If this happens squirt them with water but do not let them see that the water is coming from you.

Use the water as a distraction only to break up the fight, not as punishment because they did nothing wrong, this is how cats behave and what they do in the wild to establish who is boss. If there is hissing, this is normal as long as the hissing doesn't escalate to aggression. Observe their body language, if ears are back – flatten, tail is puffy, etc. All those are warning signs that a fight may come next, so it may be time to put the newcomer away and try the next day again. Do not get discouraged this means that they both just need more time. If all goes well leave it alone but always supervise as we said above, and only do this for 15 min or so every day, several times a day for three or four days, until they can be together at last.

When they are together.

- Make sure there are plenty of hiding spots for your cats.
- Provide high places for them such as, kitty condos, cat trees and put shelves high up on walls. These are essential for them to have for their comfort and for them to feel safe.
 - Provide also low hiding places as those cats that are shy/timid they prefer lower places to hide.
 - Make sure litter boxes are out in the open and accessible to all cats at all times so the cats do not feel trapped and hesitate going potty when they need to because their box isn't accessible. Hidden litter boxes can and will discourage any cat from going to the potty where they suppose to go and will encourage the cat to relieve him or herself in other places in the home. The rule of thumb for litter boxes is the equal number of cats + one. You should always have 1 litter box of each kind, for example if you have 2 cats you should have, 3 litter boxes total, one covered litter box and two uncovered ones.
- Make sure to provide plenty of love and attention to both cats and not just to your new best friend.

Stress relievers.

To relieve stress on both cats we at HPR suggest the use of Rescue Remedy, please make sure you get the one specifically for pets as it contains no alcohol, the human one does.

One thing you do not want in this transition is a drunk kitty cat. ☺

Rescue Remedy can be given as often as needed and it has no side effects whatsoever, Feliway Sprays. We do not recommend the Feliway plug-ins because they can catch on fire.

Calming blankets, calming toys, can also be found in the marketplace today.

Calming and stress-reducing diets are out on the market today that you can purchase at any pet store.

If you have any further questions that have not been covered above, please feel free to e-mail us @: info@hurricanepetsrescue.org we will be very happy to assist you with getting your babies to get alone and live happily ever after.

Wishing you and your new very a lifetime full of happiness and love.