

Bringing up Furry Baby: Best Ways to Welcome a New Cat

Surprisingly, [cats are popular choices for pets](#), even more so than dogs, probably because of their independent, low-maintenance nature. However, for the uninitiated, cat care isn't exactly easy-peasy as cats have special needs, thanks to their [quirky personality](#). Whether you're a first-time pet owner or a longtime pet parent bringing a kitty home for the first time, here are tips to make the transition much smoother for you and your feline friend.

Location, location, location!

Cats are particularly territorial creatures that crave stability and familiarity. Unknown surroundings are unsettling to them, so it's important to give them space and time to adjust to their new environment. This is where you get to play kitty real estate/home improvement expert!

Place essentials such as litter box, scratching post, adequate fresh water and [quality food](#), eating and drinking bowls, and toys in a private, quiet room specifically assigned to your cat. Rooms with doors and tunnels are good places for cats to feel safe. You can use cat beds or cat carriers as their cozy cubbyholes.

Cats love to get high (other than their love of catnip!), so get a cat tree for their perching, observation, and resting station. It's also a great escape route should they need to get away for safety.

For maximum feline enjoyment, [catification](#) is the way to go. Who says that interior designing is only for humans?

Avoid CATastrophes

Ensure that your home is [cat-proofed](#). Cats are too curious for their own good. They get into places and situations that can either hurt or kill them. Keep electrical cords, blind cords, harmful chemicals or substances, poisonous plants, and fragile items out of their reach. Keep small, tight, or cramped spaces shut. Be sure your cat doesn't get trapped there.

For the safety and well-being of your cat, [keep him or her indoors](#) to prevent exposure to diseases, attacks by other animals and humans, and motor vehicle accidents.

Schedule a vet check-up the same week you pick up your cat to make sure that he or she is in the clear.

Don't stand so close to me!

Cats are protective of their personal space. Don't make direct physical contact with them at first. Let them sniff your finger or paw at the feather wand or whatever cat toy you have on hand. Look away

when you come close to them. When they see you, slowly blink at them. [Blinking is the universal feline gesture](#). When the cat slowly blinks back at you, it's a sign that you've won him or her over.

Leave cats alone when they eat and when they do their business.

Chill out, cool cat!

Other than catnip, try [Feliway](#) spray or diffuser or [Rescue Remedy](#) by adding it to their food or water or rubbing it on their paws or ears to calm them down.

Slow and steady wins the race

Cats are private, reserved, and picky by nature. Too many sudden new changes and new stimuli overwhelm or even threaten them. Introduce them to other people and other pets gradually. It takes a while for them to warm up. Meet them on their terms. Wait until they're fully comfortable and confident. Don't force a cat to come out of hiding until he or she is ready. Let the cat investigate and approach first. The more you ignore cats, the faster they come to you as they feel more relaxed around you. Don't leave young children and other pets, especially dogs, unattended while being introduced to cats.

Get your cat accustomed to your smell and sight by staying in the same room with him or her for a period of time. [Engage in low-key activities](#). Watch TV, read, write, talk to your cat, or groom your cat, then leave after you're done. Come back again after a while. Continue this pattern or routine until your cat appears to settle into his or her new living arrangement.

When it comes to feeding, let your cat eat little by little if he or she doesn't eat much. This is normal behavior, although it's advised to call your vet if your cat ends up not eating for days.

If you're wondering why your cat acts a certain way, my colleague Maureen McCarthy of Love and Kisses Pet Sitting has [tips on recognizing cat behavior](#).

With time, patience, and extra TLC, [your cat may just stick around with you for the long haul](#). Here's to a wonderful start of a relationship that will hopefully last a lifetime—if not for nine lives!

Do you need a helping hand for taking care of those extra sets of paws? [Kelly's Pet Sitting](#) loves and understands cats. Please get in touch with us at 541-601-7461 or kellyspetsit@yahoo.com. Your little Fluffy will thank you for it!

References and further reading

["Bringing Home A New Cat." Petfinder.](#)

[Hotchner, Tracie. *The Cat Bible: Everything Your Cat Expects You to Know*. New York: Gotham Books,](#)

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"Tips for Bringing Home a New Cat." Cat Behavior Associates.

"Tips for the First 30 Days of Cat Adoption." Petfinder.