

## Introducing Your **New DOG** to Your Cat



While dogs and cats have often been portrayed as enemies, it is usually *a great deal easier to introduce a new dog to a cat than a cat to another cat*. While both animals may be wary of each other initially, they do not see the other as direct competition and can actually get on very well. If your dog is used to cats he may be excited initially at having a new one in the house but he will soon settle down and the novelty will wear off very quickly. He will begin to see the new cat as part of his pack. Many dogs will live happily with their own cats while chasing strange felines out of the garden, so you will need to take care until the cat is seen as one of the household.

Likewise if a cat or kitten has previously lived with a dog then it will be much less likely to be frightened for long and will become confident around the dog more quickly.

However, initially safety must come first. You will need to keep everything under control until the dog and cat have gotten used to each other. Stroke the dog and cat separately but without washing your hands to exchange their scents. A large pen is ideal for first meetings to keep the situation calm and the cat protected. Let them sniff each other through the bars and get over the initial excitement. The cat may well hiss and spit but it is well protected.

You can put the cat in this at night in the room where the dog sleeps and let them get used to each other for a few days or even a week, depending on how used to cats the dog is. Some dogs, especially those not used to cats or of an excitable or aggressive disposition, need extra special care for introductions. They should be kept as calm as possible on the lead and made to sit quietly. The new cat should be given a safe position in the room and allowed to get used to the dog and approach it if it wants. This may take quite some time and requires patience and rewards for the dog if it behaves well.

For quieter dogs and those used to cats, introductions can be made by using a cat carrier. Keep the dog on a lead initially, place the carrier on a high surface and allow controlled introductions which are short and frequent. Most dogs will soon calm down when they realize the newcomer is not actually very interesting. Progress to meetings with the dog on a lead initially for safety. If your dog is rather excitable then take it for a vigorous walk first to get rid of some of its energy!

Breeds like terriers or others which like to chase such as Irish Wolfhounds or Greyhounds, you may need to keep the dog well under control until they have learned that the cat is not 'fair game'! Young pups are likely to get very excited and may try to 'play' with the new cat which is unlikely wanting to join in! You may need to work hard to keep things calm and be aware that a sudden dash from the cat will induce a chase. Praise the dog for calm interactions, make it sit quietly and use food treats to reward the dog for good behavior. Again, associate the presence of the cat with reward for calm behavior. When you progress to access without the lead make sure there are places where the cat can escape to such as high ledges or furniture where it can feel safe. Never leave the dog and cat together unattended until you are happy they are safe together.

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