



“Introducing Meows”

A few tips from Molly’s Mutts and Meows on how to properly introduce your new meow into your home.

- **First, be patient!** It often takes time for cats to get used to each other and they like to go at their own pace. Don’t force anything. Depending on the cats, it can take anywhere from a few days to a few months for them to get along or simply tolerate each other. Patience is the key!
- We recommend at least a **TWO WEEK** isolation period when bringing a new cat into the home.
- Understand that they may *never* become best buddies. They may just learn to avoid or tolerate each other. If this is okay with them, then it should be okay with you. If your cats have had feline friends in the past the odds are good that they will get along with the newcomer. Unfortunately, cat behavior is impossible to predict. The one thing we can tell you to expect is the unexpected!

When Bringing Your New Cat Home:

- It is **ALWAYS** best to separate your cats initially. Put the new cat in a separate room so that the cats can hear and smell each other but not see or touch. Have that room set up with a comfy bed, litter box, food and water bowls and plenty of toys.
- Once the new cat is in his/her room, leave the carrier out and let your cat investigate it thoroughly.
- You may want to try feeding the cats near the door that separates them so that they associate good things (eating) with the experience of being near each other (though separated by the door).
- After two days, switch the bedding of the cats, so that they become comfortable with each other’s scents. You may want to switch toys

as well. Switch the bedding again after two more days, so that their scents begin to intermix.

- Also consider switching their living spaces for an hour or two each morning and/or evening. This gives the new cat an opportunity to explore the rest of his/her new home while providing the other cat time to investigate the new cat's territory.
- During this time, play with the cats near the door, encouraging them to play "paws" under the door. Give them treats to reinforce this fun time.
- After a week, if you have not seen much negative behavior such as hissing or growling, open the door and replace it with a temporary baby gate or screen so they can see each other and touch a bit.
- Continue to feed and play near the screen/gate, starting farther away and gradually getting closer.
- After a few days you can try letting them have supervised time together. After feeding them, consider removing the gate. Let them take over from there. You should step back a bit, but keep a watchful eye on them at all times. Some hissing and swatting is perfectly normal here. Give it time before interfering.
- If they begin to fight aggressively, have a water bottle handy and give one or both a good squirt or two.
- If these interactions go well you can leave them together for longer periods of time. Use your discretion in this.
- Make sure to give the cats equal love and attention. Also provide adequate toys, more than one litter box, a scratching post and individual food bowls.
- If one cat is always hiding or overly aggressive you may need to seek the help of your vet or an animal behaviorist. There are many good vets in the LA area.
- We also recommend Rescue Remedy, a product that can help calm your pets when they are in stressful situations. Feliway is also good to help calm cats. Feliway also helps insure that they use the litter box. We also like Soft Claws. They can help if you are afraid of your pet scratching one another (or from scratching you).