

Integrative Veterinary Care

Introducing your cat to a new family member
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If you plan a change such as introducing a new family member, either human or non-human; provide a safe place for your cat to escape to. Cat trees are wonderful safety zones for our cats to retreat to when they feel the need. We need to treat their space with respect and if they have hidden away in their tree, we need to leave them to enjoy quiet time.

We need to be sure if they are indoor/outdoor cats, they have a safe way to enter and exit the house without being cornered. If possible, it's best to supply them with a safe area in the yard that is theirs alone away from dogs and children. For example, some cats I know have a cat tree in the back yard just outside the 'cat door' window which includes a shelf to lie on. They live with two dogs and need to be able to 'get away' occasionally. The outdoor shelf gives them ample room and a great place to sunbathe.

Adding a new human family member may be easier. A new baby can bring great joy to your world but also totally new routines.

Set up baby's room before birth; rearrange other household furniture in advance. Create toddler proof spaces for litter boxes, food and sleeping areas also. This new center of the universe can be very disconcerting to your feline companions who are used to getting all our attentions. Realize they may feel displaced and try to give them special attention whenever time allows. This applies equally well to adding an adult to the household. If your cat loves the new person, great! Treats and feeding can be turned over to the new person to help them bond with your feline friend. But don't push it. Let them come around in their own time. After all, they had you first!