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How to Help Your Shy Cat Acclimate to Her New Home

Do you have a shy cat? Feel like you've tried everything to help your cat out of its shell? Here are some more suggestions to help your cat be more comfortable in your home.

At Sun Cities 4 Paws, we love when our animals are adopted into loving homes. And one of the most rewarding things we see is when a particularly shy cat finds that person or family who sees past the cat's shyness and wants to offer her a second chance.

But, any time a pet is adopted into a new home, he or she will need time to adjust. A very shy cat can have a difficult time transitioning into a new environment. Sometimes, families bring their shy cats back to us because they believe their new cat is unhappy. That's not necessarily true—some cats are just the proverbial scaredy cats.

Here are some ways to make a shy cat's transition into her new home a little easier:

- Your cat can feel overwhelmed if you let her roam all over the house on her first day home. Let her build up her confidence by getting used to one room at a time.
- Often, the first room a cat gets to see is the bedroom. But then, a shy cat is likely to hide under the bed where you can't touch her. The bathroom has fewer places to hide, and because the bathroom is usually small, she will feel safer. As long as there is a soft bed, a litter box and food and water, she won't mind settling into her new home by starting with the bathroom.
- While your cat will want to meet all the members of her new family, let her meet each person one at a time, so she can get used to their smells and voices. Let her smell their hands first before they try to pet her. And always remember when you're around her, move slowly and talk quietly. Sudden movements and noises can startle a shy cat.
- Cats usually love to play, and playing helps them get rid all the nervous energy they may have built up. However, toys with noisy jingly bells or huge feather toys flying close to her face can make a shy cat panic. She'd rather play with quiet balls, laser lights or soft furry mice at first, and she'd prefer to sneak up on feather toys and attack them instead of having the feather toy chase her!
- If she's found a place to hide, don't drag her out of it. She'll only run away and have a hard time trusting you. She's not hiding because she doesn't like you—it's her way of taking in

and trying to cope with all of the changes. If you tempt her out with a tasty treat or bring her a toy, she just might forget how scared she is.

- Try spraying Feliway on her bed to relax her. Feliway is a product that contains a synthetic version of the naturally occurring facial pheromones of cats. Even though humans can't smell it, cats certainly can! It's feline aromatherapy, and the scent makes a shy cat feel more comfortable because it smells like the scent cats leave on you when they rub against you.

The main thing is, please don't give up on your shy cat. Shy cats just need a little extra time to get used to everything.

If you have a shy kitty, please call Sun Cities 4 Paws (623-773-2246 or info@4pawsrescue.org) for advice if these suggestions don't work. We want you to know that we appreciate your patience, and that with time, your cat will give you all the love she has!