



INTRODUCING DOGS TO CATS

Who says dogs and cats can't get along?

When bringing a new dog into your home with a resident cat, the introduction process should be controlled and gradual. If you rush into things and attempt to "force" a relationship, you might inadvertently sabotage a relationship that could have otherwise worked out. Here are 4 simple steps that can help you ensure a successful introduction:

Matching their temperament is a must

1

ENERGY MATCH

When choosing a dog for a household which is already ruled by a resident cat, it is important to consider both animals personalities and energy level. It may be helpful to look for a companion that has already been exposed to the other species in the past.

If you have a shy or laid back cat at home, then a calm counterpart would be best. Be sure to bring in a dog that will likely respect the cat's space and not overwhelm the kitty with her energy level.

2

SCENT SURVEY

Allow your newly-adopted dog to explore without other animals around

Bring the **resident cat to a room** and shut the door, while the **dog is allowed to roam** the house and explore the scents. **Swap their locations a few times.** Giving your cat treats and anything else she enjoys while in the room will help her see this as a positive experience instead of a punishment or a threat. Request the assistance of a friend or a household member if possible. Your home should have high places where your cat can jump to in case she needs to get away quickly and other safe places where the new pup cannot reach, use a baby gate to **secure an area of the house where the dog cannot go** and allow the cat to go in and out as she pleases. **Swapping blankets/beds** while they are apart and feeding both animals on opposites sides of the baby gate can also be helpful.

3

LEASH INTRO

In order to remain in control, your dog must be on a leash

Ideally you should exercise the dog beforehand to ensure she does not have excessive energy, which could overwhelm your kitty during their first meet-and-greet. With the **dog on a leash** and **the cat free-to-roam**, allow the dog to **slowly approach** the cat and sniff. If the cat hisses, growls or swats, redirect their attention to a toy or treat and increase the distance between them. If the cat runs away, keep them separated until they are ready to try this again. If the dog lunges, growls or snaps, this is likely a dangerous match, and, if you are committed to making this relationship work, please give us a call to discuss the introduction further with our behavior experts before allowing any more contact.

4

SUPERVISED TIME TOGETHER

When all other steps have successfully taken place, they are ready to interact

Ensure you see all their interactions and, until you are confident they are getting along, do not leave them alone together. **Short, supervised meetings** are ideal and you should **increase the time slowly** based on their behavior. Stay close by watching carefully, give lots of praise and treats, and use toys to play with both of them. Ideally the dog should not be paying too much attention to the cat. Some hissing or swatting is healthy as long as the dog respects the warnings. If the dog keeps disrespecting your cat's boundaries, go back to STEP 2 and repeat the process a few more times. If all else fails, we ask that you give us a call to schedule a consult with our behavior experts.