

Introducing Your Kitten to Other Pets

Around the third or fourth day after you bring your kitten home and she is comfortable with the first room you gave her, put the kitten into her carrier and bring her into the family room or other room where your family spends time together. If you have more than one pet, introduce the other pets to the kitten while she is still in her carrier, one at a time. Let one pet out to sniff and look at the new family member. Stay with your pets and supervise their behaviour. At first, most kittens will exhibit anxious behaviour with the new animal. Give both animals time to look at and watch each other. If after a half hour or so the kitten is still in the back of her carrier, take her back into the original room, where she is already comfortable.

If the other pet is a dog and making noises (for example, barking) toward the kitten, ask him to settle down and be quiet. When he does, mark and reward his quiet behaviour.

Kittens can be somewhat skittish, especially when they have not had socialization opportunities. Loud noises, such as hearing a dog bark for the first time, can be frightening to your kitten. Dogs do bark at strangers, especially if they have not had socialization opportunities with cats prior to the new kitten. Your dog may get excited when meeting this new friend, and he could scare the kitten unintentionally. Do not scold your dog for barking; ask for quiet instead. If you would like information on how to train your dog to be quiet on cue, please let us know.

If your dog can settle down, then let the two animals look at and smell each other while the kitten is in her carrier until your dog gets bored with the new kitten and lies down or walks away.

If your kitten is being introduced to an older cat in your home, do the same thing. Let the resident cat check out the kitten, if she will, and make sure to give the older cat lots of attention. In many cases, the resident cat will snub the new kitten or hiss at her. This is because another feline has infiltrated her territory. Within a few weeks, this snubbing and hissing behaviour generally dwindles and eventually ceases. In some cases, however, this behaviour lessens but still continues. It may help to hold your older cat and give her lots of additional attention. This should help to stop the jealousy issues some cats have when a new kitten is brought into the home. Sometimes your older cat will never accept the new kitten. Your older cat will, however, learn to tolerate the new kitten, even if she does not like her. Give your resident cat lots of attention to reassure her she is still top cat in the house.

For the first encounter with the other pet(s), five to ten minutes is enough time together for introductions. Depending on how the animals react to one another, only one minute may be enough time. Watch the interaction, and if either pet becomes too aroused or concerned, put the kitten back in her room and close the door. You can try the introductions again later that day or the next. If the first introduction went well, repeat the exercise a few more times the first day.

The next step is to bring your kitten into the room with the other animal present and open the door to her carrier. Make sure there are places for your kitten to hide if she feels threatened. Again, allow only one resident pet to meet her at any given time. Supervise both of them closely. The kitten should be allowed to come out of hiding in her own time. This may take a while, so you will need some patience. Remember to not scold or reprimand your dog for barking. Being escorted out of the

room and not being able to stay with you is reprimand enough. Repeat this introduction exercise with all family pets, one at a time, until they begin to get comfortable with one another. In time, many will become great friends and even share mealtimes together. Once all the pets have had many opportunities to check out their new family member, it is time to allow more than one resident pet at a time with the kitten in the room. At first, with two resident pets checking her out, the kitten will most likely be afraid and hide. If the other two pets are dogs, ask them to be quiet and settle down. If the dogs do not quiet down, take them out of the room. Repeat this exercise later in the day until the dogs can be quiet when they are with the kitten.

When introducing your kitten to other resident cats, the same supervision is needed. Again, cats can be very territorial animals. Keep this in mind because your other cats may snub and/or terrorise your new kitten. If you can let them work this out on their own, it will be easier for both of them. However, if you feel one animal is in danger, your intervention may be necessary.

Depending on the animals' reactions to each other, the introductions can take a few hours or as long as a few weeks. This is the most important time for all the animals. They will all need time to adjust to each other, and that time should be given.

When introducing any other animal, follow the same set of guidelines. When raised together, many animals can learn to be friendly with one another. However, it is important to note that some animals may not get along. For example, if you have a pet bird, you should not leave your bird and your kitten together unsupervised. Cats are predatory animals and instinctively they will most likely try to eat your bird. However, sometimes even the most unusual relationships can be formed for a lifelong friendship.



If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us

www.Hamptonparkvets.co.uk

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