



Your Cat's First Week Home

Before you bring your cat home:

- Gather all necessary supplies: food and water dishes, litter box and scoop, scratching post, break-away collar, ID tag, a variety of toys, treats, etc.
- Consider bringing home a blanket that your cat has been sleeping on at the shelter so she has something familiar when she gets home.
- Cat-proof your home: Put away anything that your cat might chew on, make sure all hazardous chemicals are out of reach, and tie up loose cords that your cat might try to play with.
- Choose a space for your cat's litter box. It should be easily accessible to your cat and away from appliances that start and stop suddenly, such as washing machines and dryers. It should also be at least several feet away from her food and water bowls. If you live in a multi-story house, it is a good idea to put a litter box on each level.
- Set up a small space, such as a spare bedroom or bathroom, where your new cat can stay while she settles in to her new home. Include a litter box, food and water, a place to perch, and a place to hide. Some cats may only need a few days in their own space, while others may need a few weeks before having access to the rest of the house. Skipping this step may prolong the amount of time it takes for your new cat to adjust to her new home.

When you get your new cat home:

- Take her to her litter box and let her explore a bit. It is not necessary to put your cat in the box or move her paws in the litter; she just needs to know where the box is. Show her where her food and water are, as well.
- Give your cat some time to explore her new home on her own. Many cats feel nervous in new places and need time to settle in before they want to interact.
- Introduce your new pet to other pets in your home slowly. See "Pet Introductions" for more detailed information.

The First Week

- Give your new cat several days to settle in and get used to the routine of your household before inviting people over to meet her. Remember, everything is new to her, and having to interact with lots of new people can be overwhelming for even the most social cat.
- If you set up a small room for your cat to stay in at first, you can gradually begin giving her more freedom at the end of her first week home.
- If you change your cat's diet, do so gradually to avoid tummy upset. Mix a little of the new food in with the food you are currently feeding and gradually add more of the new food to less of the old over 7-10 days until your cat is eating just the new food.