



Introducing Your Feline to a Feline

The purrs and hisses of a successful introduction

Normal Feline Communication and Behavior:

Hissing, growling, staring, swishing tail and ears down.

Redirection is your friend. If you see tension building, redirect your cat with treats/toys. If you are able to break up the tension, the cats will have less animosity towards one another. Never physically break up a cat fight; use a chair, broom, etc. to gently block them from each other.

Quick Tips - Take it one *sense* at a time - Provide a stress free environment - Allow normal feline communication and behavior - Redirection is your friend

The Introduction: Cats are not similar to dogs in the way that they can make a friend in two seconds. It usually takes time and a lot of patience.

Step 1—SANCTUARY: Make sure your new cat has a 'sanctuary'. This is a safe place that the resident cat cannot get to. This room needs to have their litter box, food, bed and toys, as it will be housing them for anywhere from a few days to a few weeks. Have "hiding spots" in this room for your new cat. Boxes make great hidey holes for cats that are feeling a little shy and intimidated for the first few days. Both cats will be curious—sniffing under the door. See "Normal Feline Communication and Behavior" information above and what to do if it escalates.

Step 2—ONE SENSE AT A TIME: After your new cat starts feeling comfortable in their environment, you can start feeding special treats/meals to each cat on either side of the door. See how close you can get the bowl to the door, but don't push it. Over the next few days, you'll gradually decrease the distance between the two cats and the door. The intent is to get each cat eating on either side of the door without any problems. You can also Room Swap; switch one cat out with the other. Allow your resident cat to explore the new cat's sanctuary, and the new cat to explore your house. This gives them an opportunity to smell the other cat's food area and litter box. Only do this for an hour at a time maximum and at most twice a day. We also suggest rubbing each cat down with a cloth, and placing the cloth under the other cat's food dish. This helps them associate the other cats scent with a good thing— food.

Step 3—INTERACTION: Once both cats are comfortable, and are not exhibiting stress/fear signals you can open the door to the sanctuary and allow them visuals. It's always a good idea to go slow; open the door a crack, then a little more, then a little more still. If you see tensions mounting be sure to *redirect* with toys or treats. If this doesn't help, do not continue and try again tomorrow. If everyone remains calm, allow your new cat to explore the household while keeping a close eye on each feline to ensure safety.

Step 4—HAPPY HOME: Now that both cats get along they should be able to be out and about together happily! It is suggested that you do not leave them out alone together when you are not at home for the

first week or two. If something happens, you want to be present! Don't get rid of the sanctuary right away! Allow your new cat time to become comfortable and slowly start removing items from the room.

If after trying these suggestions you are still experiencing undesirable behaviors in your cat, SUBMIT QUESTIONS by clicking the link under Ask A Trainer on the Behavior and Training page of the Wayside Waifs website: www.waysidewaifs.org.

Written by the Wayside Waifs Animal Behavior Team

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