

SETTLING YOUR NEW CAT INTO YOUR HOME



Manage your expectations and think about your cat.

Your home is a very scary place for your new cat as its senses are overwhelmed with new smells, sounds, sights & people in a strange, new space. The cat needs to check every bit of space around it until it feels it's safe to relax.

That's why you need to put your cat in a smallish room which can be closed off. This should not be the laundry or bathroom which are too noisy/busy.

- Take things slowly - let your cat decide the pace. They might hide for days on end and they might not eat for one or two days. This is all perfectly normal

Prepare the room for your cat

You need to provide several hiding places for your cat to choose from/move between:

- Remove the door from the cat carrier or wedge it open. Put a blanket inside and drape a large towel over the top so it's cosy
- Cut a couple of large holes/archways in a cardboard box big enough for the cat to sit/lie in. Cover partially with a blanket/towel
- Your cat will need a good scratching post it can climb and stretch up on with hide-away boxes (You could also buy an enclosed bed (igloo bed) but another cardboard box will do)
- The room should also have a tray with litter and a bowl of water set away from the litter

If there is a bed in the room which has a gap underneath make sure you clear this space as the cat may also choose to hide there. **Check any other gaps behind cupboards etc and block them off - you want to be able to see your cat even if it's hiding.**

When you get home

- Take the cat carrier straight into the cat's room, open the carrier door/remove it, leave the room, close the door and stay out until feeding time.
- For the next few days go into the room only to feed and clean the litter, all the time talking softly to the cat but not looking at it.

Your cat will gradually check out the whole room, mostly when you're not there and at night.

This room will become their safe place. When you visit the cat make sure that all other outside doors in the house are closed - just in case.... cats can get very scared in new surroundings and may decide to run!

Leave your cat in this safe space alone for at least a few hours/days/weeks depending on the cat. You might not see it for a few days as it gets used to the new smells & noises in the house. As you take in food or clean the litter tray, talk softly to your cat even if you can't see it. If your cat cries at night don't be tempted to get up and feed it because you will create a habit which will be very hard to break. If necessary use earplugs, ignore the noise and it will eventually stop as the cat learns the night routine.

Eventually the cat will be brave enough to appear when you are there. When this happens don't try to touch it or pick it up. The best thing to do is ignore it - perhaps sit on the floor and look at something else in the room or read a few pages of a book. At first the cat will avoid you but gradually it will approach and walk around you, perhaps rubbing against your legs. Don't respond but after a few minutes get up and leave. Next time put your hand by your side for your cat to rub against. Let the cat take contact at its own speed and gradually you can open your hand to stroke it gently. Every time you go in from then on, you can take a treat such as BBQ chicken so it gets used to your presence and associates you with tasty food.

When your cat is comfortable and comes out you when you enter the room, try playing with a wand toy - This doesn't involve contact so it's less threatening and a good stress reliever. Once you feel your cat is completely comfortable in the room you can introduce it to the rest of the house. Make sure all doors and

windows are closed and the house is quiet. Open the door to its room and let your cat decide if it wants to come out. Don't force it to do anything. If it doesn't come out close the door after 5 minutes & try again later.

Don't introduce your cat to any other animals until it is comfortable with you and then follow the process for introductions. In the first weeks if you are having visitors or it's going to be noisy put your cat back into its safe space whilst they are there.

Kittens don't usually take as much time to settle in as adult cats so they may want to explore straight away. Make sure you supervise them so that you don't lose them as they can squeeze into very small spaces.

Cats and children (search for other tips online)

Remember children and babies should always be supervised if an animal is around.

Whilst adopting a cat is very exciting for children, their enthusiasm must be supervised and controlled and clear guidelines must be set around how to hold a cat and not picking it up. Even the friendliest cat will defend itself if pushed or pulled too much, so be sure to teach them the cat is not a toy. They must not crowd the cat or force it to interact with them. At first let only one at a time into the safe room for a short period to be with the cat. Have them sit still and give them a small treat to place in front of the cat. Once the cat comes closer to them and rubs against them they can gently reach out to stroke it.



Rehoming organisation number R215000093