

### **New Cat? Set Realistic Expectations!**

You can expect that it will take your cat some time to get used to the new routines and environment. The 'Rule of Three' means that you can gauge the time it might take for your cat to fully acclimate to his home in threes: three days, three weeks, and three months.

### **Three Days: Be Patient!**

The first 3 days are the initial "detox period" as the cat transitions from the shelter to your home. Your home is new and exciting, with more stimulating activity, space, and freedom than a shelter can ever provide. It can be overwhelming for many cats, especially those who have been in the shelter for weeks.

To help keep from overwhelming your new cat and help make his transition as low-stress as possible, we recommend confining your cat to one room for the first few days to weeks, depending on how quickly your cat acclimates. Having only one room, such as a bathroom or bedroom, to get used to at first minimizes stress for your cat, and allows you to monitor how well he is eating, drinking, and using his litter box. It also allows you access to him for important bonding and socializing time.

These first few days require an immense amount of patience on your part. Your cat may be very nervous and hide for the first couple of days. Be patient, and allow your cat to adjust at his own pace. If your cat is outgoing and seems well settled, remember that keeping him confined for a few days will help him learn his surroundings and get used to his litter box and scratching post, making him more likely to use them!

### **Three Weeks: Expanding Horizons!**

After 3 weeks, your cat is probably getting used to your comings and goings, learning the daily routine, and starting to figure out when the next meal is coming. He may have acclimated enough to have full run of the house, or he may just be starting to venture out of his room. Providing him with scratching posts, litter boxes, and blankets/beds in his own room at first allows you to then place these objects in other areas of the home, giving him familiar scents and sights to help him get used to a new place.

### **Three Months: Likely Settled In!**

At 3 months, most cats know they are "home." It's a process to get there, but with patience and a sense of humor, the two of you can scale the mountain together and enjoy the journey toward a great relationship. Keep in mind that settling into a new environment can be a lengthy endeavor, but well worth the effort for you and your new family member!

### **For additional resources on bringing home your new cat, visit Fear Free Happy Homes!**

Fear Free Happy Homes offers FREE online content and education for pet owners to help their pets live their happiest, healthiest, & fullest lives at home, at the vet, at the groomer, and everywhere in between! You can find this great tool by going to <https://www.fearfreehappyhomes.com/>