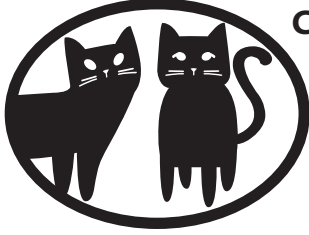


# Cat to Cat Introduction

## Multi-cat households are amazing!



### Congrats on deciding to expand your feline family!

Bringing home a new addition to the family is exciting and can be very smooth with preparation and a good introduction plan in place. Setting a timeline for this process is loose, as it depends on both kitties' personalities and adherence to the plan. But don't fret - we have you covered with a step-by-step approach and expectations. Remember - patience is your best friend during this process!

## 1 HOME PREP and SAFE SPACES for each kitty

### Environmental changes are hard, so create spaces where kitties feel safe and comfortable



- Set up a small bedroom or bathroom that has a door as the new kitty's safe space and base camp.
- Use an enzymatic cleaner to remove any residual scent of the resident kitty.
- The room should have all the basics - litter boxes, fresh water and food, cat towers, soft beds, and "good" places to hide where you can still get access to them. Block "bad" places to hide like under the bed, dressers, and other tight spots where you cannot see or interact with the new kitty.
- Bring toys, treats, and attention as they settle into their new space.
- The rest of the house can remain your resident cat's base camp, making sure to have the same basics and enrichment items for them as well.

## 2 SCENT Stage

### Cats communicate most with their noses, so this step is super important to do well!



- Rub a washcloth or soft cloth on each kitty's cheeks to deposit their scent. Swap this cloth, their bedding, blankets, and toys to introduce each of them with scent first. Pair that moment with a high value reward: a small treat, petting, play or attention - whatever each kitty loves the most! This helps to build great memories of the scent + something they love! Watch for any hissing and growling. They should be curious and actively sniff the objects that have the other's scent.
- Brush one kitty and take it to the other to smell. Then brush the other kitty to co-mingle scents.
- Do "space swap" with giving each kitty the other's territory, but make sure to NOT LET THEM SEE each other as you swap space. Use a carrier to keep each kitty hidden from the other as you swap spaces.
- Keep Feliway diffusers plugged into multiple locations in the house to add "feel good" pheromones.
- If there are no adverse reactions to the other's smell after one week, go to the next step. If there is any fear, anxiety, or aggression continue this step paired with the reward until there is only a calm reaction.

## 3 HEARING Stage - FOOD / TREAT / PLAY (Still NO SIGHT)

### Continue building "good memories" with treats, play, and other fun things!



- After both kitties are comfortable with each others' scents and/space swapping, start feeding their meals on opposite sides of the closed door. They should still NOT see each other, but simply enjoy their meal or treat while being able to HEAR and SMELL one another with the door still as the barrier.
- Do these "no sight" meals / treats for one week. Each day, move their bowls closer to the door until they are right against the door. Have a helper supervise one side, and you supervise the other side.
- Make sure there is no hissing or tension - if so, move them back and start at a greater distance apart.
- Add playtime with toys, catnip, and other fun things for each - still separated by the door. They should HEAR all the noises associated with play, as well as any meowing the other kitty may do.
- Continue space and scent swapping, and make sure the kitties still do not see one another yet.
- This is where patience is your friend! Go slowly to set this foundation properly.

# Cat to Cat Introduction

## 4 SIGHT Stage

**Great work - kitties are calm and comfortable so it is time for the next step!**



- Once the kitties are good with the closed-door feedings and play, it's time for them to see one another.
- Have a friend or family member be prepared to monitor one kitty while you monitor the other. Be ready to react to any tension. You can use a body harness for added restraint.
- Place a baby gate in the doorway and drape a towel over it to block most of the line of sight. Open the door a small amount. Slowly move the towel to show about ¼ of the baby gate so they can now start to see one another. Have multiple play sessions like this, and remember to give them yummy treats and meals on their sides of the baby gate. This is using positive reinforcement building good new memories with one another! Stay 10 feet apart at first, and slowly move them closer at each session. Try to do at least three sessions pulling more of the towel back so they see more each time. You want them to be curious or neutral, without aggression or anxiety. Do more sessions as needed.
- If small grumbles or tense body posture happens but they still eat, monitor them and continue each day moving their bowls closer over the next week or two. Let the kitties guide the pace.
- If higher tension arises (loud growling, hissing, swatting, lunging) close the door immediately and go back to a few more days of feeding with the door closed, then start this step again.
- Have toys to distract them and blankets to use as barriers if any anxious behaviors start.
- As the kitties remain calm and comfortable, continue scent and space swapping, playing and doing other fun activities through the baby gate. Monitor and gradually move them closer together.
- You should end with each kitty eating right next to one another on opposite sides of the baby gate.

## 5 MONITORED INTERACTION Stage

**Now kitties are starting to become pals, so let's expand their time together!**



- Share short times together in the same room - 10 or 15 minutes to start, gradually increasing time.
- Use toys and playtime, attention, treats, and meals to keep each kitty focused on fun, happy things!
- Supervise the kitties' interactions until there is no need for distractions and they comfortably can hang out with each other for long periods of time. Once they reach an hour of hanging out calmly with no issues, they have graduated to buddy status!

## 6 OPEN PLAYTIME and LIVING

**Buddy time can now be more open and move to unsupervised**



- Now kitties can hang out with one another for 1/2 days with minimal supervision.
- Work up to having their first day or overnight together. Be prepared to intervene if anything happens, but if they have reached this stage, everyone is doing well and I would not expect any big issues.
- HOWEVER: kitties have bad days just like us, so there may be times when issues arise.

**If issues arise - remember it's a marathon, not a sprint!**

- Each kitty has a distinct personality and it is important to recognize their individuality and be able to read their behaviors, vocalizations, and body language. See "Socialization and Reading Behaviors" for more information and tips on deciphering kitty behaviors.
- Be prepared to STOP sessions if tensions get too high, or the kitties break into a kerfuffle. A soft blanket is good to have on hand to scoop up a kitty or drape over them to create a barrier between cats.
- Be patient! If you go too quickly, don't fret. Simply take a step back and start over tomorrow. This process is never linear, so going forward and backward is expected.
- Stay upbeat - kitties can sense your tension too! Use positive reinforcement and happy associations through treats, play, and attention to always end on a positive note to build good memories 🐾

# Cat to Cat Introduction

## GENERAL TIMELINE EXAMPLE

**Remember - every cat has their own personality and history. They will let you know how they are feeling with their actions and body language. Being able to read their reactions and emotions will help you to guide the pace of this process.**

**Remember to let them steer you for how quickly or how slowly this goes!**

**Have patience, and go at their pace!**

**This is not an absolute timeline below, just generalized guidance - adjust as needed:**

### DAY 1-3:

Keep each kitty in their separate safe space and have only have human interaction. Keep the cat that is allowed access to the house away from the other side of the door for the first 24 hours so the kitty that is in the closed room can get used to their new environment and you. Make sure to have a few towels and blankets in the kitty's space where they rest or sleep. This will deposit the kitty's scent on them to use in scent swapping. Do the same separately with the other cat. This is the first step to prepare the kitties for the next step of scent swapping! Generally, we like to give kitties three days to decompress and adjust to a new space. This can be shorter or longer depending on the individual kitties.

### DAY 3-7:

**SCENT:** Swap towels with the cats. You can also swap beds, toys, brushes and other things that each kitty has scented. Remember, you are looking for any adverse reactions. If you get hissing, swatting, attacking, or read any anxiety from either cat, move the pace forward more slowly. Remember to pair a valuable reward (petting, attention play, cat grass, treats, etc.) with the moments you introduce the other cat's scented item to create good memories with positive reinforcement! Go more quickly if the kitties are calm or neutral. Read their behaviors and look for warning signs. Next start space swapping.

### WEEK 2:

**HEARING:** With the door closed, allow the cats to hear one another from the other side as they play and have yummy tasty meals. After they remain calm for this activity, do the same - play and have tasty meals but now with the door open, baby gate in place, and a towel over the baby gate so they still do not see one another - just hearing and smelling.

### WEEK 3:

**SIGHT:** With the door open, start to pull the towel draped over the baby gate back slowly over a few meals or play sessions to reveal the cats slowly to one another. Keep going if the reactions are calm or neutral. If there is any adverse reaction, go back to the hearing stage for a few days. Start the sight stage again after that. Next, have tasty meals and treats on each side of the baby gate, moving the kitties closer together slowly to get them a few inches apart on each side of the baby gate. Continue space swapping.

### WEEK 4:

Remove the baby gate and play in the same space. Have a helper manage one kitty while you manage the other. Watch for signs of fear, anxiety and stress. As calm moments become consistent, increase the time they are together each day, as they allow. As things remain calm, build up to longer sessions, and then have unsupervised time together. After this foundation is set, they can interact freely in the house!