

Introducing your new cat...

To other humans or pets!

Are you introducing your cat to other family members? Read on to find out the best approach for your situation to ensure it is a smooth introduction!

Children

Most children will tell you that when they grew up with an animal it brought so much joy and love to their life. It can even teach responsibility, life skills, and how to respect animals.

Introducing a cat to a child must always be a supervised activity to start with so you can teach them how to appropriately behave and handle their new family member safely and respectfully.

To introduce your child to a cat:

- Have them sit down patiently in a quiet room on the floor.
- Bring your cat over to them and gently place the cat on to their lap (if your cat is willing to stay) or on your own lap.
- Have your child gently stroke them while you are holding the cat to reassure them it is a safe space.
- After doing this in a few short sessions you can show your child how to hold a cat/pick up a cat. The best way to do this is to place one hand under the rump of the cat and the other arm under the cat's front shoulders so it can feel secure.
- Remind your child to always be quiet when handling a cat as they have very good hearing, and any loud noises or voices/screams can frighten their cat.



Anyone handling a cat should know the signs a cat might show when they are frightened!

Make yourself familiar with the below list of signs to avoid being bitten or scratched by a cat:

- Hissing/spitting
- Ears pinned back against their head
- Cowering
- Fur raised
- Growling
- Scrambling to get away

Providing a safe place for your new cat to retreat to if they become overwhelmed can help!

Being aware of the signs will help your cat and your other family member develop a trusting relationship.

Other Pets

At Ninth Life Foundation we will always discuss with you if your chosen cat is suitable to go to a home with other pets.

Introducing a cat to another animal in the house is a slow process and we will always help you along the way.

To introduce your cat to another pet:

- First and foremost- **TAKE IT SLOW!** This will not be a quick process and the slower you take it, the more chance there is that they will form a successful bond.
- While they are confined to their starting room, introduce the smell of your new pet to your existing pets. This could be something as small as putting a blanket or toy from your new cat into the area of your existing pet. Don't wash your hands between touching them so they can smell both of you during interactions.
- Next, if you have a gap under the door of the room let them smell each other through it. They may even start to hear each other e.g. a meow or bark which is good so they can get used to each other's sounds.
- Don't forget to spend time with your existing pet so that they know they are still special. Lots of reassuring pats, games and treats to both pets goes a long way.
- Once your new cat is showing signs of relaxation you can take them out of the room to a new safe space and let the original pet come in to sniff around your new cat's scents. Repeat a few times.
- If there are no signs of aggression or anxiety, you can proceed to visual contact!
- Visual contact is always best to be done in a way they can still be separated. You can place your new cat into the carry cage and allow the other pet to come up to sniff the door. Alternatively, you can use a screen door or baby/pet gate to separate them if they are tall enough to prevent jumping.
- After brief contact you can try it again another time and then slowly remove the barriers so they can gradually assimilate.
- Ensure that during this time you use food and enrichment techniques. Along with their feeding bowls, bring your cats into the room with something that they love such as their favourite toy or any other activity they enjoy. This keeps them distracted enough to avoid a stare-down between them.
- Do this until both cats have tired themselves out or are bored of their activity and separate them again (even if that interaction lasts up to 2-5 minutes). Now repeat these steps



the next day. Ensure that your cats leave every introduction with a positive association.

- But make sure you allow plenty of escape options and hidey spots so that either cat can take some time out if needed.
- Most cats prefer their own litter tray so allow one for each cat, as well as separate food and water bowls.
- Watch for signs of stress - eating food quickly then vomiting, excessive grooming, sleeping and/or drinking are signs that your cat isn't happy. Spraying, toileting outside the litter tray and hiding are also associated with anxiety and stress. If either cat is excessively stressed, comfort them and go back to separating them, taking things slowly.
- It can take some time for cats to become friends with other pets, but slow and gradual introductions can help avoid chaos while they get used to each other. Give them all the time they need and be patient with your felines.



Always supervise these visits for a few months after introduction...

Don't expect your pets to get on well together right away; some pets need time to adjust!

If you need any advice during your introductions - feel free to contact us at Ninth Life as we are more than happy to provide guidance and help!

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