

## Can They Be Friends?

**A noted feline behaviorist shares methods to help two cats get along peacefully.**

*Pam Johnson-Bennett*

Q: I have a 1-year-old female cat and a 3-year-old male cat. The female is the resident cat, and we recently adopted the male. They run around and chase each other and seem to be playing, but she doesn't like it when he smells her behind. Everytime one wants to lay with the other, they paw each other. Do they need more time to develop friendship? Do you think they will ever be close friends?

Feline behaviorist Pam Johnson-Bennett, author of *Think Like a Cat*, says: They are still in the early stages of getting to know each other. The swatting may be related to misunderstood communication. One cat may be in play mode while the other isn't. That is often the case when one kitty is resting and another walks up. They are also still at the point where they are figuring out who is going to claim which areas within the home. One kitty may be approaching another in a spot that is considered sacred. As long as there is no growling or outright aggression, this is something they will work out. One thing you can do is to use distraction if you notice one kitty approaching another and you're pretty sure the encounter may be negative. Distract the approaching kitty with a little toy to change his mindset from negative to positive. By using a toy you keep things positive just in case he didn't have anything but the best intentions upon his approach. As for your kitty not liking the other cat doing a scent investigation of the hindquarters that's very normal. Usually only cats who are very familiar with each other will engage in anal sniffing. Cats will approach each other and do nose-to-nose sniffing and then if they are friends, one cat will turn around to allow the other to do anal sniffing. For one cat to just walk up to another cat and anal sniff is considered extremely rude in the cat rule book. Best, Pam Johnson-Bennett, CABC IAABC-Certified Animal Behavior Consultant

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