

THE FINE ART OF CAT INTRODUCTION – “FLUFFY, MEET KITTY”



So, you've decided to get your resident cat a new best friend ...

Probably a good idea, especially if you are out much of the day. However, cats are very territorial, so if you just bring new Kitty home and plunk her in front of Fluffy, things will probably go terribly wrong pretty quickly....and you'll have a lot of remedial work to do to have a chance of the two cats ever getting along.

In order to prevent that from happening, you need to learn the fine art of cat introduction...Follow the suggestions below, and you have a very good chance of Fluffy and Kitty becoming good friends, or, at the very least, learning to tolerate each other !

- When you bring Kitty home, don't let Fluffy see her. Put her in her own room which you have set up with everything she'll need for the time being – food, water, litter, toys, scratching post. (Be sure to visit her frequently so she gets used to you) Leave the carrier you brought her home in for Fluffy to smell. Then take it back in to Kitty.
- Cats have scent glands on their cheeks that produce pheromones. Twice a day, take two clean socks and gently pet each cat's cheek with a separate sock. Place each cat's pheromone-scented sock in the other cat's area, but not next to feeding stations or litter boxes.
- Start feeding Kitty and Fluffy on either side of the closed door to Kitty's room, so they can smell each other, and also associate this time with something good. (food)
- Swap locations frequently. Put Fluffy in Kitty's room for a while, while Kitty is allowed to explore the rest of the house.
- If all is going well, the next step is to allow limited visual encounters between the cats, by wedging the door open a tiny bit.
- When neither cat appears fearful or aggressive, you can allow supervised time between them. (You might even put each in a halter and leash to begin with.)
- Finally you can start feeding them together in the kitchen, but quite far apart to begin with, gradually moving the bowls closer together.

This introductory process should take about 2 weeks. It may seem like overkill, but don't rush things. If the cats are not far enough along to take that “next step”, and you end up with a cat fight, you will have to start all over again, with no guarantee of success.

And yes, cats are difficult sometimes – but, they're worth it !

Note: The “Fine Art of Cat Introduction” can also be used with owned cats that are not getting along. Separating and then gradually re-introducing them can help ease the tension.