



Introducing your New Dog to Other Pets

Dogs are very social creatures, and often enjoy the company of other animals. A dog with a playmate can get more exercise, mental stimulation and companionship. Sometimes it can take a while for a dog to realize the advantages of having a companion.

Dogs and Dogs

Most shelters and rescues will want your resident dog and your prospective dog to meet prior to adoption to observe how they interact. Many dogs view the arrival of another dog as an invasion of their territory. To get everybody off to a good start, let the dogs meet in neutral territory, like a nearby park or field. Have short fun sessions with your dogs and be generous with your praise and rewards.

It is a good idea to initially monitor all interactions between your dogs. If you cannot be there to supervise, separate the dogs by putting either one or both in their crate/kennel or in different rooms.

When you introduce your newly adopted pet to the family, your resident dog may revert to some long forgotten behaviours like chewing or marking their territory. Punishment for these behaviours will only make your dog more upset, creating a bad cycle. Be careful to always make sure the resident dog knows they are still loved. Tip the scales in favour of the resident dog, making sure they are the first to receive extra hugs and kisses or an extra treat. Your resident dog has earned this and needs to feel secure about their relationship with you.

Dogs and Cats

Your new dog should absolutely be on-leash when meeting the resident cat(s). Make sure you are there to supervise the encounter. You want to prevent a chase scenario, where the cat becomes scared, takes off and your dog chases.

More often than not, your new dog will have little emotional control and watching a fleeing cat makes for a great game in your new dog's mind, but is not a good time at all as far as kitty is concerned. This is why it is so important that your new dog be on-leash with you holding the other end. Set up gates, barrier systems or room door(s) so that your cat can easily get to a safe place that your new dog cannot access.

Curiosity is normal and can be a good sign of things to come. However, a dog that lunges at a cat is a warning that the dog should not be allowed off-leash or left alone with the cat unsupervised, until you and the dog have developed the obedience skills to control such behaviours or the relationship between cat and dog starts to change. Most often, both cats and dogs will choose the flight option (running away) instead of the fight option when they feel threatened. It is important that both cat and dog have room to manoeuvre without feeling confined and there is a clear escape route to your cat's designated safe area(s).