



**Humane
World for
Animals™**

Formerly called the Humane
Society of the United States

Prevent stress in cats



Bringing your new cat home: Start on the right paw

Change is stressful for cats, even if it's good change, like joining your family. So don't be dismayed if your cat acts scared or uncertain when you first bring them home. Here's how you can help your new best friend adjust to your household.

Set up a safe zone

Choose a quiet room and equip it with a litter box, toys, scratching post, bed, hiding spot, food and water. This will serve as your cat's safe zone while they acclimate to the smells and sounds of your household.

Take it slow

Once they're comfortable, start leaving the door open, allowing them to explore the rest of the house, and slowly introduce them to other pets and household members. If your new cat needs more time, use a baby gate to let them see other pets without having to interact with them.

Keep it low-key

During the acclimation period, allow your cat to choose how much attention they want with you and other members of your household. Forcing your cat to be held or petted will not comfort them and may create unwanted behaviors.

Happy, healthy life

Chronic stress affects your cat's quality of life and can even lead to illness and behavior problems such as avoiding the litter box, aggression, overgrooming or marking territory. Help keep your cat healthy with these tips.

Reduce scents and sounds. Cats have sharper senses than humans and can be overwhelmed by blasting music and beeping electronics, as well as essential oils, scented candles, incense, fragrance sprays or plug-ins, and heavily scented cleaning products. Consider toning down the noise and scents, or set aside a quiet, scent-free space where your cat can escape.

Provide a pleasant potty. Notice your cat's litter box preferences; most prefer a large, open box and unscented litter with a sandy texture. Provide at least two boxes in different locations for a single cat (and add another box for each additional cat in your home) in places they feel safe, and scoop waste at least once a day.

Respect boundaries. Most cats prefer being scratched on their head, neck and shoulders; pay attention to body language to decipher your cat's preferences. Use gentle handling, positive training, and treats for stressful occasions such as visiting the vet or trimming nails.

Keep them entertained. Physical and mental stimulation are as important as food and water. Provide food puzzles, vertical space for climbing, different types of scratching posts, a catio or window perches, and interactive play.

Learn more humaneworld.org/cats-meow.