

INTRODUCING A CAT INTO A NEW HOME

When introducing a cat to other members of the family it is vital to get things right from the start; not doing so could cause a range of problems such as aggression, house soiling, stress related problems such as cystitis, failure to bond with people or place, hyper-attachment or even compulsive disorders can develop.

It is not only when introducing a cat into a multi pet household; even single pet households can be a stressful experience and for a happy, stress free relationship it is important that the early stages are carried out correctly.

Moving your pet into a new home

This may sound relatively easy but this can be very stressful for your cat. They have just been taken from an environment that they are used to, where they know their territory outside the house, have a good idea of predators and know where to find their all important feed bowl; to a new environment where they aren't quite sure where home is and have no idea where to make their new territory outside the house, or sometimes even in the garden!

How your cat adapts and how quickly will depend on a number of factors, not least forgetting their personality and previous behavioural history. Your attitude towards your pet plays a massive part in making or breaking the new situation for your pet.

Keeping calm

When moving your pet into a new home it is important to be realistic in what you expect from them. Human tension can so easily be inadvertently passed onto your pet and this in itself can increase their stress levels and undermine their emotional equilibrium, affecting your relationship with them. Sometimes excitement and anxiety to cherish can do as much harm as a cavalier attitude when it comes to

integrating cats. A 'more is less' attitude should be taken when it comes to handling, and following the cat's lead is a must.



- A **Feliway diffuser or spray** releases happy pheromones and can help to reduce your cat's stress levels that can be easily disturbed.

- Try to allow your pet an area of your new home that it can call its own and where he or she shouldn't feel threatened by humans or other animals. An area away from a main walk way, allowing easy access to food and water and a litter tray.
- Allow your cat to come to you when he or she feels ready; overcrowding a pet can ruin your relationship – similarly you need to give enough attention and time to allow your pet to come to you when they are ready.
- If you are introducing a new cat to a household that already has a pet ensure that they have separate areas away from each other, each having access to their own food and water bowls, litter trays and sleeping areas. Cats can feel very threatened when sharing supplies and this in itself can cause them massive stress.
- When introducing the cats to each other it is important not to force the relationship; indeed, even without doing so your cats may never bond to each other. Again, allow them their own space but also allow opportunity for them to 'bump' into each other at intervals. Only by biting the bullet will you find out if they will ever be friends!
- Ensure he or she is able to hide away from noises and interrogation.
- We recommend keeping your pet in for at least three weeks following a move; this allows

them to pick up the feel and scent of home well, should they become disorientated on their travels. It is always a good idea to **microchip** your pet – should they



go missing and find their way to a vets or shelter they will be scanned for identification.

- An enclosed garden will allow you to let your pet out for periods of time and adjust to their new territory. 'Cat proofing' your garden is a great idea if you don't want them to wander too far!
- We also recommend flea treating your pet and your new home – even if the previous owner did not have pets flea eggs can lie dormant in carpets!

Lastly, there is no definitive right answer; every cat is different. You as an owner will know how to balance your relationship carefully with your pet and it is vital that you are able to tune into their behaviour. Do not be tempted to overcrowd them and do not punish them if they do have soiling accidents or behaviour issues; this will only heighten their emotional state even further when it is already upset; the wrong move at the wrong time could cause a permanent rift between cat and owner.

GOOD LUCK!



Dear

We have moved! Our new Address is:
123 Happycat Street
Pusshampton
Felineham
LO43 CAT
We are settling in very well and look forward to our next new arrival!