



Dog to Cat Introduction

Congratulations on the new addition to your family! Adopting a new pet into your home comes with lots of new exciting experiences. Despite the stereotypes, many dogs and cats do live together peacefully. It is important to take this introduction slowly, to remain patient, and to understand that whether or not your pets get along will depend on their individual personalities. Cats have a long memory and like routine, so they can naturally be skeptical of changes in the household. Follow these steps to increase the chances of a successful introduction.

- 1. Setup a quiet space for your cat and dog:** Ensure that both your current pets and the new pet have areas that they can go to get space from one another. Your cat should have a secure area that your dog cannot get to. It should include a litter box, scratching post, hide or bed, water, food, and their toys. Your dog should have a secure area as well. This can be accomplished by using a baby gate for another room or a crate for them to have a quiet place to settle. Your dog's area should include bedding, toys or chews, and a food/water bowl.
- 2. Keep them separated for the first few days:** Allow both your cat and dog to acclimate into the new scents in the home. They will still be able to smell each other without having to meet. Trade off areas, allowing them access while the other is away, to be able to smell and grow accustomed to the new scents. Once they both are generally relaxed in their areas, you can begin to introduce them.
- 3. Provide them mental and physical stimulation before the introduction:** Take your dog on a walk and out for playtime before the introduction. This will help bring down the arousal level prior to them meeting. Provide your cat appropriate play and engagement as well to help their arousal.
- 4. Introduce one at a time:** Introduce new pets one at a time, starting with the most confident. Your cat should be able to roam free, but your dog should be secured on leash. Make sure to have treats with you for your dog, so that you can redirect their attention. It is recommended to start at a far distance, and with a barrier such as a baby gate or a screen. If the dog is

too focused on the cat, increase your distance and redirect using treats.

- 5. Let them greet:** If both pets are calm, allow your dog to approach and sniff your cat. Redirect their attention after a short greeting.
 - a. If the greeting did not go well, give them a break and try again the next day with further distance or a barrier.
 - b. If the interaction did go well, keep your dog on leash through the next few introduction sessions, letting them drag the leash around in the event you need to intervene for chasing behaviors.

- 6. Ask for help:** If you are having trouble with the greeting, contact us or reach out to a positive reinforcement cat trainer or behaviorist.

Helpful Tips:

- Feed both pets on either side of the same door to associate their smells with a positive experience.
- Brush all pets in the household with the same brush to mingle their scents.
- Use calming collars or diffusers that replicate the calming dog and cat pheromones to help ease any anxieties or fears.
- Be patient, it can take a week to several months for a successful introduction depending on each individual pet.

For behavior and training advice, please contact Operation Kindness at behavior@operationkindness.org or visit www.operationkindness.org/training