

Help! My new cat is hiding and won't come out!

Posted by Jennifer on January 24th, 2011



There she is, under the bed, in the farthest darkest corner. Her eyes are round and big like twin yellow glowing moons, and she cowers away when you reach towards her. What happened to the outgoing, confident, super affectionate cat you adopted at the shelter yesterday? Don't worry! Hiding behavior in cats is a TOTALLY NORMAL and healthy response to a new home! But we have some tips to help you and your new kitty relax and adjust, so you'll have your new loving purring cat back in your lap in (almost) no time at all.

1. **Give her time to adjust.** Your cat may have been happy & relaxed in the shelter or their foster home, but since then, they may have been examined by a vet, put in a cat carrier, taken a car trip, and now are in a total alien universe filled with strange sights, sounds and smells. Every cat is different, just like every home is different. It can take a day, 5 days, a couple of weeks or more for your new cat to relax. **2 weeks** is an average adjustment time for most cats.

As long as your cat is eating, drinking, using the litterbox (even if its under the bed!) and not showing any signs of illness, it is generally safe to leave them in their hiding spot. Many cats will venture out at night when you are sleeping and the world is quiet. If she's hiding in a closet, You can dust baby powder at the closet door to look for paw prints in the morning, to see if she's ventured out. See our previous article on [Cat Hiding Behavior](#) for more on this topic.

2. **Limit new things.** If you're following the tip on in our [Bringing Your New Cat Home](#) article, Kitty is in her starter room. That should be a safe place for her to take her time to get adjusted to how your house sounds & smells. Wait to introduce her to friends, family, and other household pets until she's out from under the bed.

3. **Get her used to you.** If she's under the bed, or hiding behind the bathroom sink, sit in her starter room with her and read a book, or work on your laptop.

4. **Associate you with good things.** If she likes wet food or cat treats, push some into her hiding place a few times a day, and just sit near by as she eats it.

5. **Natural remedies.** Most pet supply stores sell holistic herbal liquid remedies that can be dropped in the cat's water or food (Rescue Remedy is a popular one). Many adopters claim these really help!

6. **Feliway.** Another product available online or in many pet supply stores is the pheromone spray or plug-in brand name Feliway. This particular brand is actually used by many shelters, it is that effective in soothing stressed cats.

7. **Music.** Some adopters we know have told us that playing soothing classical music in the Kitty's starter room has helped Kitty come out of her shell. The music may help lessen other noises outside the room that she's finding frightening.

There you go, seven steps to help your new cat relax and adjust to her new home!
[Learn more about Jennifer, our blog author at Google+](#)

Cat Hiding Behavior and What You Should Know

Posted by Katya on January 18th, 2011



Love Your Pet. *This post is brought to Adopt-a-Pet.com by Susan Tripp, MS, co-author of the Positive Pet Parenting e-Course for www.AnimalBehavior.Net. She is also a member of www.PetConnection.com's advisory board and founder and president of the non-profit www.positivepetparenting.org* You've noticed something odd lately about your cat. Instead of lounging on the couch she's holed up in your closet all day. And when you walk into the room a blur of fur streaks by as she bolts for the safety and comfort of your bed – only she's underneath it.

Has your cat lost it?

Cat hiding behavior is not unusual and is a normal feline response. Cats withdraw suddenly from life and hide the day away when something is just not right in their universe. Common reasons why your cat may cower and want to avoid the public spotlight include one or more of the following conditions: a medical problem, pain, fear or stress.

Medical: Start by ruling out any medical issues. A change in pet behavior is often the first sign of an underlying illness or disease that may be causing discomfort. Medical issues can be ruled out with a thorough veterinary exam that includes diagnostic lab work. If your cat is not feeling well, then a health screening will give you a plan of action. If your veterinarian proclaims a healthy cat, then seek a behavioral explanation.

Pain: A medical exam will usually identify a physical pain unless that pain is caused by, for example, a child who may pull or squeeze the cat's tail or other parts within grabbing distance. On the other hand, cats who are unable to get to their litter boxes because of a closed door or a bully cat sometimes refuse to soil outside of the box and may experience emotional and physical discomfort.

Fear: Cats see the world through the eyes of a predator and the eyes of prey, which makes them somewhat unique. Using physical punishment is a big mistake with cats. Cats respond to any type of threat or perceived threat with avoidance. Hiding is normal behavior for cats who want to avoid contact with a perceived threat. For instance, some cats share better than others. So, if your cat must share his or her stuff with a power hungry housemate who is bullying your cat, he or she may be afraid of public places or may just choose to avoid conflict. Territorial aggression is normal in cats so if you have more than one cat, be on the lookout for cat bully behavior.



Stress: Cats bond to territory and therefore are stressed by changes in the environment. Take a look around. Have you added new furniture? Is a new cat or dog now part of the family? Maybe a neighboring cat has taken up residence in your backyard. Has your routine changed? How is your stress level? Yes, if you're stressing out your cat may be stressing with you! Try to keep your cat's stuff such as feeding bowls, litter boxes and climbing trees in the same place. Keep in mind that we may like to change up the furniture but our feline friends do not.

If you are not sure why your cat might be stressed, seek the help of a professional. In the meantime, allow your cat safe hiding places like under the bed or in a closet. Cats feel less stress when they are able to hide or can perch in high places. To give your cat extra comfort, add a tall floor to ceiling cat tree with plenty of comfy perching places. Add calming feline pheromones to your cat's sleeping areas or to the cat's favorite rooms with a commercial product diffuser or mist.

First and foremost, do not scold, shout or swat the cat to correct or control any behavior. Do not forcibly remove your cat from her perceived safe area. Cats feel less stress when they are able to choose movement and are able to move freely. Lessening stress will likely decrease the cat's hiding behavior.

As tempting as it can be, do not stroke or soothe your cat during the hiding. You may accidentally increase the hiding with your loving attention. Instead, ignore the cat. Do praise your cat for bravery and for any other behavior you want more of.

Think of ways you might make it worthwhile for your cat to come out of hiding. Call your cat for meals and treats. If your cat will eat near you, try hand feeding your cat. Lack of appetite is one sign of stress. If the cat won't take food from your hand, try sitting quietly near your cat and tossing an occasional treat. If your cat takes the treat, toss the treats closer to where you are sitting. Over time, the cat may take the treat from your hand.

If all of these suggestions fail to reduce your cat's hiding behavior then make sure you visit with your cat frequently to give mental stimulation and ensure he or she is getting nutrition, water and access to the litter box. Or, consider giving your cat a private room that is people and pet free. Make that private room a cat sanctuary that has everything your cat needs for comfort and security.