

Room for one more? *Becoming a multi-pet family*



Thinking about expanding your furry family? Adopting a pet is a very rewarding experience *and* an important way to show compassion toward animals. If you're an animal lover, chances are you've already got a pet (or two!) at home. Whether you're bringing home a new cat or a dog, the most successful introductions are made gradually. With a little planning, you can make the transition stress-free for everyone. Stay relaxed and in

control of the situation, and make sure all interactions are positive (*hint: keep treats handy to reward friendly behavior!*)

Dog to Dog Introductions

- Let the dogs meet on neutral territory. Ideally have two handlers and keep both dogs on-leash, at a distance from each other. A brisk walk is a great way to help them expend some energy and get to know each other by scent first.
- Watch for signs of stress and move dogs in opposite directions if things get tense.
- Be sure to pick up any chew toys or other "high value" items before the dogs are in the same area together.

Dog to Cat Introductions

- For the first week, animals should be kept separate. Your new pet will have the chance to adjust to his new surroundings and to the presence of your other pet by smell.
- When it's time to meet, keep the dog on-leash and make sure the cat has a high perch to go to feel safe, or an escape route if so desired.
- Maintain a distance between them and give lots of positive reinforcement and/or distraction as needed. The goal is to make the meeting a "non-event".

Cat to Cat Introductions

- If possible, create a special room for your new cat to stay in for the first few days. Make the space feel safe and cozy as she adapts to her new surroundings. Include food and water, litter box, some hiding places, a scratching post and a few toys.
- Let your cats smell and hear each other for the first few days, say from either sides of a door, before a visual introduction.

For more tips, please visit our online resource library at sonomahumane.org/behavior-training/resources.



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