



Bringing Your New Cat Home

When you bring a new cat into your home, remember: this is a period of adjustment for them. Even though they are now in a loving home, it may take them a little while to realize this!

How would you feel if you were brought into an unfamiliar place from a stressful situation? Probably confused and scared! By giving your new cat time to decompress for a couple of weeks, it will help the cat become well-adjusted and happy. This will also help your cat to bond to you at a pace that works for them. Below are ways to create a happy cat and owner:

- **Don't expect your cat to have a hearty appetite right away-** New foods and stress can equal a lack of appetite. Leave small amounts out and add a small amount of something that is a special treat to motivate feeding and begin building a positive association with you. Leave the room if needed. (Eventually, you can start being in the room and building the association of: human=delicious food!) Have plenty of water accessible too. If the cat has not eaten or drank anything in 24 hours or seems lethargic or sick, please call your veterinarian or the shelter where you adopted your pet from.
- **Don't give the cat too much space, too soon-** Start small, so you do not overwhelm the cat. One quiet room that has food, a litter box, scratching pads, toys and some "safe" places. This can include- large paper bags, boxes or blankets. Using a Feliway spray or plug in can also help reduce stress. These products can be found online or at local pet stores. As your cat becomes more comfortable, you can begin letting them explore more of your home.
- **Let the cat come to you-** Using calming body language and allowing the cat to approach you (instead of you approaching the cat) will help tremendously. Think of it as the "getting to know you phase". If you force the cat to interact with you, it can cause more harm than good. Calming signals include- blinking, sitting facing the side, extending hand (to let cat sniff you), speaking softly and tossing a few treats gently nearby. As your cat improves, you
- **Play together, stay together-** Introducing play can also help with bonding. Some ideas: Blowing bubbles, feather toys, crinkle balls, etc...
- **Wait to introduce other pets** – Both animals need time to figure out that they will be sharing a space together. Letting them adjust during this time can make for a much easier introduction!

The Humane Society of the United States and the ASPCA have a great online library of information on cat care, behaviors, and issues:

<http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/cats/tips/#.UpeVYeLAW5o>

<http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/cat-care>

If you have further questions, please contact our behavior department:

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