



# Your Adopted Cat

If you've been lucky enough to have been owned by a cat in your life, then you probably know what to do when you bring your new "rescue" home. It's sensible stuff, really. Best not to overwhelm your new pet, so start her off in a small room (a bathroom is fine) where you can place her food and water dishes and a litter box, as well as a comfy bed for her. (Put as much space as possible between her food and water dishes and her litter box. Also, many cats prefer not to have their food and water dishes too close to each other.) A small toy or two, such as a catnip mouse or ball can be left with her. She may want to hide at first, so if you have a cat carrier you can leave open, with bedding inside, or even a box with a hole cut into it, she'll appreciate that. A dim night light would probably also be welcome, though not necessary if there's a window for natural light.



Leave your new pet alone for a bit, so she can explore her new space, then visit her to bring food at what will become her regular mealtime. If she wants to be petted, now's the time to begin bonding; stroking her or using a soft brush will be enjoyable. And she needs to begin to know your voice, so talk to her. Use her name — either the foster name she was given or, if you want to change that, her new name. Allow other family members to also visit her and begin to bond, with children, of course, being supervised closely until they learn how to be gentle with their new pet.

Take your time if your new pet seems nervous or standoffish. Cats, as a rule, are more easily stressed and slower to bond with their owners than dogs. But they do bond with their people, and many are extremely affectionate. Virtually all cats will be companionable and will wish to be near you, though some will never be "lap cats" or demanding of attention.

When you've given your new pet a few days to adjust to being in a new space, pick a day when the house is quiet and allow her out of the small room to explore her new home. Make sure you've cat-proofed your home so that no hazards (poisonous plants, small objects that can be swallowed, cleaners and other chemicals, etc.) threaten her health or safety. Also be sure that doors and windows are secured; a cat unfamiliar with her surroundings, if she gets outside, can disappear in a flash, never to be seen again, so keep her safely inside. If, in her safe home, she seems curious rather than nervous, and shows no signs of discomfort, you may never need to confine her to the smaller room after this first day. But if she does seem overwhelmed or anxious, return her to her room and try again the next day. Eventually, your new pet will be comfortable in the entire house.



Cat's Motto:  
No matter what  
you've done wrong,  
always try to make  
it look like the dog  
did it. --Unknown

Do be sure you don't move her litter box; cats are neat creatures and wish to be clean, so as long as you provide her a clean litter box kept in the same location, you're unlikely to have accidents in other parts of the house. (Do be aware that a cat who suddenly begins to soil her home outside the litter box may have a medical problem such as a urinary tract infection, and should see her vet as soon as possible.) Also keep her food and water dishes in the same general area rather than moving them about the house. If you have several cats, or merely want your single cat to enjoy the freshest water possible, you might want to invest in one of several available models of water "fountains" designed for pets; these have filters to keep the circulating water clean, plus reservoirs to hold extra water.

### Introducing Other Pets

If you already enjoy the companionship of a cat or three, and are adding to your feline household, you probably know how to introduce your new cat. Follow the advice above, confining the new cat to one room, which allows the resident cats to sniff under the door and begin to get accustomed to this new cat. After a few days, allow the new cat to explore her home while the resident cats are confined to the same small room she's occupied until then, so that they can become even better acquainted with her scents. You may want to start slowly, allowing the new cat an hour or so to explore, then returning her to her room while the resident cats are removed from that room. You may also want to do this several times over several days.





When you are ready for your new cat to join the others, having in hand a spray bottle filled with water may come in handy if there are any serious hostilities. In most cases there will be some hissing or spitting, even some "swatting" at each other, but cats in groups quickly establish a "pecking order" and usually can live together in harmony. Do observe the interaction of the cats closely, especially in the first hours and days, and be prepared to remove the new cat back to her room if it seems to you that there is serious conflict. In most cases, even such conflict can be resolved with time and patience. (But if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact your CPC Adoption Coordinator.)

As a general rule, it's best to have one litter box per cat, plus an extra, and it's also best to locate these boxes in several different areas. If cats become territorial, one of the things they will "guard" is their litter box, so make sure none of your cats is blocked from using her box by another of your cats.

If you are introducing your new cat to a household which includes cat-friendly dogs, take special care to make the introductions slow and patient. If your dog is obedience-trained and can be counted on to remain quiet and still while the new cat explores this new home, that alone may reassure the new cat that the dog means her no harm. If necessary, don't hesitate to crate your dog while the new cat explores, just to keep things calm and reassure her. Most cats easily become tolerant of the dogs in the family and many form close friendships with dogs. These early days of introduction are critical: patience now will pay off in a quiet home with pets who are entirely comfortable with each other.



# Kittens!



A word about kittens. Kittens are highly active, highly social creatures who learn much of Proper Cat Behavior from littermates and other cats. So, if at all possible, please consider adopting two kittens rather than just one. They'll not only be company for one another when you're not home or not available to play with them, they'll also expend much of their energy playing with each other and will be calmer, better-behaved cats. And while one kitten is entertaining as she explores her world, learning to leap and pounce and stalk, two are more than double the fun! It's a special treat to adopt littermates, kittens who are able to happily spend their lives together — and with you.



There is really not a great deal of difference in the cost of caring for two cats and caring for one, and the benefits far outweigh the costs. Inviting two of these endearing creatures into your home and your life may be one of the best ideas you'll ever have!

So cute!



From Your Friends at the Community Pet Center