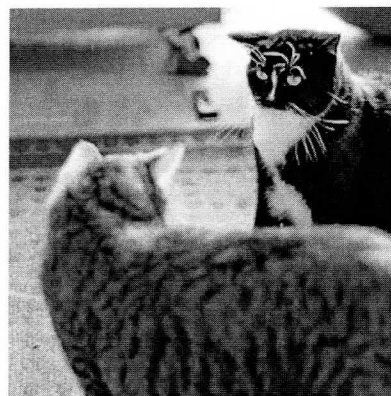


Introducing Cats Without The Fur Flying A Useful Cat Training Technique

You would think that introducing cats to each other would be a relatively simple thing. After all, the domestic cat is a friendly soul, who likes nothing more than to greet everyone he meets with a gentle head nudge, right? Well, not always I'm afraid.



Although cats can quite happily live with other pets, it does very much depend on the individual pets involved, and so there are never any guarantees that harmony will descend on the household.

Are cat's social animals?

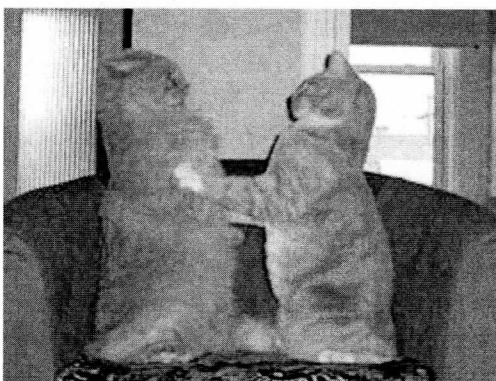
In the wild, cats do not hunt or live in packs like dogs and are generally far more independent creatures. Their main preoccupation in the wild is to have enough to eat and to be able to mate with as many females as possible.

This means that territory is of the highest importance to them. So the intrusion of another cat onto their territory is a threat to their food supply and mating precedence. This is why when introducing cats for the first time they generally feel threatened and react with aggression.

However, cats are quite able to get on with each other in the domestic situation as many owners can testify. It is not unusual for many households to contain 2 or more cats, all who get along with each other perfectly well as long as the food supply is plentiful and there is enough fuss and attention to go round.

Why do some cats find it hard to get on with other cats?

Even in the domestic situation, some cats find it very hard indeed to accept another pet into their territory. This can very much depend on the individual personalities involved.



However it is quite noticeable that cats that were brought up with other cats or other animals from an early age, find it much easier to accept a new face into their home environment.

These cats have been used to sharing affection, food and living space, and so do not feel threatened when a new cat is introduced to their home environment. As long as the new cat feels the same way, they should get on together happily after a time.

However, it may still be possible for two cats to get along amicably, even if they never become bosom buddies. It is important that cat owners take an active role in the introduction and do not have unrealistic expectations, which may cause tension between the two cats.

Introducing cats for the first time

The whole process of introducing cats to each other has to be done slowly and carefully from the very beginning. If not, then the whole situation can become much worse and you may find that you have two cats that try to attack each other whenever they come into contact. This may even lead to a situation where it is safer and fairer to have one of the cats re-homed.

The steps to take when introducing cats to each other are:

- **Separate the cats** – keep your new cat in a separate room from the beginning.
- **Swap scents** – rub a clean towel over your new pet and then rub the towel around the rest of the house. On walls, furniture etc. This will allow your existing cat to get used to this new scent. Do the same for your new cat, using the scent of your existing cat.
- **Affection** – make sure that your new cat doesn't become the focus of your time. It is important that your existing cat does not feel neglected, as this will increase their insecurities.

After a few days and when you feel that your new cat is confident in its new environment:

- **Slow introductions** – Put your new cat into a cat carrier that allows visual access and put the carrier in a room with your other cat. Stay in the room and let you cats see each other. They may be spitting and hissing, but do not react to this.

This first encounter should only last a few minutes. Repeat the process daily, for longer and longer periods of time. Whilst the encounter is happening be sure to use a calm voice towards your cat and stroke them to reassure them that everything is ok.

- **Repeat** - You can repeat the process the other way round, with your existing cat in the carrier and your new cat outside. Gradually over time during the introducing cats process as they are exposed to each other for longer and longer periods of time, the cats reactions should become less and less aggressive.
- **Final Step** - Once the aggression has subsided, it is time to introduce the cats without the carrier. Never leave them alone together during this time. Allow them to get to know each other in their own way. Offer the cats treats, so that they associate each other's presence with a good experience.

It's all about making your cats realise that the other cat is not a threat and that they should not feel threatened. However if a fight does break out, separate them, never shout and try again later.

Once cats have gone through this process of introduction in a calm and reassuring environment, they will eventually stop feeling threatened by each other and should stop reacting to each other in an aggressive way.

Making the home environment a happy one

It is important for your cats to feel that they have their own little part of the home, which they can call their own. It is therefore important that as owners we provide each cat with their own things when introducing cats to the household. These items are a must:

Affection – make sure you spend equal amounts of time with each of your cats. Playtime is a good bonding exercise and will make your cat feel a part of the family.



- Litter tray – the trays should not be too close together.
- Feeding and water bowls – Again these should not be too close together and should not be near the litter trays.
- Bedding – Unless you are very lucky and have cats that like to sleep together, you will need to make sure you provide each cat with their own beds.

But what if they never get along?

Unfortunately I do hear of cases where owners have tried introducing cats to each other and they just won't get along. Rather nasty fights may break out all the time, resulting in injury, or one of the cats to be terrorised by the other and so become a timid and frightened creature.

In these cases I would say that the kindest thing to do for both of your cats is to re-home the newest cat into a home where they can regain their confidence and live a happy relaxed existence.

Your existing cat will also benefit, as they will no longer feel threatened in their own home and can return to being the happy cat they once were. I realise this is a hard decision for owners to make, but never the less a very considerate one.

Article compliments of:

Our Happy Cat.com