

Garston Animal Rescue

Introducing a New Cat to your Existing Cat/s

If your own cat is out when the new cat or kitten arrives, don't let the new one loose in your house – you don't want your resident cat to get a shock when she arrives home and thinks her home has been invaded by an unwelcome stranger.

Keep your new kitten in one room and continue to allow your resident cat to roam round as usual.

Buy an extra feeding bowl, litter tray and scoop for the new cat. Don't expect them to share.

Introduce when it is calm in your household. Gradually allow the new kitten out into the rest of the home – under supervision. To begin with don't leave your new pet alone with your existing pet.

If anyone is going to be restricted it should be the new pet not the old one. Your new kitten needs to learn their place in the pecking order and your old cat is the boss.



If it's a stray cat you're rescuing, then consider borrowing a cage for the stray to use in the first few days. This way, the new cat and your own cat can sniff each other, hiss or growl at each other without doing any damage. This enables them to gradually become used to one another over a period of time.

(It's worth getting a stray checked by the vet for a chip in case you've taken in someone's precious lost cat.)

Stay calm. Allow lots of time and patience. The integration can't be rushed.

Have your TV and music at a far lower volume than usual. Consider playing something calming, eg Classic FM.

Have fewer visitors than usual for the first few days of so of the arrival of the new animal.

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We always suggest that people give lots of extra love and cuddles to the existing pet; after all, the arrival of a new animal makes them feel very insecure and unsure of your feelings. A few extra treats e.g. toys, catnip, food, may help.

Still give lots of love to the new arrival, but just perhaps be a little discreet, so as not to distress the resident animal. Maybe when the original pet is in another room then take this opportunity to reassure the new and very frightened animal. Speak in a quiet and calm voice to them, and blink at them.

What many people don't know is that in the wild to stare is a confrontational act, often followed by pursuit and aggression. So blink in an exaggerated fashion.

Don't shout or sound impatient with your resident pet if they are aggressive or confrontational with the new animal.

Sympathise with the original resident and go so far as to apologise to them – after all, you wouldn't like it if your space was suddenly invaded.

If the new animal is being attacked obviously protect him/her (remember however that any animal which feels threatened may then naturally act aggressively towards you – because they are feeling very frightened). So perhaps wear a thicker long-sleeved top to protect yourself, and be prepared for your face to get the odd inadvertent scratch if caught in the crossfire.



However, don't intervene unnecessarily – they have to be allowed to establish a relationship. Remember also that it may not be the newcomer who is threatened.

Put around your house/flat a few drops of Lavender Oil – because this will help to mask the scent of each animal, and also because it is said to have calming properties.

For the first few days at least, wash your hands in between touching each animal to remove the scent of the other.

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Have ready a quick change of t-shirt, pullover, etc. so that when you go from one animal to the other you can have a swift change. This helps to minimise any antagonism between each animal.

If you have any ideas we can add to this leaflet, we'd love to hear from you. Our only aim is to help the animals.

Thank you.