



## Introducing cats to cats

It's important to consider that cats have different social structures to dogs, and so introducing a friend can take time. Being patient and realistic in terms of their progress will go a long way to ensuring the best possible outcome.

1. **Resources:** Ensure that there are enough resources available for all the cats, so that they don't feel the need to compete over food, water, toys, litter trays, sleeping areas and scratching opportunities. The rule of thumb is 1 for each cat plus one. Provide water and food in completely separate locations.



2. **Confinement:** Keep the new cat in a separate room with access to food, water, toys, litter tray, scratch post and a bed. Keep the litter box and the food on opposite sides of the room – this is more sanitary and helps the kitten/cat feel at ease. Place the food near the door so that both the new and the resident cats begin to associate each other's scent with yummy food. If they aren't eating, the food may be too close together for them to relax, and it should be moved a bit further away from the door.
3. **Carriers:** Keep an open carrier (containing comfortable blankets) in each cat's space so that they begin to use it as their bed. This will get them used to being in the carrier and will help with Step 8.



4. **Feliway:** this is a synthetic version of the facial pheromones that cats deposit on surfaces to make themselves feel comfortable in their environment. Feliway can be sprayed at feeding sites and in areas that are important to the cats (e.g. scratch posts, couches, doorways) in order to create a soothing atmosphere.

Although this product is helpful, it is very expensive due to import costs so it is entirely optional.



*NOTE: Feliway has a high alcohol content, so allow 15 minutes after spraying for the alcohol to evaporate, before putting food/water down or allowing the cats access to the area*

5. **Scent swapping:** Swap items between your cats (blankets, carriers, toys, beds) over a few days. This will help them to familiarize with each other's smell, without having to actually meet.
6. **Switch:** In the morning, without allowing them to see each other, remove the new cat/kitten

from his/her room (room A) and confine to a different room (room B) to explore. Allow the resident cat/s into room A and let them explore. Switch them back after about an hour. Later, confine the resident cats in room B and open room A so that the new cat has access to the whole house (without access outdoors). Allow 30 minutes of exploration and switch back. Repeat this over a few days.



7. **Avoid antagonistic meetings:** If your cats are inadvertently allowed to meet and experience a fearful reaction, this will slow the process along, so try to remain patient and rather spend more time setting up positive associations than hoping the hostility will pass. If they do meet and give a direct stare/hiss/growl, removed them from the situation and just go back a step for a day or two. If there is an overtly aggressive incident, start again from the beginning.



8. **Introductions:** Once they are at ease in each other's living area, you can allow visual access. Place each kitty in a carrier on either side of the room at a 45° angle to each other (so they aren't forced to stare at one another!). Feed high value treats like bits of chicken or kitty tuna. Over a period of a few days, repeat this process while reading a book or watching a movie – you want to gradually increase the period of time they spend in the same vicinity so that they habituate to each other's presence.

### Close together, 10°, direct visual access



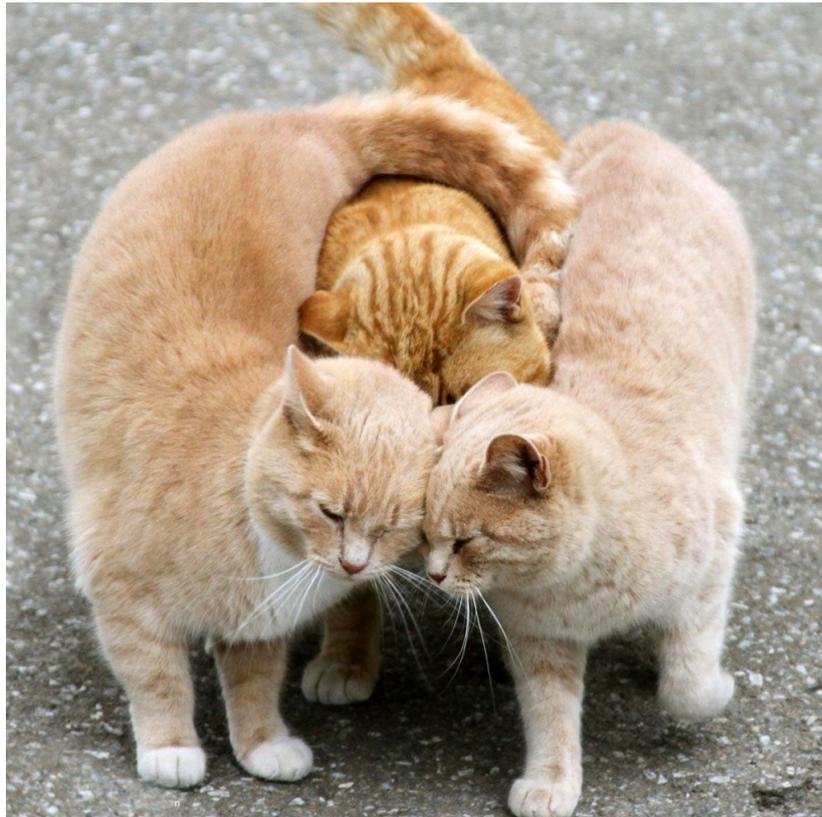
### Spaced, 45°, no visual access



9. **Bolt holes:** allow as many areas as possible for each cat to retreat and hide if they feel uncertain.
10. **Levels:** Cats are instinctively programmed to make use of height in their living space. Having multiple levels in the home will help the cats to observe each other from a distance, and provides an escape route to avoid confrontation.



11. **Meeting:** Allow the kitties to meet in an open area of the house as confined spaces/corridors can cause tension and restrict escape. If multiple cats are being introduced, restrict meetings to two cats at a time (one new, one resident) so that neither is overwhelmed. Reward all positive, calm interactions with delicious kitty treats. If there is hissing, growling, swatting: go back a step.
12. **Friends:** Cats who consider each other part of the same social group will engage in play, grooming, sleeping, and rubbing together. Because cats actively avoid confrontation, the absence of these behaviours is an indication that they aren't actually getting along; they are merely tolerating each other. If you **do not** see these behaviours on a regular basis, contact a qualified behaviourist to assist you further.



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