

Handling a Needy Kitty

Help your new kitten transition smoothly into its new home.

By Lindsey Getz

Introducing a kitten to its new home is exciting for pet owners. It's fun to watch the kitten explore its new environment and grow more comfortable with the space. But what if a new kitten doesn't seem to adjust? Experts share their advice on helping a new kitten become more independent.

More Than One

The ideal situation is to adopt more than one kitten, says Terry Marie Curtis, a veterinarian and clinical behaviorist at the University of Florida's College of Veterinary Medicine. "Or even better, the mom with one or more of the kittens," she says. "Cats are very social. But if the kitten is all alone at the beginning of its time in a new house, start by restricting the area that it has."

During the first week or so, keep the kitten in a confined area to help it feel safe.

"Very young kittens are more likely to show distress behaviors when they are separated, hungry or even when they have to use the litterbox," says Ilana Reisner, a veterinarian and assistant professor of behavioral medicine at the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. "A kitten that gets lost in a house and feels 'trapped' might vocalize and act distressed. Ironically this can be prevented by decreasing the amount of space it has to explore."

****For the full article, pick up the April 2007 issue of CAT FANCY.****

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