

## Overview

You've decided to adopt an adult cat! Congratulations! The experience of being in a shelter or foster situation is very stressful for animals. They are very territorial and don't like change. Don't be disappointed if your new addition hides under the bed for days to weeks after you bring them home.

## Before the Arrival

You should do a few things to prepare your home to help make it as comfortable and welcoming as possible for the new cat, and a trip to the store might be necessary. You should consider the following:

- Litter Box (one for every cat, plus an extra) and litter
- Scratching Posts
- Toys (every cat is different, so you are best to get an assortment of textures, sizes, weights and colours)
- Food and water dishes (some cats have a material preference, so you may need to switch this up)
- Pheromone spray or diffuser
- An enclosed space (box, bed, or kennel) for your cat to curl up and hid in
- A high perch to lord over you all (a sturdy cat tree will work well)

### A NOTE ON PHEROMONES

Products like Feliway or Feliway MultiCat mimic the natural Facial pheromones ('happy markers') cats leave behind when they rub their faces on items in the home. It acts as a sign they feel safe and comfortable in their environment. They can help ease transitions and introductions to new homes and resident pets. We strongly suggest using this to help with the adjustment period.

## First Impressions

Introducing cats to each other is a multi-step process. The length of time it will take varies from cat to cat. The main thing is patience. Allowing cats to meet at their own pace will help to ensure a happy household.

Set up a small room like a bathroom or laundry room for the new cat to spend the first few days in. Set up the litter box and bed along with food and water dishes.

## The First Day Home

Once the big day has arrived, prepare the kennel by placing a few towels or a small blanket that has been sprayed with Feliway inside. This will help them feel safe from the start. On the ride home, try to keep the volume in the car to a minimum. Some soothing classical music can also help. Once you arrive back home, place the cat directly into the room you have set up for them, and let them explore at their own pace.

## Getting Acquainted

At feeding time, set your resident cat's bowl near the door of the new cat's room, and do the same with their bowl. This allows them to smell and hear each other safely. Do this for a few days. If there are no signs of aggression, move the bowls continually closer, until each is against the door. If either cat shows unease, move them farther away for a few days and try again.

During this time, it's a good idea to 'swap scent'. Place some items like a blanket or towel from the new cat, and place it near the resident cat's favourite spot. Remove it if there is any aggression or spitting. Do the same with the resident cat's bedding, giving it to the new cat to smell. You can also swap food bowls during this time.

If this goes well, it's time to move on to visual contact. If you can separate them with a screen, or baby gate. If this isn't possible, just open the door to the new cat's room very slightly, so they can see each other. Give lots of treats and positive reinforcement to each cat. Make this a positive experience. When they are comfortable with each other they will sniff noses or rub against the door. When this happens, it's time for a proper introduction.

Open the door and let the new cat explore! If the cats show aggression or fight, interrupt them by clapping your hands, or with another loud noise that doesn't scare them. Let them adjust at their own pace. They may simply ignore one another. This is ok! They may just need some time to become friends.



Adopting an adult cat can be a very rewarding experience. We are so pleased to be a part of your new cat's health care team. We look forward to helping you keep your new pet in the best health. Feel Free to contact us with any questions that might arise over the adjustment period.