

## BLUE COLLAR CAT ACCLIMATION TIPS



**Humane Rescue Alliance**

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The acclimation period for Blue Collar Cats is 3-4 weeks. During this time, the cat stays in the acclimation pen we provide along with a smaller shelter for the cat to sleep or hide in and a litter box that should be cleaned daily. Below are tips to help ensure the success of your Blue Collar Cat's acclimation to your space and to you. Following these steps will help your Blue Collar Cat view your location as his or her new home.

1. Provide fresh **food and water at the same time** every day. This teaches the cat that there is a regular food source available on a predictable schedule.
2. **Add high value treats** to each meal: tuna, cooked chicken, baby food (chicken or turkey flavor), or canned cat food. High value treats give cats more confidence to eat & reinforce their trust in you as a regular food source.
3. **Talk to the cat in a calm voice** each time you bring food. Try to spend 10-15 minutes each day talking to the cat. It doesn't matter what you're saying; as long as it's your voice, that's what matters.
4. If the cat begins to show interest in you, you can **offer treats from your hand**. This is both a confidence building and bonding activity for the cat. **Don't force** this interaction – only do so if the cat is actively interested in you.
5. **If you have other animals, introduce cats to them slowly**, dogs in particular. The goal is for both your dog and the cat to become familiar with each other's scents so your dog isn't overly excited when the cat is out and the cat doesn't see your dog as a threat. The best way to do this is to regularly allow your dog, **on a leash**, to sniff the acclimation pen where your dog and the cat can't directly see each other.
6. **Offer the cat toys** (fuzzy mice, balls, fishing rod type toys, etc) in the acclimation pen. If the cat can be engaged in play, then the cat is likely to become more confident and comfortable in the space.
7. Each cat is different, so acclimation periods will range from 3-4 weeks. **Do not allow the cat out of the acclimation pen until HRA contacts you** to indicate that it is appropriate to do so.
  - a. On the day the acclimation period ends, feed the cat normally, and leave the pen door open instead of closing it as you have been. You may need to secure the door open with a carabiner or zip ties.
  - b. Don't remove anything from the pen.
  - c. Continue feeding inside the pen on the same schedule that you were feeding during the acclimation.
  - d. Once the cat is returning to the pen only to eat – typically 2-3 days later – the pen can be removed and should be returned to HRA. Please contact us at 202-608-1356 or [catnipp@humanerescuealliance.org](mailto:catnipp@humanerescuealliance.org) to schedule a time to return the acclimation pen.
  - e. Once you return the pen, the cat's shelter and feeding station will remain on your property, preferably in the same area where the acclimation pen was located.
8. Once acclimation ends, **the cat may wander** for a couple days. This is normal; continue putting out fresh food at the same time of day even if this happens.
  - a. Initially, the cat may not understand how to get back in your yard, especially if you have something like a very tall fence or a roll-up garage door. Consider your space, and leave a door cracked open with food nearby so the cat learns where to enter & exit.
  - b. If your Blue Collar Cat is missing for several days, please refer to HRA's guide on steps to take to help find or guide your cat back home.