

Introducing Cats and Dogs

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Whether you already have a dog and are considering getting a cat, or have a cat and are considering getting a dog, it is very important to think about their first introduction. If you let a loose cat and dog meet each other in an open room for the first time, you are setting both animals up to fail. Instead, plan ahead and take your time.

Here are a few tips -

- Keep your cat isolated from your dog.
- Make a safe and secure room for the cat.
- Swap scents; using an old blanket or towel, give the item to your cat. Let her play on it, sleep on it, eat on it. Rub her with this blanket and then leave it in her room for 24 hours.
- Remove the blanket and present it to your dog. Rub him all over with it, let him roll on it, sniff it, sleep on it for 24 hours, then switch and do the same thing again. This blends their scents, making them a bit more at ease with each other.
- Give your dog a soft plush dog toy, let him play with it, slobber on it and then toss the toy into the room with the cat. Just leave that toy there.

Know your Dog or Cat when selecting a new friend

- If you're thinking of getting a cat for your dog or a dog for your cat, it's important to consider both animals' personalities. Preferably, look for a companion that has already been exposed to the other species in the past.
- If a dog is highly prey-driven and attempts to aggressively chase, trap or pick up a cat, it is best to not even consider getting a cat. A dog lunges at or obsessively barks at a cat will do best in a home without cats. Similarly, a cat who growls, swats and/or runs from dogs will prefer to not live with dogs.
- If a dog has prey-driven and loves chasing things, the best match would be a calm, confident cat who will not run either from fear or to play.
- If a dog likes to play exuberantly, avoid kittens or elderly cats who can easily be hurt. Instead, consider playful adults who are confident enough to take care of themselves. If a cat is very playful, a dog who is also playful, but gentle, could become great friends.

The Introduction

The first introduction between your current pet and your new pet is a very important.

- Unlike dog to dog introductions , the introduction should take place at home.
- Keep the cat safely inside a **sturdy** carrier, and keep the dog securely leashed.
- Have lots of tasty dog treats handy.
- Use two people: One to handle the dog and one to be in charge of the cat carrier.

Walk the dog past the carrier

Walk the dog past the cat carrier, keeping him several feet away while praising him and giving treats. If the dog is relaxed, keep walking him by the crate several times. If the cat is quiet and appears calm, you can walk the dog closer and closer.

Let the dog sniff the carrier

- If BOTH animals are calm, allow the dog to briefly sniff the carrier as you pass by, but keep moving. Repeat this several times. As long as both animals are calm, quiet and showing no aggression or fear, allow the dog to sniff the crate more and more.
- If the dog freezes or gets too curious (is not relaxed) do not allow that to escalate into dangerous behavior by gently guiding the dog away and getting him to refocus on you and the treats.

Open the carrier door

- Keep the dog on leash at all times until the dog can be near the carrier and neither animal seems aggressive or afraid of the other.
- Then, walk the dog several feet away and have the other person open the carrier door and allow the cat freedom.
- Assuming the cat leaves the carrier, be sure to keep the dog leashed until both animals are calm and relaxed around each other.
- Do not leave a new cat-and-dog combination unsupervised for the first several months until you are certain both animals are safe.

DO NOT RUSH THIS PROCESS even if the dog and the cat live in different parts of the house for a few days or weeks and you repeat this process regularly until they are good with each other.