



Bringing Your New Cat Home

Courtesy of The Humane Society of the United States

Congratulations! You have a new cat. No doubt you're looking forward to years of happy companionship. But what do you do now?

Be prepared

Before bringing your new furball home, outfit your home with all the supplies you could possibly need.

- Litter and litter box
- Food and water bowls
- Cat or kitten food
- Scratching post
- Cat toys and treats

Coming home

The first thing you should know about your new pet is that most cats hate to travel. For the trip home, confine your pet in a sturdy cat carrier. Don't leave him loose in your car, where he might panic and cause an accident, or get out when you open the car door. He may yowl and cry and try mightily to get out of the carrier, but don't give in.

Upon arrival

After the ride home, he will, most likely, not be in the mood for fun. To make his transition to your household as comfortable as possible, select a quiet, closed-in area, such as your bedroom or a small room away from the main foot traffic, and provide him with a litter box, food and water, toys and a scratching post.

Let your new pet become acquainted with that limited area for the first few days. Be sure to spend plenty of time with him in that room, but if he's hiding under the bed, don't force him to come out. If necessary, sit on the floor to talk to him and offer treats. Let him sniff all your belongings and investigate all the hiding places.

Your new cat may be full of self-confidence and itching to get out and make himself at home. Or he may be more of a shrinking violet who needs more time to adjust.

The first week

Over a few days, slowly introduce him to the rest of your house, including the other pets and household members. Make sure he always has access to "his" room so he can retreat to it if he feels nervous.

It will take a little while, but he'll eventually start to feel comfortable at home.

Cats vary in terms of how demanding they are as pets, so let yours guide you to the level of attention he wants, whether it's your hand for petting, or your lap for sitting. Provide him with the necessary creature comforts, and give him the companionship he seeks, and he'll be content.

For more information on cat behavior, visit hssaz.org and click on Adopt A Pet then Pet Behavior.