



Introducing Your New Dog To Your Resident Dog

Dogs have individual personalities, just like people! Imagine you have a new roommate move in that you didn't necessarily get to pick. It might take some time for you and this new roommate to figure out boundaries and learn to like each other, so we need to allow the same time for our dogs as well. Throughout the process, remember to keep things positive!

The Introduction

Choose a Neutral Location

Introduce the dogs in a neutral location, even just outside of your home. Each dog should be handled by a separate person and kept on a leash. It is recommended that you bring your resident dog with you to the shelter and introduce the dogs before adopting the new dog, but be sure to do a slow introduction once you get home as well. A good introduction at the shelter doesn't guarantee success when you get home.

If you have multiple dogs, it may be best to introduce the new dog to one dog at a time. It can be intimidating to meet multiple new dogs all at once and dogs do have a tendency to gang up on each other.

Use Positive Reinforcement

From the first meeting, you want both dogs to expect good things to happen when they're in each other's presence. Let them sniff each other when they greet each other as this is normal canine greeting behavior, and as they do, talk to them in a happy, friendly tone of voice. Don't allow them to investigate and sniff each other for a prolonged time, as this may escalate as one or both dogs become uncomfortable. Interrupt their greeting as needed with happy, friendly encouragement. Take the dogs for a walk and let them sniff and investigate each other at intervals. Continue with happy talk and rewards as you go.

If either dog decides they are no longer comfortable and gives the other a correction (such as a growl, lip curl, snap, etc.), don't punish either dog. This communication is extremely important and totally normal. If either dog is punished for growling, baring their teeth, or air snapping, they may not do that the next time and move straight to a bite or fight. Watch to make sure the other dog listened to the correction appropriately and moved away or stopped the greeting. If the other dog doesn't listen, interrupt their interaction yourself using a happy tone of voice. Just saying a loud "Okay! Good dogs!" is usually

enough, especially when paired with encouragement to walk away. Remember to keep things positive, even during stressful situations or when either dog is exhibiting less than ideal behavior. In order to ensure the dogs have a positive association with each other, we need to fuel that with positive reinforcement.

Be Aware of Body Language

A signal that may indicate that things are going well is a playbow. One dog will crouch with her front legs on the ground and her hind end in the air. This is an invitation to play that usually elicits friendly behavior from the other dog. Some dogs may not appreciate much play, so watch for the other dog's response. If you see any signals such as teeth baring, growling, moving away, getting stiff, or staring, you will want to interrupt the interaction. The best way to interrupt is by encouraging the more playful dog to come and play with you in another part of the home; that way, you can give the other dog some much-needed space. Once the dogs have calmed down and seem more relaxed, you can try letting the dogs interact again, but this time for a shorter time period and/or at a greater distance from each other. Let them do this at their own pace, do not force any interactions.

At Home

Make sure you aren't leaving the dogs alone together until you are sure they are 100% comfortable with each other. At first, you may want to keep all toys and food off the ground to ensure the dogs don't feel the need to protect any valuable objects from each other as they get to know each other. Remember to take things slow, don't force any interactions, and use lots of praise and rewards!

Introducing Puppies to Adult Dogs

Puppies usually pester adult dogs excessively in an effort to play. Before the age of four months, puppies may not recognize subtle body postures from adult dogs signaling that they've had enough. Well-socialized adult dogs with good temperaments may set limits with puppies with a growl or snarl. These behaviors are normal and should be allowed, but be sure the puppy is responding appropriately and giving the adult dog space. Adult dogs that aren't well socialized, or that have a history of fighting with other dogs, may attempt to set limits without much warning and this may harm the puppy. For this reason, a puppy shouldn't be left alone with an adult dog until you're confident both can get along safely. Be sure to give the adult dog some quiet time away from the puppy, and perhaps, some individual attention with people.

When to Get Help

Dogs can be severely injured in fights, and the longer the problem continues, the harder it can be to resolve. Conflicts between dogs in the same family can often be resolved with professional help. Punishment won't work and can easily make things worse. If the introduction of your new dog to your household doesn't go smoothly, contact Homeward



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Pet Adoption Center's Animal Behavior Manager or another professional trainer or behavior consultant for help.

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