



CAT INTEGRATION - ADOPTED CAT WITH EXISTING CAT(S)

Probably the most upsetting scenario you can inflict upon your new/existing cat is to plonk them down together expecting them to become best mates with a new cat.

A slow measured and careful introduction is the best way.

In a nutshell, cats recognise smell before sight so a certain amount of scent exchanging should be carried out before they are allowed to meet for the first time.

Keep the new cat in his or her own room for the first few days - we do it for a week - if you have glass doors it's a good idea to block off the lower part with newspaper so that the cats don't see each other - glaring and sticking their tongues out at each other is not the best start!

During their time apart you should carry out some scent exchanging by brushing each cat with the same brush, swapping their bedding and rubbing clean cloths around their scent glands (situated in the cheek area) and then rubbing that cloth over the other cat and vice versa. The idea behind this is that when the cats eventually meet they will recognise each other's scent and should be more likely to accept each other.



If you can borrow a large dog pen or a baby gate can help (new cat goes in the pen just for a short period each day supervised in the living room (put pen in there for the week new cat is in its room, so existing cat/s get used to the pen).

After a week you can start to leave the door to the new cat's room open so that the cats can meet on their own terms. When you see them together, throw down something tasty to eat or encourage play so that they associate being together as a good thing.

A bit of hissing and spitting is completely normal; all out fighting is not and if that happens you should separate the cats again and continue with the scent exchanging for a bit longer.

It's also a good idea to prepare for the meeting by plugging in some artificial pheromone diffusers such as Feliway around your house. The diffusers are similar to plug in air fresheners but they can only be detected by cats. Try to locate them in areas where the cats are most likely to meet and allow the diffusers a couple of days to start working.

Another calming option is Zylkene 75 - a completely natural capsule which can be added to wet food. Both can be bought online from various pet supermarkets. You can of course use a combination of both for a double whammy. I personally only use Zylkene 75 and give to my resident cat/s for a few weeks before introduction and to the cat becoming a resident with us.

Once your cats have met each other and all seems calm you can start to leave them together for longer periods of time when you are not around, although personally I would keep them separated overnight for another week.

