

Dog-Cat Introductions

GOOD CANINE CANDIDATES FOR LIVING WITH CATS

- Puppies
- Adult dogs that have successfully lived with a cat before
- Laid-back, relaxed, friendly dogs

GOOD FELINE CANDIDATES FOR LIVING WITH DOG

- Kittens
- Relaxed, laid-back cats

NOT-SO-GOOD FELINE CANDIDATES FOR LIVING WITH DOGS

- Shy, skittish cats
- De-clawed cats — more vulnerable and are likely to behave aggressively when cornered

NOT-SO-GOOD CANINE CANDIDATES FOR LIVING WITH CATS

- Dogs that show predatory behavior (i.e. chases cats, squirrels when outdoors)
- Cats who haven't lived with dogs almost always behave defensively the first time they meet a new dog

Steps for Introduction

STEP 1

Keep the dog and cat separate for the first few weeks before you try an introduction. If the cat is the newcomer, remember that the cat needs to become comfortable in their new environment and with their new people before meeting any other animals.

STEP 2

Have the dog on a leash to avoid any chasing or unwanted contact between the two. Make sure you are not leading the dog too close to the cat- opposite sides of a room is ideal. Have your dog sit and give your dog lots of treats when he/she is focusing on you and not on the cat. It is okay if the dog stands or lays down, as well, as long as they are remaining calm and focused on you. If the dog will not stop focusing on the cat or is straining on the leash, separate the two, allow the dog to calm down, give treats for being calm, and try again. If your cat chooses to run away, let them leave. Make sure the cat has a safe place to retreat to without the dog following.

Repeat step 2, always rewarding your dog's calm behavior, for multiple days before moving on to step 3.

STEP 3

Once your dog is consistently focusing on you and the cat is not running away drop the leash (still keeping the leash attached to your dog's collar/harness) and supervise closely. Good signs are gentle investigation and wagging and respect for the cat's defensive signals. Bad signs are instant attempts to chase, whining, and barking. If any chasing occurs, separate the two and give each pet a break. Try again starting with step 2.

STEP 4

Supervise all interactions until you see a positive pattern in their relationship. Separate your dog and cat when you are not at home to supervise until they have lived together for a month with no incidents. If the dog is the newcomer, make sure that your cat's normal routines for eating, playing, and treats are not interrupted. If the cat is the newcomer, make sure the dog associates the family addition with good things.



TIPS 4 SUCCESS

DOG/CAT HOUSEHOLDS

- Above all, be patient! This will take weeks or even months! The more gradual and gentle you make the process, the better chance of success. You may prolong the time it takes for your pets to be accepting of one another if you go too quickly.
- Have a dog-free room (use baby gates/cat doors) as well as high places the cat can access but the dog cannot. The cat needs places where he/she can relax in peace and then venture into the "dog territory" at his/her own pace. Make sure the cat's food, water, and litter box are located in these dog-free places.
- Never force the cat to be close to the dog by holding them, caging them, or otherwise restricting them. This is stressful and, aside from being inhumane, stress may result in cats developing issues using the litter box.
- Dogs should not have access to the cat litter box or feeding area. It is too stressful for the cat.
- A useful management exercise for cat-dog interactions is to practice sit-stays for treats with your dog while the cat is present, or simply rewarding your dog for any and all calm behavior it shows while the cat is around.
- Know that your cat will set the pace for this relationship!
- If you have more than one dog or more than one cat, go through these steps individually with each animal.



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