

INTRODUCING A NEW KITTY INTO A HOME WITH AN EXISTING RESIDENT CAT (ERC)

First, please realize that New Kitty you are taking home will probably be frightened to some degree. It's just been uprooted from its home - in some cases the only home it's known - and everything in your home, no matter how comfortable for you and the Existing Resident Cat (ERC), is all strange and new, and may take some time getting used to. How long it takes for the New Kitty to acclimate I can't say - each kitty has its own personality & comfort level.

THERE IS A VERY SIMPLE, FAIRLY PAINLESS METHOD TO INTRODUCE A NEW KITTY

HERE IS THE PROCEDURE

"Furnish" a room for the New Kitty to come home to. This is where he will spend 3-8 days getting to know YOU and your family.

Provide food, water, litter pan, a few toys, a scratching post and a "bed". The bed can be an old comforter folded to make a nice soft bed to snuggle in, an old sweatshirt or two, or a couple nice thick towels folded.

Give the New Kitty some toys: balls with bells, catnip-filled toys, & furry mice. Have a couple feather toys placed out of the New Kitty's reach too. These come in handy for if the New Kitty gets frightened and goes under a piece of furniture. They usually can't resist.

When you come home with the New Kitty, take him to "his room". Place the carrier near the litter pan - this is a reference point - he needs to know immediately, before anything else happens, where the litter pan is located. Open the door to the carrier - let him come out when he is comfortable. Some come out immediately, tail waving, head up - looking around to explore. Others will slink out, and go under something. This is ok - just talk softly to the kitty, put food in the dish, and leave him alone for a little while, to listen to the new noises and smell the different smells in your house.

Go in several times during the first day - the New Kitty may not run up and leap on your lap - so please don't be disappointed. He's very much out of his known territory. So what do you? Go into the New Kitty's room, sit down, and talk, watch TV or read a book, and talk to

the New Kitty. The New Kitty may or may not come out. If he does, that's great, and shows he will probably not need the full 8 days in the room.

Second day & Third day, same routine. Go in before leaving for work, give fresh food / water, scoop the litter pan - the New Kitty should now have nibbled and used the pan. Some will wait about 24 hours; others have no qualms at all. When you arrive home from work, go visit the New Kitty. Get down on the floor and entice him to play. (This is where the feather toys come in handy.) On each trip to visit the kitty, notice if the balls or any other toys have been moved - or anything else in the room. If things have been disturbed, that means he has been exploring.

I cannot emphasize enough how much patience may be needed during the first couple weeks with a New Kitty. An older adult may require much more time and patience.

Fourth day - pick up the New Kitty, and open the door. Allow the Existing Resident Cat (ERC) to come in, while you go out and close the door. Allow about an hour or so for the ERC to sniff and investigate where the New Kitty has been. During this time, take the New Kitty to where the ERC's litterbox is (again, a reference point) - and allow the New Kitty to explore at his own pace from there. Then, exchange the New Kitty and ERC again - New Kitty back to "his" room, ERC back into "his" house.

Do this 1-2 more days. The New Kitty should become increasingly comfortable, and this is the best way to prevent the ERC from taking great offense that another creature has moved in.

On the 6th or later day - when you arrive home, go in and spend a little time playing with the New Kitty. When you exit the room, leave the door open. For a few more days, leave the New Kitty's litterpan and dishes in the room - then remove them. The New Kitty should be using pans in both locations, and should not mind the removal of "his".

THE BENEFITS OF INTRODUCING A NEW KITTY IN THIS MANNER

1 - The New Kitty gets used to new sounds, smells and people in a confined area, and this area is likely to be a comfort zone if for some

odd reason later on in life, he gets frightened by something or must be confined.

2 - It allows observation for both you and the New Kitty. You can see what the New Kitty likes in regards to toys, petting, and grooming, plus it gives you a chance to see how much he's eating, and using the litter pan for the first week and just generally observe his general behavior. The New Kitty is given a chance to get to know and bond with you, without interference from the ERC. Take your time, allow the New Kitty to progress at his own pace. Its well worth the time spent!