

HUMANE SOCIETY OF INDIANAPOLIS

Helping Your Cat Adjust to its New Home

Cats are very affected by stress, and changing homes can be very stressful for them. Cats are also very resilient, so given patience and some understanding, they can adapt wonderfully to their new home with you.

Make sure you keep your cat or kitten in the box that we sent home with you during the ride home. Some cats do not like car rides so allowing them to stay in their box which smells familiar to them will help in their transition. Any time you transport them in a car make sure they are contained to keep them more comfortable.

Remember that your home is completely new to your cat, so give him or her some time to adapt. Make sure to keep him or her indoors. It may be good to confine the cat to a smaller area than your entire home with access to its litterbox and food and water until he or she becomes comfortable. Keep your cat separate from other animals at first until he or she adapts, then introduce the other animals slowly. Be sure to keep all windows closed or all screens secure.

Be patient. Your cat may hide for the first few days as he or she becomes used to the new surroundings. It's not uncommon for them to hide at first. Talk quietly to the cat, offer toys, especially to a kitten. You may engage him or her in play and get the kitten out of its hiding spot that way. Be prepared to spend several hours with your cat, but don't force interaction. Sit quietly with the cat. If he or she seeks you out, feel free to lavish attention on them. Give them time—not all cats will want love and affection right away.

Provide a sleeping area for your cat; if you provide a bed you may help to prevent him or her from sleeping on your furniture. They often like several sleeping areas. Respect them while they are sleeping and make sure children leave them alone during their sleep.

See our handout on introducing new cats to resident animals for more tips on how to make sure the introduction goes smoothly.

If you are having problems, please contact our Behavior Helpline at 317-876-2173 or email behavior@indyhumane.org and they can give you more tips to try to help your cat acclimate.