



## Bringing Kitty Home: a First Day Guide

The arrival of a new cat is exciting for adopters, but frequently confusing and stressful for the cat itself. Whether introducing your cat to your family or to other pets, *first impressions matter*, and failure to plan ahead can negatively affect long-term success. Take the following steps on Fluffy's first day to get everyone off to a great start!

1. **Set up a sanctuary room.** Pick a smallish room where your cat will spend his first week. The room should be clean, uncluttered and as quiet as possible. Supply it with at least one litterbox, water, bedding for the cat, toys and at least one hiding place (either a kitty condo or simply a brown paper shopping bag on its side). The purpose of this is not to punish or ignore the cat, but to allow him to slowly acclimate to his new surroundings without becoming overly stressed. If you have other cats, keep him in this room at least a week to protect the others from being exposed to illnesses he might be carrying. Have him checked by a vet before beginning integration with your other cats.
2. **Give Fluffy space.** While it may be tempting – especially for children – to rush in and cuddle with the cat, your cat might not be ready for this. Many recently adopted cats hide for the first few days, if not the first week. Be ready for this and let Fluffy decide when and if he wants to approach family members. Bring a book and simply sit with him in his room to allow him to get used to you.
3. **Prepare the litterboxes.** Provide enough litterboxes to equal one per cat, plus one. (Therefore, a family with two cats will provide three litterboxes.) Space them out around your house, with preferably one per floor. Avoid placing them in areas where your cat might feel trapped, such as a closet or corner. Use an unscented, clumping litter and set up a cleaning supply caddy at each one (with bags, a slotted scooper, paper towel and enzyme-based cleaner). Scoop each box twice a day. Every 1-2 weeks, dump out the box completely and wash with soap and water before replacing with clean litter.
4. **Kitty-proof your house.** Once Fluffy is safely in his room, go through your house and look for potential dangers and problem areas. Tie up dangling cords, stow fragile knick-knacks, lock up hazardous chemicals, shut doors to forbidden areas (this includes closets and cabinets), put away food items (butter, cookies, bags of hot dog buns, etc.), pick up clothes and toys on the floor (a potential "litterbox") and make sure that all windows and doors are secure and firmly latched.
5. **Keep new cat and other pets separate.** Do not throw them together and let them "work it out"! In fact, do not attempt any introductions to other pets for at least 4-5 days. All animals in the house will be aware of each others' presence, even if

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they aren't face to face, and the goal is to let them get used to hearing and smelling each other while enjoying something pleasant. Feed your other pets nice treats whenever they approach the sanctuary door: slide some treats under the door for Fluffy. If you see or hear growling or hissing from anyone, redirect your resident cat away from the door to a fun game. At no time will you bring other pets into Fluffy's sanctuary room to "say hi": he will likely view this as an attack and become defensive. For a full integration protocol, see your adoption guide, "Your New Cat or Kitten: Introducing Your Cat to Resident Pets". Know that this process can take days, weeks or months: rushing it can permanently damage your animals' relationship, if not dooming it completely. Be patient and provide lots of loving care to all pets in the house.

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