

Introducing a New Cat to your resident cat.

Some cats are very social and enjoy living with other cats, while others prefer to be solitary. If you are integrating a new cat to other cats in your home please understand that it will take time, so please be patient as it may take anywhere from 5 days to 6 weeks.

And it take anywhere from 8 to 12 months for cats to develop a friendship.

This varies from cat to cat as some cats are very social and other prefer to fly solo!

Some cats never truly become friends, however they learn how to live in peace under the same room, by simply ignoring each other.

Most of the time you will find that the sweet resident cat you had for so many years will become somewhat aggressive and he/she will hiss and puff and pout at everyone in the household, 2 legged and 4 legged due to the arrival of the new kitty.

Even though you may be not so happy about this, this is normal behavior and it will pass with time.

They are many things on the market these days that will help in making the transition easier for everyone in the family including the 4 legged ones. I will talk about this further towards the end of this article.

There isn't really a rule of thumb for best matching cat personalities as all are different, nor there is such a thing a male or female will do better or a kitten, the resident cat will be mad at you and everyone else because there is a new pet in the house.

As I said all cats are different, so the above may not always happen.

For example my cats Zachary, can care less who comes in the house and gets along with everyone.

My cat Captain Tyler, is still bossing and competing with my new arrival and they have been together for 3 years already!

Do make sure all pets in your household is spay/neutered including the newcomer as this will make a lot more submissive and a lot less territorial.

Bringing the new cat into your home.

The first impression is critical.

Letting the new cat have the run of the house from the get go, it is a huge NO NO!

It is best to put the cats in separate rooms (or put the new cat in a large cage if a spare room is not available)and to let them get aquatinted with each others smell first.

Each cat should have his or her own supplies such as, its own litter box, water bowl, food bowl, scratching post and toys.

Always place litter boxes as far away as possible from food and water bowls.

If the new cat is in a separate room, put the food and water bowls of both cats near the door that separates them, this way they will learn that coming together, even though they can't yet see each other, results in a pleasant experience.

It is helpful sometimes to just put a drop of Vick's Vaporub on top of the bed just a little tiny dab where they can lick it.

The smell of the Vaporub is so strong that both cats will smell the same!

Another thing you can do is rub the cats with the same towel to intermix their scents.

Also when you go from room to room pet the cats and do not wash your hands in between, pet one and then go pet the other and then go and pet the other again and again.

After 2 or 3 days put the new cat in a different room for about an hour or so and the resident cat in the room where the new cat was. Leave him/her there for an hour or so and then switch them back.

This will also give the new cat a chance to explore little sections of the house at a time as giving the run of the entire house all at once could be too overwhelming for him or her.

If the door that separates the room is high enough off the ground you can encourage both cats to play through the door, with a toy or a feather.

After another day or so, try opening the door an inch or so with you holding it so they will be able to see each other. Let them get acquainted now by seeing each other a little bit everyday.

If you have somebody handy in your house you can also build a door to set inside of the existing door frame so the cats will be able to see each other and play but they cannot hurt themselves.

A screen door can work as well.

In about 2 weeks you can remove either the lattice or screen and see what happens when they are face to face.

Let them do their thing, while you supervise them and keep a water gun or squirt bottle handy in case a fight breaks loose.

It might be a little hissing, this is normal as long as the hissing doesn't escalate to aggression.

If a fight breaks loose squirt them with water and separate them again.

If all goes well you can do this for little for 15 min or so everyday several times a day, until they can be together at last.

If one cat spends most of his time hiding, or if one cat is continually harassing and pursuing the other, you should seek the assistance of a certified animal behaviorist or veterinary behaviorist ..

Make sure there are plenty of hiding spots for your cats, also kitty condos, cat trees are essential as many cats prefer to be high up.

Other than that are shy/timid they prefer lower places where they can hide.

Make sure litter boxes are out in the open so the cats do not feel trapped.

The rule of thumb for litter boxes is the equal number of cats + one.

You should always have 1 litter box of each kind, for example for you have 2 cats you can have one covered litter box and 2 that are uncovered.

Cages although they may seem cruel, work best when introducing a new cat or kitten, as you can place the cage out in the open where the cats can constantly interact with each other but they cannot hurt themselves.

If you decide to use a cage to introduce your newcomer to the rest of your family, please make sure you purchase a cage that is big enough for the cat to comfortably stand and move around where you can fit a litter box and food and water.

Make sure you put a comforter or piece of cardboard on top of the cage so when the resident cat gets curious and jumps on it his/her leg will not get caught in between the bars of the cage.

Do not keep the new cat in the cage for more than 4 weeks.

To relieve stress on both cats we at HPR suggest the use of Rescue Remedy, which is an all natural anxiety medication for humans.

Rescue Remedy can be given as often as need it and it has no side effects whatsoever, Feliway sprays and plug ins are also very helpful.

If you have any further questions that had not been covered above, please feel free to e-mail us @: HPRESQ@aol.com

**Celene Albano
HPR Rescue CEO**

**Website: www.hurricanepetsrescue.org
ADOPTIONS: www.hurricanepets.petfinder.com
Telephone: 786-999-8239**