

Introducing a New Cat into your Home

Before making the decision to add a new cat to your household, please consider the following:

- Can you afford it?
- Who will care of it on a daily basis?
- Does your home have room?
- Will it fit in with your other pets?
- Does its personality fit your lifestyle?
- How will you deal with behavioral issues?
- What kind of grooming does it require?
- What happens when you go on vacation?

Cats thrive on comfort, security and familiarity!



Once you've carefully considered all the above factors and are ready to add a new feline family member, the following sections will help ensure a smooth transition and integration with other family members and pets.

It's extremely important to be prepared ahead of time!

When introduced to a new environment, it is important to let your cat explore every nook and cranny gradually. This provides them with valuable information about their surroundings and helps them feel more secure.

People and Children

- Your new cat will easily be overwhelmed with new people. Their first few days should be spent with their primary caregiver only. Avoid overwhelming your cat. Once they warm up to you, you can slowly introduce others.
- Do not force interactions! Even the friendliest cat will defend itself if threatened. Avoid cornering them and provide plenty of perches and hiding spots.
- Children should be taught how to handle a cat before attempting to interact. Practice with stuffed animals. Instruct them to move slowly and monitor them closely.

Cats

- Avoid any interactions with other animals for at least a week. In most cases you will want to wait even longer. Ensure that your new cat is comfortable and settled in and has been cleared by the shelter or your vet.
- Start the introduction process by swapping blankets or toys so each cat can acclimate to the other's scent.
- Next, set up a baby gate, so they can safely observe each other without overwhelming each other. Try feeding and giving treats near the gate, so they can associate their new feline companion with their favorite things.
- Finally, remove the gate and let both explore freely. Continue to feed from separate bowls and provide separate litter boxes and bedding so they continue to have their own "territory".

Dogs

- Follow the steps listed above for introducing cats. Anytime your dog will be around the new cat, keep him on leash and be sure the cat has an escape route.
- Teach your dog commands such as "stay" "leave it" and "place" so that your dog is under control and the cat can feel more comfortable. If your dog understands impulse control, they are less likely to chase the new cat.

General Tips:

Prepare a safe & cat-proof room

Give the kitty a place to hide

Have food, water and litter in the safe room

Help your new cat get to know you

Give your new cat a new post

Give s/he cat toys for entertainment

Spend time with your new cat

Transition beyond the safe room

Get ready to explore the rest!



Basic Needs

Access to fresh food and water

- 🐾 Monitor appetite closely as your cat adjusts to his/her new home. Avoid abrupt changes in diet, but be prepared to offer a variety of foods if your cat is not eating.
- 🐾 Cats can be picky and require clean, fresh water. Change your cat's water frequently and consider investing in a pet fountain.

Litter

- 🐾 Cats will naturally use a litter box and do not require training (in most cases), so litter issues should be addressed immediately.
- 🐾 Ensure you have enough litter boxes. Your new cat should have one to itself. Clean litter boxes frequently (daily scooping + weekly changes).
- 🐾 Avoid heavily scented litter. Pine litter is used by the shelter, so some cats may have been acclimated to pine before entering your home.

Scratching

- 🐾 Provide plenty of scratching surfaces for your cat. They should have a variety of materials and heights. When selecting scratching posts, remember that cats need to be able to use their full body to stretch and scratch, so make sure they are tall enough!
- 🐾 If your cat is scratching furniture, re-evaluate the scratching surfaces available to them. Double-sided tape is a good deterrent if they insist on scratching. **DO NOT** use a spray bottle. If all else fails, separate the cat from the furniture for at least 2 weeks to attempt to break the habit.

Hiding / Climbing

- 🐾 Providing adequate spaces for your cat to hide and perch is **ESSENTIAL** to their acclimation into your home. If your cat hides for the first few days or even weeks, leave them be!

Play

- 🐾 Cats need to be involved in active play that works all of their senses. Leaving toys on the floor just won't cut it! Teaser wands, puzzle toys, treat dispensers, catnip toys, and fetch are some examples of activities you can do with your cat.

To learn more about volunteering, donating or adopting, visit our website at petallianceorlando.org

