



Bringing Your New Kitty Home

You and your cat will be together for many years, it is best to take the time now to acclimate him to your home than have him live for years in fear and never be fully comfortable in your home. When introducing a new cat to your home, there is one thing they need above all else – time to adjust! You can make the adjustment period easier by letting your cat get to know you, your home, the routine, the smells, the sounds, from the safety and comfort from their own room. Many people hesitate at the thought of confining cats thinking it is "mean" or "cruel", but providing a safe space is just what your cat needs - a whole house can be overwhelming!

Room Requirements

The safe space should be a small, quiet room (bathroom, small office, large walk-in closet, or a spare bedroom are all good candidates) without any hiding spaces such as under a bed or behind a bookshelf. You don't want to have to try to pull your cat out of a hiding space – that's not a very good start to your relationship! Do be sure to provide your cat with acceptable hiding places that are easy for you to access. The room should be set-up with his litter box, food and water bowls, and bed. Be sure to provide plenty of toys and a scratching post for your cat as well.

Start off slow when visiting your kitty – don't try to interact too much with your kitty. Allow him to come to you when he feels comfortable with you. Some cats this may only take a few days, or even a few hours, some may take a little while longer. Your cat will let you know when he is ready for more interaction with you.

Most cats are overwhelmed when they first move to a new place – this is completely normal. If you just open the carrier door, most cats will often bolt around the house looking for a safe place to hide and may stay there for several days. The safe room allows them to gradually adjust to your home without feeling overwhelmed. The room also gives you access to interact with them in a place where they can't hide for days and days.

When to explore the rest of the house

You may wonder when you can let your kitty out of his safe room. Every cat is different and some may only need a few days, some weeks, others might need months. The important thing is to NOT rush – you and your cat are going to enjoy a long-term relationship regardless of how long it takes him to feel comfortable in your home. You should look for all of the following before letting your cat out of his room:

1. Your cat is eating, drinking, resting, grooming and using a litter box.
2. Standing up or walking around the room does not send him into a panic or hiding.
3. Your cat is showing interest in leaving the room.

Don't mistake scratching at the door as a sign of readiness to leave the room. Even a fearful or shy cat may scratch or meow at the door for attention. If you notice the cat meowing at the door, but then runs away when you open the door, he's not ready!

If your cat feels overwhelmed at any time, return him back to his room and trying again after a few hours. Be sure to supervise your cat at all times. You may want to keep your cat confined at night and/or while you are at work even if your cat is comfortable with your home.

The safe room can be used even after your cat is comfortable with your home. Your kitty will like having his own space with all his things! His safe room is his room and won't feel like punishment when he is in there. If you decide to bring a new kitty home with resident cats, the new cat should be confined so the cats can get used to each other indirectly. Don't feel bad for confining your cat. It will help him relax and adjust to his new home faster and at his pace!