

Homecoming Dance

Make your new cat's transition into your home a smooth one.

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Moving an existing cat to a new home, or bringing a new cat home, can be traumatic for all involved. Cats are very attached to their turf, and moving to a new place can cause it unimaginable anxiety that is frequently manifested by not using the litterbox, spray-marking the walls, destructive chewing or clawing or misplaced aggression toward people or animals in the home.

To avoid these problems, first make sure you're completely unpacked, with boxes put away, movers gone, windows closed or screened and chimneys and ventilation crawlspaces blocked off so your cat cannot escape or get stuck. Next, before bringing your cat home, rub a towel on your cat to get its scent and rub the towel on many areas in your home. This will spread your cats scent, thereby reducing its anxiety and easing the transition process.

Next, place your cats water bowl, food bowl, bed, condo and litterbox in areas similar to kittys previous residence. Cats prefer predictability and consistency.

Also, create a safe room for your cat to stay in for at least four weeks before introducing it to the other parts of the home. In this safe room, provide your cats familiar items food, water, and on the opposite end, litterbox filled with its regular litter. During the four-week period, as your pet gets used to its new limited space as evidenced by eating regularly, using the litterbox regularly and laying out in plain sight in a relaxed posture engage it in playful chase-me games with pingpong balls, catnip toys and interactive toys. By the fourth week, begin introducing your cat to the other rooms of the house under supervision.

Next, from all the far reaches of your cats new kingdom, run relay races showing it the quickest and most direct route to where its litterbox(es) are located so your cat doesn't become disoriented or lazy and begin to have accidents in its new kingdom. If your cat is used to sleeping with you at night, you can temporarily bed down with it in its safe room, make your bedroom the safe room or allow your cat to have access to your bedroom only at night, while spending the rest of the day in its safe room, especially while your are out of the home.

Finally, give the adjustment process at least three to six months to take full effect.