

## Take Introductions Slowly

**A kitten needs to regain his sense of security before meeting the resident cats.**

*Pam Johnson-Bennett*

If the cats are food motivated then divide up their regular portions so you can use food as a training tool. If you free-choice feed then you don't have the advantage of having them associate the anticipation of a meal with the appearance of the other cat. Scheduled feeding works best when trying to introduce cats to one another. Gradually, you will be able to build up the length of time the cats are together but don't rush it. Some cats can become friends in a few days while others need weeks and weeks to come to an understanding. Since Clayclay appears especially terrified, I'd suggest you go slower than you think you need to so you always stay within his comfort zone. Once you get to the point where you feel you can leave the cats out for 15 minutes or a half hour, keep an interactive toy nearby so you can distract Miss Kitty if she starts to get aggressive or if her body posture starts looking hostile. An important aspect of introducing cats is to make sure the environment is set up to encourage a peaceful hierarchy. Think vertically and make sure you have a cat tree, a couple window perches and other areas where Miss Kitty to claim the top area to show that she is top cat. It's also important to have hiding places so the more subordinate cat has a little retreat. When the cats get to where they are together more and more, make sure you have at least two litter boxes and that they are not in the same room. This allows for territorial divisions and will help prevent one kitty from being pushed out of an area claimed by the higher ranking cat. If you need more specific step-by-step instructions, you can find them in the book *Cat vs. Cat: Keeping Peace When You Have More Than One Cat*. I'll also help you here as much as I can but remember, take it slow and keep it positive so the cats find a reason to like each other. That's the key! Best, Pam Johnson-Bennett, CABC IAABC-Certified Animal Behavior Consultant

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