

Adopting a cat is an exciting experience, but for your new pet it can be a time of uncertainty! Follow these steps to help your new feline friend feel more comfortable in their new home.

1 setting up a safe room

Set up a "safe room" for your cat. New spaces can be overwhelming, and when cats feel overwhelmed, they hide! It is important that you know where your new kitty is hanging out so that you know they are safe, eating, drinking and using the litter box. If your cat is hiding in a mysterious location it will be difficult to build a relationship with them or check on their well being. Set up one room for your new cat with their food, water, litter box, toys and comfy hang out spots for them to hang out while they adjust to their new surroundings. Scope the area out beforehand- are there any potential hiding spaces that are unsafe (behind a refrigerator, fireplaces, etc)? Are there any hiding spaces where you could not reach your cat if you needed to? When you bring your new cat home, allow them to leave the carrier on their own time. If you have other pets in the home that your new kitty will need to be introduced to, do not start this process on the first day. Wait until your new cat is feeling comfortable and confident in their safe room. If you do not have any other pets, allow your new cat to leave their safe room at their own pace. If they express interest in leaving the room, allow them to do so, but **never** force them.

2 manage expectations

Managing your expectations can be the hardest part. Your new cat is home, and you want to love on them! It is important to understand that all cats adjust to new homes at different paces, and there is no right or wrong timeline. It is perfectly normal for your new cat to hide, hiss, not be interested in playing, have a lack of appetite, or be fearful of new sights, smells, sounds, or even you! It can take months for your new friend to fully integrate into your home, and there is no need to rush. You have a lifetime together ahead of you!



3 take it slow

Your new cat may or may not be excited at first about you or their new home. This is only because they do not know you yet! Building a positive relationship with your new cat relies on going at their pace. Do you have a feisty, happy, energetic kitten on your hands? Wonderful! Get down to playing. If your cat is more apprehensive, take it slow. If they are hissing, offer them some treats. Talk softly, move slowly and take your time. If you are introducing your new cat to your resident pets it is very important to take it slowly. It is easier to build a relationship between your pets slowly than to take it too fast and have to go backwards and mend a damaged relationship. Your adoption counselor can give you a detailed handout on animal introductions. Do not rush this process!

4 expanding horizons

As your new cat gets used to you and their new environment, they will explore your home at their own pace. Before letting your new cat out of their safe room, walk around your home and ensure your home is "cat-proofed" and everything is safe for your new cat to explore. Make sure windows are closed and screens are installed securely and cleaning chemicals are safely put away. While your new cat explores it is normal for kitty to get spooked and want to return to their safe room. Allow them to do so. Relationships between cats and resident animals are slow to develop, so be patient and do not panic if your new kitty or resident pets are upset by each other's presence. Do not force your pets to interact and allow them to get to know each other at their own pace, and try to end interactions between your pets on a good note.