



of sonoma county
Santa Rosa & Healdsburg

DOG - DOG INTRODUCTIONS

To successfully introduce a new dog into your household, plan ahead and be patient. Don't assume the dogs will instantly like each other or, if they don't, that they will work things out themselves. If your dogs get off on the wrong paw, the relationship might not recover. Taking a little extra time is well worth the effort.

Before you get in the house

- Arrange an on-leash meeting on neutral ground. That means not in your house or yard, and with plenty of space around.
- Keep the leashes loose and let the dogs approach each other calmly.
- After a 2-second greet-and-sniff, call each dog away with a cheerful voice. Praise and treat the dogs.
- Now take a short walk with both dogs. If, after the greeting, the dogs are a little stiff with each other, begin the walk on separate sides of the street. As the dogs relax, gradually move closer together until they walk side by side.

In the yard

- If possible, allow playtime in the yard. For safety, have the dogs drag their leashes until you are sure they get along well.
- Should a fight break out, use noise (your voice, clanging or banging pans) to stop it. If that doesn't work, use the leashes to separate the dogs. Never reach in between two fighting dogs.

In the house

- The first time the dogs are inside the house together, keep them on leash and keep the introduction brief, around 5 minutes.
- Then confine the newcomer to a comfortable space like a spare room, crate, or a dog-proofed, enclosed area where he can start to get used to his new home away from the attention of other family pets.
- Over the next day or two, repeat the brief introductions. Keep them to 5-10 minutes and keep the dogs on leash. If a squabble breaks out, leashes make it easy to pull the dogs apart.
- Make the time the dogs spend together as pleasant for them as possible. Reward friendly and playful behavior with food treats, praise, and toys.
- Don't be tempted to try longer periods of time if the early introductions go well. Slowly work your way to longer and longer periods of dog-dog time.
- Every now and then, confine your other dog (and any other pets) and let the newcomer explore the house by himself.

With this approach, your new dog should be fully accepted as a family member within a week or two. If things are still not warming up after two weeks, call us for help.

Training Tip: Never punish or chide your dogs for acting grouchy or fearful with each other; that can make things worse. Just calmly separate them and try again later.