

How to Introduce Yourself to Shelter Cats:

CONSENT: Cats do best when their preferences are respected. Just like you want strangers to interact with you while following specific, predictable rules, so do cats! It's best to interact with cats on their terms and to offer them the choice to back away.

Check **where the cat is** in the cage. Is the cat hiding? If so, approach the cage door slowly and quietly.

Offer **SLOW-BLINKs**. Attempt to make eye contact with the cat, then slowly close your eyes and hold them closed for a count of 5, then open them. Repeat until the cat returns your slow-blink. If the cat doesn't return your slow-blink, walk away and come back later.

Notice **POSTURE**. Is the cat lying down, standing up, walking toward the front of the cage, or huddled curled up hiding?

Speak softly and gently to the cat.

Extend **two fingers** to the door of the cage, offering the cat the chance to sniff or rub against your fingers. Use caution extending your fingers through the cage door if the cat's pupils are dilated, if the cat is hissing, or if the cat's tail is swishing.

Nudge the cat's head with your fingers when they sniff your fingers.

Trust the cat to show you how they want to be petted.



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