

INTRODUCING A NEW DOG TO YOUR RESIDENT CAT

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When introducing dogs and cats, we recommend a slow and safe introduction. While it may be tempting to let your resident cat greet the newcomer right away, the consequences of a not-so-great first impression may have negative lingering effects.

Safe Introduction

- Plan ahead by setting up baby gates and plenty of vertical space for your cat to escape. Cat shelves and tall, sturdy cat towers work well for this.
- Keep your new pup on leash in the house at first. Keep your cat in a closed room.
- Growling and hissing are important, clear communications; avoid punishing hissing or growls. Instead, let those expressions be your cue to give the pet(s) a break from the current environment.
- Keep toys and chew items off the ground until you know how your cat will react around valued resources. This includes both dog items and cat beds, bowls and cat toys.

Plan Ahead

- The first three days are crucial for the new pet. Set up a private space where they can decompress and be alone before adding the stress of meeting the new roommate.
- After three days, let the pets sniff each other's bedding. If that goes well, let them sniff each other on opposite sides of a closed door.
- Feed separately. Keep the cat's food bowl and litter box behind a baby gate or closed door
- Have an emergency plan just in case. If a fight or chase breaks out, place a physical barrier in between the animals, not your hands!

Be Patient

- Create positive associations for both your resident cat and the new dog by using food or treats.
- Use baby gates or X-pens to help manage the environment. Keep pets separated when you cannot keep a close eye on them, especially during the first three weeks after introduction. Slowly increase amount of time the pets spend together.

QUICK TIPS

- Keep your dog on leash
- Give your cat freedom of choice to move away from the dog
- Provide plenty of sturdy vertical space for the cat to jump up off the floor
- Reinforce polite greetings and calm behavior with treats

SMART TIP: Every pet is different

Just because your cat got along with another dog before does not mean they will act the same way around your new pet. Take things slowly and create positive associations.

We are always here to help! You can find additional behavior and training resources at pasadenahumane.org/behavior.



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361 S. Raymond Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91105
pasadenahumane.org