



You brought home a new cat, and you want them to feel like part of the family. However, for your cat, everything is new and different—and it can take some time to adjust.

Here are some ways to offer your cat reassurance—so there are less “new-home jitters” and more time for bonding and playing.

Getting Settled: Helping Your New Cat Adapt to Your Home

Cats want to feel settled and safe as quickly as possible.

However, cats are creatures of habit. So even though they’ll soon be grateful for their “forever home,” it can take time to adjust to such a big life change.

They’ll come around and want to be your best friend soon. In the meantime, these tips can help your new cat feel comfortable faster...

Privacy, Please

Giving your kitty their own space will do wonders to help them settle in more quickly. Try these strategies for a successful adjustment...



- Create a private place for your cat to stay, such as a small room where other pets and children aren’t allowed (at least not yet, although they might be allowed in later). This should be somewhere you don’t mind your new cat hanging out long-term, since many cats will be attached to the room they adapted to first.

- Keep all supplies easily accessible. Your kitty should have food, water, a litter box, a scratching post, and somewhere to sleep in their room or private space.

- Give your kitty a place to hide. In addition to their other supplies, cats appreciate a place where they can hide while observing everything going on around them. This could be under a bed, or up high on a cat tower.

More than likely, your cat will explore at night, when everyone’s asleep and the home is quiet. Then, once they’re feeling more secure, they’ll start to venture out from their hiding place during the daytime.

Be Patient

An average cat will take about 1-2 weeks to start acting more comfortable in a new home. Some cats adjust more quickly, while others can take several weeks or longer.

Even if they were outgoing before you adopted them, don’t be surprised if they suddenly become shy once you bring them home.

As long as your kitty is otherwise doing well (eating, drinking, using their litterbox, and not showing symptoms of illness), it’s okay to give them some time. This is their forever home—so there’s no rush.



Follow these principles for taking things slow...

- Start with just one room (as described above), then gradually allow your cat to explore more and more of the home.
 - Don't force them to explore or go outside their comfort zone before they're ready—although it is okay to encourage them out of their room with treats and toys.
 - In the beginning, keep other pets confined when your new cat explores more of the home. Your new kitty might feel nervous if another pet is "observing" them as they explore.
- Introduce household members slowly and with supervision.
 - For other pets, start by letting them sniff each other on opposite sides of a door or baby gate.
 - For children, have them sit down and calmly call the cat over to them—don't allow children to chase the cat.



Learn Some Cat Body Language

If you're new to cats, it's helpful to learn their "signals."

Even if you've had dogs before, cats are a little different. A few common examples include...

- A swishing tail means irritation—so if your cat's tail is swishing back and forth, it's not a good time to try to pet them.
- Ears forward is usually friendly, while ears flattened against the head can be a sign of stress or fear.
- Tail up in a relaxed cat is a friendly greeting, while a tail lowered or tucked between the legs may indicate fear.
- A slow blink of the eyes is a show of affection.



Tuning in to your cat's cues will help you know what your pet is feeling and what they need, and aid the two of you in communicating and bonding. You can also accurately monitor how cat-to-cat interactions are progressing.

Think About Sounds and Smells

In addition to what they see, cats notice sounds and smells—so, thinking about these factors will help you support your cat.

For example, if you place your cat's food or litter box near a noisy washer and dryer, they may be reluctant to go near their supplies. When in doubt, quiet is better.

You can also strategically use scents to help your new cat adapt. Look for pheromone products, which are scent signals that tell a cat they're in a safe place. These products often come in spray, diffuser, and wipe formulations.

Respect Your Cat's Individual Personality

Some cats want to hang around their humans all day long—like a shadow always by your side. Other cats prefer to spend hours alone, but still need some attention from you each day.

Some cats love being picked up and carried, while others don't like being picked up.

The point is, cat personalities and preferences are highly variable. So, if your previous cat or friend's pet was a lap cat, you can't assume your new kitty will be the same.

The best thing to do is observe and allow your kitty's personality blossom naturally.

Respecting their preferences for interactions will help you develop a rapport more quickly.

As you give your new cat space to explore and help them feel comfortable, they will truly be themselves and their personality will start to shine.

Within a few weeks after adoption, your cat will really open up to you—and that's the beginning of a beautiful friendship!

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