**My Cats are not Getting Along**

Most cats can learn to get along or at least tolerate each other, but this is often a slow process that requires patience. Cats are territorial. While they can develop close bonds with other cats, most cats are wary and distrustful towards other cats at first. Some cats can develop trust and feel safe around each other on their own, but with some cats those feelings of fear and distrust can intensify over time. In these cases, the owners must take proactive measures to resolve the situation.

What kind of behaviours can occur when cats don't get along?

* Active bullying. This can result in the bullied ca eating less, withdrawing, over-grooming from the stress.
* Inappropriate elimination in the home (either spraying or avoiding the litter box by the bullied cat).
* Active fighting among the cats.

What are the signs that the cats are not getting along?

* Routinely hissing, growling and/or swatting when near each other
* Leaving urine and/or feces around the house
* Fighting
* Exhibiting a change in routine (e.g. eating less, hiding more).

Advice

* Increase the amount of vertical space in the home available to the cats. By increasing their vertical space you are increasing their territory and decreasing their need to compete for territory.
* Ensure that there are enough resources for every cat in the home so that they don't feel like they are in competition with each other. This includes: feeding/watering bowls, litter boxes, scratching posts, hiding and high resting spaces, individual attention and playtime.
* Have at least as many litter boxes as you have cats, PLUS one more. Make sure that the litter boxes are open boxes and are placed in open areas where the cats will not feel trapped.
* Cats can be bribed! When the cats are near each other and coexisting peacefully, offer them highly valued food or treats so they associate the other cats with something positive.
* Engage the cats in individual interactive play. This will help reduce their stress levels. This can also be very helpful if one cat is very active and the other(s) are less active and bothered by the active cat.
* If needed slowly reintroduce cats. *See the article on introducing/reintroducing cats to each other.*