

Fearful Adult Cat Recommendations

*Not all cats are well socialized as kittens, and not all cats are comfortable around humans, especially new ones. That doesn't mean that with patience and work you can't get an adult cat comfortable around you, even if they are extremely scared at first! Please use this guide as a tool to help adjust an fearful adult cat to your presence in your home (if your cat is **less than** 3 months old, please see our *Socializing Kittens* guide first).*

Create a Safe Room

- Identify the common hiding places your cat likes to hide
 - Clear the space underneath so you have easy visual and physical access to them during socialization exercises outlined below
- Provide ample hiding spaces in the rooms they spend time in
 - Place a couple of carriers or hidey beds in the room your cat spends the most time in and make them very comfortable. We want to encourage them to hide in these places if needed.
- It may be helpful to restrict access to one room again to make them feel more secure
 - Whichever room you choose, you may enter and exit like normal but be mindful of sudden movements and loud noises to avoid startling them

Engage in Quiet Socialization Sessions

- Use their meals for the day to complete the exercises
 - Do not free feed. Feed only in meals
 - 1 or 2 short sessions a day (10-15 min in duration)
- Remain quiet and sit on the ground nearby (find a healthy balance between sitting nearby and giving the cat space). Essentially, you are looking to quietly coexist with them.
- Maintain calm body language—avoid sustained eye contact, calling to your cat, sit facing away.
- **Goal 1:** Get them to eat in your presence easily during the day.
- **Goal 2:** Once they eat in your presence during the day, we want to slowly lure them out of their hiding spot with food
 - He/She may be too fearful to eat right now but keep trying!
 - If you notice significant signs of anxiety or stress, try placing the food down on the floor and retreating a few feet. You may have to go to the other end of the room at first. Once they are eating food at a particular distance, retreat to a short distance next time. Continue incrementally decreasing the distance you retreat to until your cat is eating with you sitting nearby.
 - Note: What a cat considers “high-value” can vary from one cat to another so feel free to experiment with different kinds of treats like baby food, wet food, tuna, etc.



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Short Play Sessions

- Play is a great way to break your cat out of a fearful mindset for a while
- Engage your cat in low energy play using a long toy
- You can always use a toy to try and lure your cat out of their hiding spots as well

Tips:

- Be sure to create ample opportunities for enrichment during the day: beds or shelves near windows, etc.
- Be patient! This process takes time but you will see the most progress overall by going in incremental steps.