

Training Handout | Introducing Cat & New Dog

Type of Dog

Some dogs are not appropriate for a home with a cat since they are too predatory. We rarely know a dog's history with cats so please, be aware that the match might be unsuccessful. Consider their individual personalities: A calm/elderly cat will likely not be happy living with an energetic dog that runs and chases things; a small kitten can easily be injured by a large dog that plays roughly; an active cat that likes to swat at things with a fearful/older dog may not lead to a successful match.



Steps of Introduction:

- 1) **Let them smell each other before they actually meet.** Keep the dog and cat in separate rooms. Pet the dog and cat separately but without washing your hands to exchange their scents. The cat should be allowed a few days to explore and find his/her safe hiding spots.
- 2) **Beginning on-leash, supervised introductions.** Once the cat seems relaxed with the dog nearby but not seen by the cat, you may begin supervised, on-leash introductions. First, feed the dog a nice big meal and give him lots of exercise! Only attempt an introduction if the dog is feeling calm and relaxed. When ready, keep the dog on-leash and make sure the cat can escape or hide without being followed by the dog; use baby gates, cat perches, and other hiding places. Allow both in the same room, with dog on-leash. Give both pets lots of yummy treats and praise! If the cat chooses to run or hide, that's okay! *Give this phase more time and lots of patience; it could take weeks or even months!*
- 3) **Slowly increase the time of the supervised interactions with the dog always on-leash.** If the dog is relaxed and calm while the cat is in the room, the dog can be tethered immovable object, such as an extremely heavy piece of furniture. While the cat and dog can see each other, you can try feeding them or playing with them separately. We want to teach them that good things happen when they are near each other!
- 4) **Remove the leash when the dog seems calm.** Do not hold the cat during this time to prevent injury to yourself or the cat. This can take several or more sessions before the dog and cat seem calm. Make sure there are places where the cat can escape to for safety, such as high ledges or furniture.
- 5) **Never leave the dog and cat together unattended until you are happy they are safe together and have supervised many meetings between them.**
- 6) **Keep cat food and litter box away from the dog.** The cat's food and litter box will be hugely tempting for any dog, so put them out of reach of the dog.

[This video](#) may help to explain the process of a slow/proper introduction between a new dog and a cat.

Use your phone camera
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video if handout is
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