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|  | Rescue, rehabilitation and re-homing of cats and kittens in the South Peninsula in a home environment Welcome Glen, Fish Hoek, Capri, Noordhoek  and Sun Valley (Cape Town).  **Cell:** 0725422680 (Sharon Petersen)  **Email:** sharonandcats.sp@gmail.com |

**WELCOMING HOME YOUR KITTEN or CAT**

A safe starter room for the new cat or kitten will provide them with the quiet and safety they need while becoming familiar with the scents and sounds of your home. The starter room can be any size but must have a secure door and ceiling (for adult cats please duct-tape or cable tie the windows). Confine your new cat to this room and lock the door at all times (visitors, children or domestic workers may open the door or window by mistake). Have everything the cat needs in the room. If you have other cats, when feeding your cats, feed them on each side of the closed door. This simple technique helps to familiarize them with each other’s smell, plus it helps to build an association between that smell (the existing cat), and something they enjoy – food! Once they are both happily eating on either side of the door you can prop the door open a tiny bit at the next meal, allowing the cats to see a little bit of each other.

* **Give kitty or cat a place to hide.** New cats are often nervous and like to hide. Cardboard boxes or sheets draped over chairs make ideal hiding spots when you first bring kitty home. If you’ve adopted a shy cat, we recommend removing large items of furniture from the room, such as beds and dressers. It is much easier to interact with a cat hiding in a box than a cat hiding under a bed.
* **Help your new cat get to know you.** Place a t-shirt or a piece of your clothing that contains your scent in the safe room.
* **Equip the safe room with cat food, water and litter.** Place food and water on one side of the room and an open (unenclosed) litter box on the other side. Shyer cats may not eat much during the first 24 to 48 hours and may experience temporary diarrhea from stress. If your cat has not eaten in 48 hours, try some cooked skinless chicken.
* **Give your cat a scratch post if you can.** Put a scratching post inside the safe room. Scratching is a natural and comforting behaviour for cats. It’s also important that the scratching post is ideally new or properly clean (your new cat does not want to be stressed by the smells of other cats while first adapting to his or her new surroundings).
* **Cat destresser saves the day.** If your new cat is an adult, you can use a store-bought product to distress the cat. It imitates natural cat pheromones and helps a new cat feel more comfortable. We use Pet Remedy Spray and it is excellent!
* Give your cat some **cat toys for entertainment.** Provide toys such as mice and balls in the safe room for when you are not around.
* **Spend time with your new cat.** In the beginning, visit frequently for short periods of time. Visiting can mean interacting directly with the new cat in the form of play or petting, or quietly reading a book or chatting on the telephone in the same space as your new companion. Keep in mind that a nervous cat may growl, hiss, twitch its tails or pull its ears back. The best response is to speak softly followed by giving the cat some time alone.
* **Keep your cat/kitten inside so he or she does not get lost or run away: Adult cats: keep inside for a minimum of 3-4 weeks inside.**
* **Kittens: keep inside for a minimum of 8 weeks. Kittens should be supervised outside until they are old/big enough to protect themselves around 4 to 6 months.**