

Helping Scared Cats Adjust

The most important thing to remember when dealing with a scared cat is that you must exercise patience. Your cat will come around at his or her own pace. Sometimes there will be no signs of progress for weeks or even months, and then you will start to notice your cat becoming more relaxed around you and more open to affection. Remember not to expect too much too soon. Your cat will eventually bond with you and you will be so glad you did not give up on him.

Here are a few simple guidelines to make your cat feel more comfortable.

- When you first bring your cat home start him off in one room in your house, preferably not a bedroom as he will hide under the bed and you will not be able to interact. Gradually give him more space to explore.
- Give him his own safe spot to retreat to, such as an open pet carrier.
- Spend as much time as you can in the room with the cat. At the beginning just talk to him, allow him to get used to you. Leave items around him such as your shoes or a pillow you have slept on so that he will get used to your smell.
- Try and establish a routine where you interact with him at the same time of day every day, he will start to anticipate your company.
- Leave a radio on while you are gone so he can get used to human voices, especially if he has no pet companionship.
- If there are other pets in the house leave items in the room that smell of the other pets.
- Always get down on the same level as the cat
- Approach slowly and calmly, keeping your voice low
- Avoid sudden movements or loud noises
- Never approach him from the front; this will be interpreted as a sign of aggression.
- Start off by using a long soft toy to stroke the back of his head and neck area. Move your hand closer each time you do this.
- When he is comfortable move your hand from the toy and stroke the top and back of his head very lightly with your fingers. Each time you approach pet him a little more and for longer.
- Use treats to draw him out. You should only feed canned food to him while you are present. This way he will associate you with something good.
- When he is ready to be picked up, try to pick him up as often as possible even although he won't like it. Most cats once in your arms will respond to being held and stroked.
- Watch for body language signals and back off if the cat is growling, spitting or swishing his tail.