



Set Up for Success: The First 30 Days

Sanctuary room preparation, homecoming day, predictable routines, and resident pet introductions.

Step 1: The Sanctuary Room (Before Bringing Cat Home)

Never give a new cat free run of the whole house on Day 1. It is terrifying and overwhelms their sensory system.

Prepare a dedicated, quiet bedroom or office with:

- Litter box placed far from food and water bowls.
- Comfortable bedding and elevated perches.
- Scratching post and cardboard scratcher.
- Feliway pheromone diffuser plugged into the wall 24 hours prior.
- Accessible, safe hiding spots (cardboard box with entrance hole; block off under-the-bed if impossible to reach in an emergency).

Day 1: Arrival & Unpacking

- Carry the carrier directly into the Sanctuary Room and shut the door behind you.
- Unlatch the carrier door and step back quietly. Do not drag or pull the cat out. Let them emerge on their own terms.
- Sit quietly on the floor, speak in a gentle whisper, read a book, and offer a Churu treat. If they prefer to remain in the carrier or box, let them!

Week 1–2: Routine & Confidence Building

- **Predictability is Medicine:** Feed meals at the exact same times every day. Announce your arrival with a soft, cheerful greeting.
- Engage in daily play therapy with a wand toy to build confidence.
- Do not invite friends or family over to meet the new cat during this decompression window.

Resident Pet Introductions (Gradual Scent & Sight)

1. **Scent Swapping:** Rub a soft towel over the new cat's cheeks and place it under your resident pet's food dish. Swap bedding back and forth.
2. **Doorway Feeding:** Feed both pets on opposite sides of the closed Sanctuary Room door so they associate the other's scent with positive food rewards.
3. **Visual Barrier:** Install a tall baby gate or crack the door open an inch with a doorstop so they see each other without physical contact.
4. **Supervised Short Meetings:** Keep meetings under 5 minutes while distracting both animals with play and high-value treats. Gradually extend time. Never rush this process!