

Why to Confine your New Kitty



Watching your feline explore her new place can be a joy—but if you let your New Kitty have the run of your home too soon, behavior problems may follow. That’s why it’s key to confine New Kitty! Starting out in a small room will help her feel more comfortable. Bonus: confinement encourages good litter box habits, too!

Before you bring New Kitty home: Choose a small room as your new friend’s temporary

domain. Bathrooms work especially well! They’re easy to clean and easy to get in and out of. Best of all, they usually don’t have much furniture for New Kitty to hide under or to soil while she gets to know where her box is.

Getting the space ready: Food, water, a bed, and a litter box are key. Make sure there is no laundry on the floor—soft laundry can be a tempting, and you don’t want kitty to go potty anywhere other than the box! Also, remove small irresistible items such as hair ties, dental floss, earrings, and bobby pins. Be sure that any potentially toxic cleaning products are locked away, and close off any small, inaccessible hiding places.

Didn’t get set up before adopting? Not to worry, just leave New Kitty in the carrier while you prepare the space.

Adopting two kitties at once? If they have already lived together (e.g. kittens in the same litter, or adult cats from the same household), they can be confined together. If they haven’t met each other yet, they should be confined separately, at least until after they get a clean bill of health or all clear at their veterinary wellness check.

If you have other pets: Confining the new arrival can help your other furry household members adjust. While New Kitty stays in her safety zone and gets used to the sounds, routines, and smells of your home, your established pets are getting familiar with the smell of the new family member.

Integrating into the household: After getting a wellness check at the vet, New Kitty can come out of the bathroom—as long as you don’t still see any signs of stress or fear. For some felines, this takes about a week. For shy cats, this could be weeks or even months. Some time in confinement is a small price to pay for a lifetime of happiness with your kitty! When New Kitty seems ready to come out, start with slow, supervised visits, then very gradually increase access to more space and new parts of the home.

It’s never too late to start over: If your adult cat hides as soon as leaving confinement, it’s wise to take a step back. Try confinement again: adult cats are more cautious and can’t be rushed.

Establishing a routine: Regular feeding times will help your new furry friend—and any established pets—adjust. Feeding all your pets together at the same time helps them associate each other with good experiences!

With these guidelines, you can help your new friend put her best paw forward. Don't let New Kitty roam and explore immediately, and your patience can be rewarded with a happy, well-adjusted family member!