

How to Transition Your Cat to an Indoor/Outdoor Lifestyle

- A **slow** start is key!
- It's important that your cat become acclimated to their indoor home, first. So please make sure kitty has a good amount of time inside with his family before beginning the process to acclimate them to indoor/ outdoor living.
 - Every cat is different; this could take from two weeks to a month or more. When your cat is feeling confident and calm in their indoor environment, they'll be much more confident in their new indoor/ outdoor routine.
- Feed your cat indoors and on a regular schedule.
 - Feeding outdoors can attract wildlife and other cats. It can also eliminate a desire for your cat to come inside. Establishing a feeding schedule can help train your cat to an indoor/ outdoor routine.
- Start with slow increments of time outside, only ten minutes at first. Let them get a feel for the smells, sounds and sights in their new outdoor world.
 - Keep an eye on them. Spend time with your cat outdoors to acclimate them to their yard and area surrounding the yard.
 - Don't let the cat out initially unsupervised, the best plan is to keep an eye on them and increase time outside in a supervised manner.
- Then bring them inside.
 - Give your cat a yummy treat right after coming back inside. The more tempting the treat, the stronger the instinct will become to come back inside when it's time! It can also be helpful to add a sound signal to this treat so that eventually your cat will respond to you calling them back in. When you're offering your cat his tasty treat, saying something as simple as "It's time to eat" in a happy voice can begin to condition them to understand that when they hear that, a tasty treat will follow and that they should come back home.
- Develop a routine of letting them out at the same time every day and bringing them in at the same time every night. Do not let your cat stay outside at night.
 - Let them out before feeding time so that they can remember to come home... that's where the food is!
 - Keep meal times consistent so that their internal clock will remind them that it's feeding time. This will help you to always bring your cat in at night; you'll never need to worry about where he is at night. It's very important that he be home at night, after all, he is a part of your family and he wants to be home when his family is home!
- Some folks prefer to use the same door every day for your cat's outdoor access. Maybe a door with good windows nearby to see that your cat is there waiting to come back inside or a door away from a road or busy neighbor.

- Make sure that you're not letting your dog out or bringing them in at the same time as your kitty can be helpful as well. That way, a cat waiting to come inside won't be chased away by an eager dog as they come back in as well.
- Make sure your cat wears a collar and tag, or better yet, have it microchipped.
- Letting your neighbors meet your cat is a really good idea as well. They are then familiar with him and know that he not only has a home, but that they can come to you if they have questions or concerns. Remember that he could very well show up on their porch, so it's best for them to know where he lives and who his family is so that they can feel confident that they don't need to take him to a shelter as a stray or bring him into their home as their own!
- Yearly veterinarian visits are important for an indoor/outdoor cat. Also make sure to follow a regular deworming and flea treatment routine.
- Avoid letting them out in extreme hot or cold weather.
- Declawed cats can have a much more difficult time fending for themselves outside. We recommend that you choose a cat that is not declawed for indoor/ outdoor living.

Other Things to consider:

Safety concerns:

- Dogs, wildlife and other cats who may try to harm your cat
- Cars
- Poisons and toxins (antifreeze, pesticides)
- Mean people: neighbors can sometimes be cruel to cats they find in their yards

Health concerns:

- Disease (FeLV/ FIV)
- Parasites (fleas, ticks, intestinal worms, and even heartworm)
- Be sure to consult your veterinarian and let them know your cat has an indoor/outdoor lifestyle.

Necessary vaccines and preventatives:

- Feline Leukemia vaccine
- Rabies vaccine
- FVRCP
- Heartworm preventative

Optional vaccines:

- FIV
- Leptospirosis