



Caring Hands Humane Society

1400 SE 3rd Newton • www.caringhandshs.org • (316) 283 0839

INTRODUCING A NEW CAT TO YOUR HOME

Cats will require a great deal of adjustment to their new home, here is how you can help. Keep the cat in her carrier and place in a quiet room where the cat can be confined for a day or two, preferably the same room as her litter box, food and water dish. This will be your cat's "safe" room. Be sure that all the windows and doors in your house are closed, that loose electrical cords have been secured, and that any spaces behind appliances or large pieces of furniture are blocked off. Once in the safe room, open the carrier and let the cat come out in her own time. Keep noise and bustle in your house to a minimum while the cat orients herself. Sit quietly in the room while the cat explores, offering attention and gentle stroking if she seems to want it. If there are no other animals in the house, it is all right to leave the door to the cat's room slightly open when you leave, but don't be surprised if your cat stays in.

Hiding is normal. Some cats spend their first few days, weeks or even months in a new home in hiding, usually under beds or in closets. Hiding is how some cats adjust to their new environments, and it does not mean that the cat is unaffectionate, unsocial or sick. Few cats can repress their curiosity enough to stay under a bed for more than a few days, but if your cat requires more hiding time, make sure she's getting food and water and is getting out at some point to use the litter box. Do not attempt to forcibly pull or drive a cat out from a hiding place, as this will only intensify her fears and make her adjustment harder.

Introducing Your New Cat to Other Pets

Pets enjoy each other's company. A pet with a playmate receives more exercise, stimulation and companionship. If you have other animals living with you, it is best to keep the new cat confined in the "safe" room for a few days while your resident pets get used to her smell, and vice versa. When you bring cats together for the first time, it would be best to choose a day when you can be around the house, encouraging friendly behavior with praise and affection. Do not just throw them together allow them the opportunity to find each other on their own by completely opening the "safe" room door. Remember your resident pets can experience jealousy and other complex emotions. Be careful not to neglect your old friends in your excitement over the new cat. Nothing will irritate them more than seeing all the hugs and kisses going to the newcomer. Whenever you arrive home, always greet the resident animals first, when handing out treats – you guessed it – resident animals first. If the cats have not ventured together after a couple of hours, bring the new cat into the living area and hold her on your lap while generously passing out treats to everyone. Do not force her to stay on your lap if she does not want to. Expect

some apprehension from both of the cats as well as a little hissing or growling. This is normal cat behavior and they will usually work it out and become friends. If you have a dog that will be meeting the cat make sure he is leashed. Curiosity is normal and he will want to sniff the cat. If he shows signs of aggression, place him in a time out and try again later. You may never be able to leave them alone together.**

CHHS Staff

**Please see Lori Smith's articles on difficult introductions!