



ACCLIMATING A WORKING CAT TO THEIR NEW HOME

What you'll need:

- Cat food, including something extra tasty
- Bowls for food and water
- Litterbox
- Litter – we recommend unscented, non-clumping litter
- Cardboard boxes, tote bins, or other items to create hiding spaces
- Extra-large dog crate, exercise pen with a secure top, or other small, secure space.

Before bringing the cat(s) home:

- Identify a secure confinement space where the cat can live for the first 2-4 weeks, while they acclimate to their new environment. If you immediately release them into a large barn, warehouse that has open doors, etc., they are likely to take off and not return. Instead, you want them to get used to the scents and sounds of the space, all of which will be new to them, and to learn that this space has a reliable source of food and comfort.
- Make sure the confinement space is really secure. A frightened cat will be able to climb, squeeze into tight spaces, and push aside light barriers, so any openings will need to be closed off.
- Set up the space with food and water bowls, litter box, and places for the cat to hide.
TIP: Most working cats won't appreciate you coming too close. Place the food, water, and litterbox within the confinement space in a way that will allow you to access them for cleaning and replenishing.
- Make a plan for when you will feed the cat and clean the litterbox. Feeding the cat on a schedule will help them learn that they have a reliable food source, which in turn will help ensure that they stick around.
NOTE: Working cats still need to be fed, even if you want them to help take care of rodents. Hunting is instinctive to cats, so don't worry that offering an alternative food source will dampen their desire to chase and catch prey.

When you bring the cat home:

- Set them up in their confinement space and offer food. Don't try to handle the cat, just let them get familiar with their space. They will most likely find a hiding spot and stay there as long as you're around.
- Take note of what and how much the cat is eating. If they are not eating, you may need to try offering a different variety of food and/or giving the cat more hiding spaces to get them more comfortable.

TIP: An adult cat should eat 5-6 ounces of wet food per day. Dry food can be substituted for some portion of that, or offered in addition. (Most working cats will be getting more exercise than their housecat cousins, so weight gain is less of a concern for them.)

- After 2-4 weeks, you can open up the confinement space and allow the cat to explore their new environment. They will likely want to spend time in elevated areas, like a loft or the rafters.
- Continue feeding the cat, including offering up some extra tasty treats to keep them sticking around. If you plan to move the cat's food out of its original location, move it gradually so that the cat will surely be able to find it.

TIP: If the feeding location is accessible to wildlife, be sure to remove or secure the food at night to avoid drawing in unwelcome creatures.