**Introducing Cats to Other Cats**

# **Successful introductions take time!**

DO NOT try to introduce the new cat to your current cat immediately upon arrival. Rushing introductions may damage the relationship irreparably and initiate fear, anger, aggression, or spraying. Some integrations may proceed faster or slower and integration is dependent on the personalities of the cats involved. Remember, you know your cat best.

## **Smell**

* The new cat/kitten should be in a separate room with a litter box and bed.  Initially you may want to use a bathroom until they use the litter box.  Spend time with them in this room!  You can move them to another quiet room once litter box is used.
* The cats will smell each other through the door.
* Provide toys to play with for both near each other
* Within two to four days, begin exchanging the bedding between the new and current cat(s) daily. This will also help familiarize the cats with each other’s scents, even though they can smell each other through the door.

**Continue to let smell be the only interaction**

* If there are no marked signs of aggression from the cats, such as hissing and growling, the next step is to confine your current cat(s) to a room and let the new cat explore your house for a couple of hours each day for several days.

## **Sight**

* If there is no hissing or growling, it’s time to let the cats see each other.
* You can put the new cat/kitten in a carrier and put the carrier in a common room where your current cat is, or you can try using a baby gate.
* If there are signs of aggression, cut the visit short. If things are going well, keep the visit to only five minutes or so.
* If possible, repeat this phase 2 to 3 times daily, until cats appear to be more comfortable with each other.

## **Meeting without barriers**

* If there are no signs of aggression between cats, let the cats meet at their own pace.
* Leave the door to the safe room open a crack. This will allow the new cat to explore and/or your current cat(s) to visit. Supervision is necessary for the safety of both cats.
* In case of aggression, have a spray bottle filled with water or a towel handy. Always stop serious threats and/or aggression immediately. A serious fight may damage the potential for successful integration and the future relationship.
* If over a period of weeks your integration plan is not going well, consider the installation of an inexpensive screen door from a building supply store. The screen door allows the cats to continue to get to know each other by sight and smell, while keeping both parties safe. Each cat can take turns in the screened room. A FELIWAY diffuser may also prove helpful when integration is difficult.
* You may notice some occasional hissing, swatting and grouchy behavior over the next few months (and years). This is normal. Cats are hierarchical by nature and must establish and affirm the pecking order within your household. Plus, much like humans, all cats have the occasional “off” day.
* If you’ve adopted a shy cat or kitten to provide companionship for your resident cat, a quicker integration may be best. Shy cats are often used to and welcome other feline companionship. They will be very lonely on their own, so we recommend that the integration take place very quickly (1-3 days) unless there are significant problems.