



Introducing Kittens to Other Pets

Congratulations on adopting a new cat or kitten! If you have other pets in the home, following a slow introduction process will increase the chances of everyone getting along and feeling comfortable in the home. We recommend the following steps to help properly introduce your new cat or kitten to the home:

Step One: Set up the new pet in their own space

After bringing home your new kitten, set up a space away from other pets in the home where they will spend their first two weeks. Many people choose a bedroom, bathroom, or office. Keeping the new pet separate for two weeks allows resident pets to get used to the sounds and smells of a new animal before meeting face-to-face. This also ensures that everyone is healthy before introductions, as new kittens often develop sneezes or loose stool in response to the stress of a new home.

Step Two: Scent Swapping

During your new kitten's two-week quarantine, practice scent-swapping by trading blankets or bedding between pets. You can also "trade spaces" by allowing each animal to explore each other's living spaces while putting the other away.

Step Three: Eating near the door

Start feeding the resident pets near the door separating them and the new kitten. This will allow them to develop a positive association with the new pet and will give them the opportunity to smell and see them under the door. If your pet is reluctant at first, start out further away and move closer to the door each day.



Step Four: Allow them to meet

Allow the new kitten to meet the resident pets. Keep an eye on their body language. Hissing, growling, and hiding is normal behavior and is just a cat's way of communicating. This behavior should eventually disappear. If either parties are lunging, biting, or charging, place the new kitten back in their room and look for ways to decrease stress in the environment (see page 3).

Step Five: Continue to monitor behaviors

Some cats may take several weeks or months to truly accept new change like a kitten into their lives. Continue to monitor them together and spend individual time with each animal. Make sure interactions are positive by providing rewards for desired behavior! If your cat is not accepting of a new kitten even after lots of patience and working to help them get along, please contact the rescue you adopted them from for options.

Tips for Introducing Kittens to Dogs

Introducing a kitten to a dog that has been living in the home or to a new dog that is entering the home will involve much of the process described above. Here are some extra tips to help your dog get along with a new kitten:

Tip #1: Allow the kitten a dog-free zone

Create a sanctuary for the kitten that is not accessible to the dog. This space should have everything they need including food, water, and litterbox and should be easy to access in the event that the kitten needs a quick escape or a break. Many pet owners will create a room with a cat door or an area blocked off by a baby gate.

Tip #2: Create constant positive associations with the cat for your dog

The dog should learn that a cat equals good things like treats or attention! Every time the kitten enters the room, ask the dog for a simple command such as "sit" or to make eye contact with you and offer a reward. If the dog is prone to chasing the kitten and does not have a strong recall, make sure that the dog is on leash.

Tip #3: Allow supervised visits only

Dogs don't always know what is "too rough" for a cat and prey-drive can kick on in an instant. For everyone's safety, cat-dog interactions should be supervised and they should never be left alone together. If you have concerns, please contact the rescue you adopted either pet from for resources.

Decreasing Stress in the Home - Cats and Kittens

Taking steps to decrease stress and make everyone feel more comfortable and secure will assist with tricky introductions. Here are some tips to decrease stress:

Tip #1: Calming Pheromones

There are several brands of calming pheromones for both cats and dogs. For cats, we recommend Feliway or Comfort Zone. For dogs, we recommend Adaptil. Pheromones come in sprays or wall diffusers and can help naturally decrease feelings of fear, stress, and anxiety.

Tip #2: Provide Height for Cats

Cats are a predator-prey species, meaning that they feel most secure when they have a vertical escape from any perceived threats on the ground. You can provide vertical space for cats by placing cat trees or cat shelves in the areas they spend the most time.

Tip #3: Keep Feeding Stations and Litter Boxes Separate

By nature, cats tend to eat and potty away from other cats. Feed cats in different areas (out of view) from each other and provide multiple litter box locations. Make sure you always have one more litter box than the number of cats in the home!

Tip #4: Play Therapy

Playing with your cat will reduce their stress and boredom and help create bonds between them, you, and other pets. The best type of play is interactive, meaning that instead of tossing a couple of crinkle balls on the ground, you are tossing the toys for a game of fetch, using a wand toy, etc.

Tip #4: Enrichment

Exercising the brain can decrease stress even more than exercising the body! Try feeding your cat using food puzzles, harness training them to go on short walks outside, or turning on music/TV for them throughout the day. Catnip can also be a great tool for enrichment!

