



Confinement-Frightened Cat

Confine your new cat to one medium-sized room (bathroom or utility room) with his litter box, food, water, scratching post (very important to start this immediately), toys (ping pong balls are great)! Nothing that the cat or kitten can swallow-no feathers (child-proof items) and a bed. Remove any bath/throw rugs.

******Do not use a bedroom UNLESS he CANNOT get under the bed or hide in a closet. The idea is to NOT give him a place or opportunity to hide from you. You can cut a large hole in a large box so he feels safe (enclosed), but the hole needs to be large enough so you can pull him out to hold and socialize him. If his containment is in a laundry room, make sure he cannot squeeze and hide behind any appliances or sink areas. ******

Go in to visit him very often, pick him up and hold him. When the time comes that he runs up to you for attention when you enter the room, this means he's getting closer to being allowed out of confinement. He should run up to you, happy to see you with his tail held high. Tight bonding is **critical before** he is allowed to roam the house.

Then you can allow him to roam, one room at a time. Keep walking him back to his litter box from each room in the house. If he doesn't follow you back to the litter box, carry him to it and place him in the box....this is to train him WHERE it is-he already knows how to use it. He will probably jump right out...let him roam some more-he just needs to know where the box is from each room in the residence.

If you let him outside, you will probably never see him again.

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.

Patience and compassion are key with a shy cat :It can be frustrating to try and try to help your shy 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.

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.

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.

Talk to the shy 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.

Food is a great way to win friends and influence a shy cat: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.

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.

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 cat.

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. <https://bestfriends.org/resources/socializing-cats-how-socialize-very-shy-or-fearful-cat>