

## Cat Introductions

Cat introductions can be challenging, but by following the steps below, your newly-adopted cat and your resident cat will learn to get along peacefully.

For detailed information, read Jackson Galaxy's [Cat Introduction](#) blog series.



### 1. Prepare the house and the resident cat for the new arrival.

- a. Wean the resident cat off of free-feeding. Instead, schedule mealtimes.
- b. Set up a separate room ([basecamp](#)) for your new cat to help them adjust safely.

### 2. Keep the cats entirely separated to start.

- a. Move the resident cat to a closed room to bring your new cat into their basecamp.
- b. Introduce cats to each other's scents by swapping blankets, scratching posts, and toys.
- c. Give your new cat a 7-21 days to get comfortable in their basecamp. Thereafter, allow the cats to investigate each other's spaces solo, also referred to as [site swapping](#).

### 3. Create a consistent feeding ritual.

- a. Set up meal stations on both sides of the closed door to the new cat's basecamp. It is best to have a human on either side of the door to watch each cat's behavior.
- b. Each meal station should be 4' or more from the door. If the cats eat peacefully without any agitated behaviors, move the station a few inches closer at subsequent meals.

### 4. Allow visual access and repeat the feeding ritual.

- a. Once both cats are eating calmly close to the closed door, allow limited visual access, by installing a screen door or pet gate.
- b. Drape a blanket over the gate or screen to have more control over how much is visible. Restart the feeding ritual in Step 3 from a distance with the limited visual access.

### 5. Introduce the cats without barriers.

\*Only proceed to this step after your cats eat calmly on either side of a gate or screen.\*

- a. Cat-proof a large room where you will introduce the cats. Barricade spaces where the two cats could get stuck together, like under the couch.
- b. First, practice playing with each cat alone in the room.
- c. Next, set up each cat with their own handler on opposite sides of the room. Encourage the cats to play solo in their spaces. You may use treats to keep their attention.
- d. The goal is to have each cat focus on their own play. Keep sessions under a 3 minutes at first, and end the session while they are still engaged with the handler.
- e. On each repetition: gradually increase the time and decrease distance so long as the cats both remain friendly and engaged in their own play.

**Training Tip:** Always supervise all interactions between cats, and be ready to interrupt fights with noise or a visual barrier, not your hands!

For more resources, check out <https://sfhumanesociety.org/behavior-library/>