

Adoption Counseling for Cats

Important Issues to discuss with adopters concerning behavior

1. Your new cat will most likely hide for the first day or two. Don't worry! Hiding is the best way cats have to adjust to a new environment. Do NOT try to pull her from her hiding place. Just be patient and as soon as she feels comfortable, she will start coming out.

2. Litterbox

You don't need to teach a cat to use the box – just let them know where it is.

Cats prefer unscented litter – regular clay litter or the clumping varieties are preferred by most.

Some cats do fine with covered boxes but they trap odor and some cats won't use them.

Keep the litterbox clean – scoop daily and change completely once a week.

3. Scratching

Cats need to scratch and its very normal cat behavior. To safeguard your furniture provide your cat with a scratching post.

Make sure the post is placed in a prominent area in the house

Make sure the post is tall and stable (though some cats prefer horizontal marking posts instead of the vertical type).

Make sure the substrate is made of sisal rope, corrugated cardboard, or natural wood (carpeting is not preferred by cats).

4. Introducing your new cat to your other cat/s.

Set up a room to put the new cat in for a couple of days. Make sure he has a litter box, food, water, and toys. Go in and visit your new cat often.

The cats will be able to smell each other from under the door. Putting treats near the door will help form a positive association between the cats as they smell each other while they eat.

Scent exchange – rub one cat with a washcloth and then use that washcloth to rub the other cat. This is a good way to exchange their scents and let them get to know each other. Do this daily (without washing the cloth in between)

After a few days start putting your resident cat in the new cat's room and let the new cat explore the house for an hour or so each day.

Next - set up a baby gate at the door so the cats can see each other for a day or so before you let them in the same room together (one baby gate on top of another will prevent them from jumping over). Putting treats on either side will add some positive association.

Short controlled introductions are the next step. Bring the cats into the same room and provide them each with a dish of tuna fish. DO this daily, moving the dishes closer each day.

This process can take 4 days, a week, two weeks, or two months. Go at the cat's pace. A slow introduction will go a long way to improve the cat's future relationship.