



# Pet Introductions

Most cats will like or tolerate other animal siblings. Your adoption counselor will talk with you to make sure that there is the best possibility that your new addition is pet friendly. While each animal is different and we cannot always guarantee success, following this method of introducing your pets will give you the best chance for a happy transition into home life together.

You should **NEVER** put a cat in a carrier in a room and let the resident pet sniff around it or put two animals in a room to “figure out who is dominant”. This is inhumane and creates a situation that will make it harder for the new cat to trust the current household members.

## Step One: Separate Spaces

The first step is to provide a safe room for your new cat. See our Success at Home flyer for tips on a safe room. This will be home base while your kitty adjusts to its new home. While your cat is in this room, allow your current residents to roam the house.

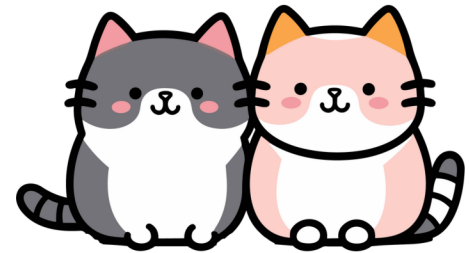
## Step Two: Food Time & Scent Swaps

Once your new kitty seems comfortable in their room, begin feeding or giving treats to both cats at the same time on opposite sides of the door. This way both kitties will associate something positive with being close together. Help them get to know each other by swapping scents before they meet. Take a blanket or bed that belongs to each cat and let the other sniff and explore it. If you don't have an existing scent soaker, you can use a sock or piece of clothing. Wipe it along each cat's cheeks and body and then give it to the others to check out.

## Step Three: The Slow Introduction

Once your kitties have had time to get to know the other's scent and are successfully eating or playing under the door (without growling or hissing), you can let them start to get a visual on one another. If you have access to a gate, you can place a gate in the doorway and allow the cats to see each other without having direct access to one another. You can continue to feed them on opposite sides of the gate and allow them to sniff and play with each other. If you don't have a gate, you can do short, supervised meetings with them. It's best to distract the two cats with treats or toys and let them discover each other during an enjoyable activity. A hiss, growl, or swat is normal but if there are other signs of aggression, redirect the cats and go back to separate rooms for a bit longer before trying again.

## Introducing Cats



Cats are solitary hunters and territorial animals, so you will need to make sure they have their own spaces in the house and their own areas for eating and eliminating. They should always have enough space to have some alone time.



## Introducing Cats and Dogs

The most important thing to remember is that dogs and cats are different species and do not share the same set of body language or social structures. Your cat will never be a pack hunter and your dog will never be confident in solitary situations. Even with their differences, they can still be friends.

### Step One: Separate Spaces & Sniffs

The first step will be to provide a safe room for your new cat. See our Success at Home flyer for tips on a safe room. This will be home base while your kitty adjusts! While kitty is in this room, you can take a blanket or bed from each of the pets and swap them for the others to sniff. This allows them to get to know each other without coming face-to-face. If you do not have a blanket, you can wipe a sock or other piece of clothing along the face and sides of each pet and put it in the other pet's area. Getting to know scent before meeting is how they'll begin to trust each other. Once your new cat seems at home in their room begin feeding or giving treats to each of the pets at the same time on opposite sides of the door. This way both pets associate something positive while being close together.

### Step Two: Training Your Dog

While your new cat is getting settled in its safe room, it's smart to practice training with your dog so that it can reliably sit or stay when asked, even if the cat dashes across the room. It's important to know that many dogs have been bred to hunt and chase small animals, such as terriers, hounds, huskies, herding, and working dogs. You must be sure there are several dog-proof escape routes for your cat with an "in" and "out" entry point or a high place that dogs can't reach. **NOTE: Certain dogs with high prey drives may never be able to live with cats.**

### Step Three: Initial Meetings

Once your new cat seems comfortable in their safe room and there is no growling or hissing when they approach under the door, you can start short, controlled open room meetings. Keep the dog on a leash and use the largest room in your house. Have the dog already in the room when the cat enters. Do not put the cat directly in front of the dog, let the cat approach as far away as they want and at their own pace—don't force the issue. Distract the dog by talking to them and have plenty of treats on hand for both pets to positively reinforce their behavior. After a short meeting, let the cat return to its home base. If either pet begins to act aggressively, end the meeting.

### Step Four: Free Roam Access

Once these sessions go well with no signs of aggression, go slowly and let your cat free from the safe room leaving their food and litterbox there for them to retreat to. Spread the cat's blankets or beds around the house to expand their territory. Until you are certain the two can interact safely, supervise all time together. If at any time you feel you may be moving too fast you can separate their areas and start controlled interactions again.