



## **How to Introduce a Kitten to a Cat: Steps to Take for a Harmonious Household**

Introducing your cat to a new kitten who will share their space is a slow and measured process. But, by taking a calm, patient approach to introducing them will lay a foundation for a positive relationship between the older and younger cat that will set them up for a lifelong friendship.

Following are slow and steady steps recommended by The International Cat Association (TICA) that owners can take to prepare for the arrival of a new kitten.

**Introduce your cats by scent.** A great deal of your cats' communication is based on scent. It is important to create a positive scent associated for both

cats before they meet. Help your cat adjust and feel less threatened by taking a new blanket to the breeder or place from which you will be getting your kitten and rub its scent onto the blanket. Leave the blanket in a place your cat will find it and become familiar with the scent of the new kitten.

**Create a separate space.** Prepare a separate room for the new kitten to occupy for the first few days. Make sure you leave enough water and food for them as well as a litter box, scratching post, toys, and a comfortable place to sleep.

When the new kitten arrives, put your faithful cat in a separate room with his favorite things while you give the new kitten a quick tour of the home so they can get acclimated and then settle him into his own separate room. Next take your cat out and let him smell your kitten-scented hands and clothes. Make sure to give him treats to create a positive association.

Over the next few days, gradually introduce the kitten's scent into the rest of the household. As soon as they are both comfortable with each other's scent, allow them individually to explore the other's territory and scent, without them seeing each other.

**Introduce slowly.** Once they become familiar with each other's scents, allow them to see each other through a pet gate or screen door so they can smell each other. The best time to make a formal introduction is at mealtime since their desire for food will outweigh all other distractions. Place their food bowls one on each side of a closed door so they can sense the other on the opposite side of the door. Once they begin behaving normally when in proximity you can allow them to meet. Bring one cat into the room and engage him in active play or with treats. Then bring the other cat into the same room at the same time.

**What to expect when they first meet.** Expect them to growl and hiss when they first meet. This is normal for them to create their individual place within the hierarchy. Closely monitor their body language for warning signs like arching, skittishness, any hostile actions, and signs of distress. If you have followed each step then your careful preparations will mean that by this stage, they 'recognize' each other enough to co-exist during dinner. Keep their introduction short and reward them both with praise and treats.

Gradually increase the time they spend together. Share your affection and attention equally between them during their time together, not only to build positive associations but also to demonstrate that they are both equal. Remember to reward them throughout for good behavior. Continue to pay close attention to their behavior. Normal non-aggressive play includes pouncing, running, batting, chasing. Expect them to compete for toys and attention.

Overall, the average introduction process, if followed properly, will take at least one week or longer. Be patient as they get acquainted and remember the slow and steady process will all be worth it when you have two cats to love.