

## Keep in mind

It is never, ever a good idea to just put cats together and "let them fight it out." Such a strategy presents serious initial risks for injury and sets the stage for prolonged, if not permanent, social conflict among the cats. First impressions are extremely important for cats, and an overly ambitious introduction can sometimes require months of behavior modification to help cats co-exist.

You must prepare for a variety of outcomes. The cats may become best friends, they may exist with mutual tolerance, they may actively avoid one another with occasional skirmishes or one or both may be so intolerant of the other that fights are frequent. In cases where cats can't learn to get along, finding one of the cats another home may have to be considered. Appropriate introductions can help prevent this unfortunate outcome.



**Escondido Humane Society**  
3450 E. Valley Parkway  
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[www.escondidohumanesociety.org](http://www.escondidohumanesociety.org)

**Escondido Humane Society**

## Forging feline relationships

**Tips on introducing your newly adopted cat to your resident felines**



Visit us online at  
[www.escondidohumanesociety.org](http://www.escondidohumanesociety.org)  
for more cat resources

The Escondido Humane Society  
Adoption Center is open from  
10 a.m. to 5 p.m. seven days a week.

## Cat-to-cat introductions

At first, the cats should be allowed to only smell and hear each other, not see or touch each other. Confine the new cat to a small room with food, water, a litter box and a bed. After a few days, during which time can be spent with the new cat, you may alternate which cat is confined to the room and which is allowed to run free in the house. This will give the new cat a chance to explore the house without the resident cat being present.

Place towels with the scent of the other cat underneath each cat's food dish and on resting places. Rub the cat toys with the scent of the new cat. The goal is to have this scent associated with good things.

Offer both cats preferred treats close to the door of the cat's room. Or slip a toy under the door to encourage play. This helps each to associate good things with the other's presence.

Repeat these procedures until there are no aggressive or fearful responses and both cats begin to show some curiosity about each other.

When the cats are first together, keep the session brief and continue to offer enjoyable things like food, toys and petting.

Do not allow the cats to be alone together until they are consistently demonstrating friendly behaviors with each other for at least a week.

Punishment is not helpful with cat introductions as it is counterproductive to creating the association of good things with each other's presence.

Keep the resident cat's routine the same by keeping feeding, playing and sleeping times and locations the same as before the new cat arrived. This will of course change when you alternate the cats' locations.

This above protocol can be used to solve the problem of two resident cats who fight.

Separate them and alternate their locations for a week or two.

High retreats must be provided in a multi-cat household. These places help to eliminate stress.

There are pheromone products on the market but these should be viewed as something to assist, not to completely solve the situation.

If you continue to have problems introducing your cats, please call us at (760) 888-2275 to speak with our Adoptions Counselors and behaviorist.

