

These protocols contain general advice on those animal-related matters which, in Collier County Domestic Animal Service's experience, affect animal lovers and pet owners most often.

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### **New Cat Introductions**

- 1. Initial Separation:** Have the two cats separated, with a door in between. Do this for around two weeks. Let them sniff each other under the door. You will want to let each cat out, separately, to have time with you. This will also allow the other cat's odors to gradually enter the rest of the house.
- 2. Controlled Interactions:** Get infant gates to control access to the room which a cat claims. Doubling one on top of the other prevents jumping or climbing over. This permits the cats to see and smell each other but doesn't permit aggressive interactions. In fact, if any aggressive behavior occurs (see list below), give it a time out (see #7). Be ready to implement time-outs as needed, you can immediately stop any threat behaviors.
- 3. Positive Associations:**
  - A. While they can see each other through the gate, encourage positive behavior by feeding treats. Don't try to get them close together. Work into that slowly. Have a friend help you. Have the friend sit well away from the gate, with the cat near him/her. You do the same from the other side. Feed treats, play with interactive toys, and do some petting at a distance:
  - B. Give each cat its daily food in locations they can see each other through the infant gate, but separated by quite a distance. The goal is to get them to associate the positive activity of eating tasty food with the activity of seeing each other. As they come to act tolerantly, gradually move the bowls closer together. A good rule of thumb is to move the bowl one "bowl's-length" every three to five days, as long as no aggressive behavior occurs. Move more slowly if needed.
  - C. After 5-7 days of A., and B., allow the cats to interact for five minutes at a time, with supervision. Slowly increase the length of time, as they adjust over the next few months. A good way to do this is to have "treat" sessions. Feed very highly prized treats (cheese is often good), in very small pieces. You want to be able to actively control the presentation of the treats from moment to moment. That way, they are close together under positive and rewarding circumstances. It will work best if you can have help with one person feeding each cat.
  - D. Try to have three to five, 5-minute sessions each day (if you have time). However, allow at least an hour to separate each session. The goal is to gradually expand the positive together time by controlling the duration, not stringing a bunch of them together. For every three days that they interact without aggression, add five minutes to each session.
- 4. Kitty Condos:** Get "kitty condos" or cat shelves for several locations in the house. Cats like to be up high--they feel more secure. Encourage the cats to use them by feeding treats on these shelves. See which cat prefers which shelf and try to encourage exclusive use of these. You can do this by seeing who goes where and then removing other "intruders" from those spaces. Do this with all the cats. Encourage one cat to pick an area away from the others. Allow each to mark out a shelf when the other cat is not present (and vice versa).

**5. Felaway Artificial Scent Marking:** Use Felaway® on the shelves or condos. Felaway is an artificial scent marking which has been shown to help cats feel comfortable in new or threatening environments. Follow the directions on the bottle for each cat's territory. You will not need to mark every corner and edge, as the bottle describes. However, you will want to mark the Kitty Condos, window sills, and any sleeping surfaces the cats have in their areas. Felaway® can be bought on-line or from your veterinarian.

**6. Territories:** Give each cat its own "territory." Make these exclusive, each with its own food and water bowls and litter boxes. However, it's important that the cats not come to feel isolated. Rotate them through the house for company. Also give each cat controlled access to a common room (but not together--see #6-C.).

### **7. Extinguish Negative Behaviors:**

- A. Select a bathroom, small room, or other isolate-able area to use as a time-out location. This location is to be used to isolate the aggressive cat for 10-15 minutes, as soon as the cat begins to act inappropriately (see B., and C1. below).
- B. Do NOT tolerate any threatening behavior from any cat. As soon as one begins to act dominant or threatening, it goes into the time-out space. Don't yell, just scoop the cat up, put the cat in, and close the door. If this is not possible (say, for example, you're having a treat session), spray the offender with the water bottle or shake a noise can.
- C. One of the keys to successful time-out training is consistency. The time-out must be implemented every time, immediately, and repeated as often as necessary. Even if the cat has just come out of the room, if it makes a threat 15 sec later, back it goes for another 15 mins. Here are examples of milder threatening behaviors (stronger ones are obvious):
1. Growling, snarling, hissing (although these are usually defensive threats, not dominating threats.)  
Double check that the non-noisy one isn't subtly threatening the other. If it is, IT'S the one who gets the time out, not the noise-maker.
  2. One cat stares at the other cat.
  3. One cat has fur elevated or spiked, while crouching in a "stalking" posture
  4. One cat slowly approaches the other, ears up, staring.
  5. One cat uses a stalking walk when approaching the other.
  6. One cat puffs its tail or arches its back.
  7. One cat lays down on its side in front of another. (While in dogs this is a submissive posture, in cats it's actually domineering...)
  8. While laying down and looking at the other cat, it begins to lash its tail, flatten its ears, or stares.
  9. One cat follows the other too closely
  10. One cat prepares to ambush another

If you can coordinate it, reward positive exchanges while not tolerating negative exchanges. Have some treats on hand and toss them to the cats when a positive exchange happens. Here are some examples of positive exchanges (note that some of these are designed into the program above).

### **8. Positive Exchanges to Reward:**

1. Lying quietly within 4' of each other, or closer.
2. Looking at each other, and then looking away.
3. One walking by another, who is sitting or lying down, without showing any of the "threats," above.

You want to control interactions for at least a month or two, to reduce fighting, help the social hierarchy settle out, and get things back to normal.

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