

FEARFUL CATS

9 Tips for Socializing a Shy Cat

By: [Jane A Kelley](#)

Have you had this experience? You're thrilled about your new cat, and you're anxious to give her the loving forever-home and warm lap you know she's been yearning for. But as soon as you open the carrier, she flees. For days, you see no sign of her, except maybe some food missing from the dish or some pee in the litter box. Or maybe you start looking under furniture and, in the farthest, darkest corner under your sofa, you see a pair of terrified golden-green eyes staring at you.

You, my friend, have just adopted a shy cat. But don't worry: You can help your new friend come out of her shell. It's just going to take some time and patience. Here are some tips to help you along the way.

1. Understand that it's not your fault or hers

You brought this cat into your life with very good intentions, and there's a 99 percent chance that nothing you did caused her to react like this. Your cat may have been traumatized or she may never have had a chance to be properly socialized.

2. Patience and compassion are key

It can be frustrating to try and try to help your new cat to no avail. You may even start thinking about bringing her back to the shelter, but please don't give up. You've probably been in situations where you were terrified or traumatized: Recall those times and think about what would have helped you to cope. Your compassion may also provide insight into what might help her.

3. Start with a small space

Hopefully when you brought your cat home, you placed her in a small room — either a guest bedroom, a bathroom, or something similar — along with bedding, food, water, litter boxes and toys. A shy cat will cope better if she can familiarize herself with a small space first.

4. Keep it quiet

A football game, a party or that new murder-and-mayhem video game at full blast are fun noises for you. For cats, not so much. Not only do cats have very sensitive hearing, but loud noises terrify shy cats.

5. Talk to the cat in a soothing voice

Keep the pitch and volume of your voice low, tell the cat what you're going to do, and use her name often. Imagine you're talking to a baby who needs comforting. Maybe you can even sing her a little lullaby.

6. Food is a great way to win friends and influence kitties

Even the most timid cat can be won over by tasty food. I was able to coax a traumatized and terrified cat out from under a couch with a can of tuna cat food.

7. Allow the cat to approach you

When your shy cat does poke her head out from her hiding place, don't rush to touch her. Hold your hand out in a relaxed position, with the palm down, and allow her to determine how close she gets.

8. Use a calming pheromone

Feline calming pheromones are synthetic analogues of the "happy cat" pheromones that cats leave when they rub their cheeks on you or your furniture. Plug in a couple of pheromone diffusers and allow them to help calm your shy kitty.

9. Keep it positive

Don't stop working with your shy cat if she regresses in response to something you did. Instead, finish your interaction with something you and she have previously enjoyed together.

Want more? Best Friends Animal Society created [a guide for socializing shy or fearful cats](#). It includes step-by-step instructions for the way the organization's staff socializes kitties at its world-renowned sanctuary, as well as documents you can use to record your cat's progress.

FRAIDY CATS

3 STEPS TO MAKE YOUR CAT MORE SOCIAL – JACKSON GALAXY

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=FO_T6WXIRQM#ACTION=SHARE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FO_T6WXIRQM#action=share)