

## **Two Cats Can Live as "PURRR...FECTLY" as One**

**You've decided to adopt another cat. Congratulations!**

**Many multi-cat owners will tell you that how you go about introducing your new cat to your other cat(s) will determine how well everyone will get along. Like people, cats are choosy about their relationships - they can be the best of friends or just tolerate each other with a minimum of conflict.**

**Timing is very important in order to ensure a good relationship can develop. Listed below are the steps to ensure your cats get along!**

- 1. Confine the new cat to one room with his/her litter box, food water and a bed.** Feed your present cat(s) near the other side of the room's door. Don't put the food so close to the door that the present cat is too upset by the other to eat. This tactic will help start things out right by associating something enjoyable (FOOD! Yum) with the other's presence. Gradually move the dishes close to the door until the cats can calmly eat directly on either side. Next, use two door stops to prop the door just enough to allow the cats to see each other, then repeat the whole process.
- 2. Switch sleeping blankets between the new cat and the resident cat so they have a chance to become accustomed with each other's scent.** Try placing the scented blankets underneath the food dishes as well.
- 3. Once the new cat is using his/her litter box and eating regularly while still confined, let him or her have free time in the house while confining the other animal(s).** This switch provides another way for the cats to experience each other's scent without a face to face meeting. It also allows the newcomer to become familiar with the new surroundings without being frightened by the other animals.
- 4. Avoid any interactions between the cats that result in either fearful or aggressive behaviour.** If these responses are allowed to become a habit, they may be difficult to change. It's better to introduce the animals to each other so gradually that neither cat becomes afraid or aggressive. You can expect mild forms of these behaviours, but don't give them the opportunity to intensify. If either cat becomes fearful or aggressive, separate them, and continue the introduction process in a series of gradual steps, as outlined above.

**In addition, it is a good idea to add another litter box and scoop and clean all of the boxes more frequently. Make sure that no cat is being "ambushed" or bothered by another while trying to use any of the boxes!!!! (This can result in behaviour problems)**

**Hissing, spitting and growling are to be expected for the first little while. However, if a fight breaks out, do not interfere directly by grabbing either of the cats. If you anticipate a fight, throw a blanket over each cat, wrapping the blanket around the cat before picking him or her up. Separate the cats until they have calmed down. It may be best to leave the cats separated when you are not home until you are certain that they are over this stage.**

**REMEMBER: ALL SUCCESSFUL INTRODUCTIONS REQUIRE TIME AND PATIENCE.**

**Giving plenty of both means everyone will be living happily ever after.**

**(Reprinted: The Toronto Humane Society's Animal Talk Newsletter.)**