

# TIPS ON INTRODUCING YOUR CAT TO THEIR NEW HOME



There are a number of things you can do to make your timid cat feel more secure.

- When first introducing a new cat to your home, keep them in one room to start with. This will help the cat to relax and feel safe while bonding with its new family before being given full access to the whole house.
  - Provide plenty of refuges. Cats de-stress quicker if they can hide, preferably in high and dark locations behind sofas and under beds. A cardboard box on its side or blankets placed on shelves or wardrobes can help your cat feel safe.
  - Keep all your daily routines consistent where possible. This provides a predictable, reassuring environment for your cat.
  - Use synthetic scent pheromones – these can create a reassuring environment for the cat and may help to reduce stress – they are available from your vet (\*See Feliway Notes below).
  - Sit quietly in your cat's vicinity to allow them to get used to you in their own time. Ignore them while you read a book or take a nap so that they don't feel pressured or anxious about your presence. Do it while they are eating or provide a small treat so they associate your presence with something positive. The time you spend near them can very gradually be built up as they adjust.
- Let your cat make the first move – direct approaches are extremely threatening so don't force attention on your cat. Blink slowly at your cat, narrow your eyes so they are half open and then turn your face away slowly to reassure your cat that you are not a threat.

As your cat becomes braver, try:

- Talking to your cat quietly in a calming tone – it is a great way to bond.
- Rewarding your cat with a treat when they approach you – at first, give the treat as soon as your cat approaches but gradually increase the time between the approach and the treat. Over a period of weeks, work up to being able to calmly stroke your cat once or twice before giving the treat.
- Using small toys you can gently throw for them, such as ball of foil, scrunched up paper or ping pong ball. Fishing rod toys allow the cat to interact without them feeling threatened by close contact. Most importantly, never lose your temper or try to force your cat to interact too quickly as this will just reinforce their previous fears. Build on your successes gradually – eventually your cat will learn to trust you and will much happier. In some cases, you may find guidance from your vet or a suitably qualified behaviorist useful.
- Overcoming a cat's shyness through patient handling and care often leads to an extremely rewarding and close relationship between owner and cat and is well worth the extra time and effort.

*\* Feliway is an easy-to-use product that helps create a loving and comfortable home environment where your cat will spend more time with you. It is supplied as a plug-in diffuser. This special scent (odorless to people and other animals) that Feliway utilizes is a replication of the pheromone that cats leave naturally when they are feeling comfortable in their environment. Plug in a Feliway Diffuser, if possible, 48 hours before bringing your new cat home. The diffuser lasts four weeks and will help your cat adjust to its new home. For more information visit the website [www.feliway.com](http://www.feliway.com).*