



## INTRODUCING CATS AND DOGS

### STEP 1: CHOOSE THE PROPER LOCATION FOR THE FIRST MEETING

- *Resident cat to new dog:* If you are adopting a dog, you should not take your cat to meet him at a shelter, or other establishment which houses a number of animals for health and safety reasons. Instead, the introduction should take place at home.
- *Resident dog to new cat:* If you are adopting a cat, do not take your dog into a shelter and expose him to the cats, as this can be highly stressful or traumatic for all of the cats. Also, it is not necessarily a good indicator of how the dog will react at home.

### STEP 2: SEPARATE THE ANIMALS

- Across a few days, rotate which animal has freedom and which is confined to allow each animal plenty of time to investigate the other one's scent.
- Sometimes the dog should be confined to a crate or another room (or taken to another location if he can't be left alone) to allow the cat time to roam free and investigate the smell of the dog.
- If the dog obsessively digs at the separation barrier or barks at the cat for more than a day or two, the interaction likely won't work without proper training. You may need the help of a professional.
- When no one is home, the dog or cat must always be securely confined so unsupervised interactions are not possible.
- Once the dog is calm (or at least not obsessed with the cat) and the cat is calm, eating and using the litter box normally, you can proceed to the next step.

### STEP 3: MAKE LEASHED INTRODUCTIONS

- Allow both animals to be in the same room at the same time, but keep the dog securely leashed.
- Continue with this type of introduction until the dog is calm and ignores the cat, and the cat is calm, eating and using the litter box normally.
- If there is any fear or aggression displayed on either animal's part, stay at step 2 longer.
- Continue indefinitely until both the dog and cat seem happy and relaxed around each other.



- When no one is home, the dog or cat should be securely confined to separate areas so unsupervised interactions are not possible.

#### **STEP 4: ALLOW UNSUPERVISED INTERACTIONS**

- Unsupervised time together can occur after the cat and dog have been supervised around each other for a significant period of time (a month or so) and you are positive they will not hurt each other.

#### **TRAINING TIP:**

If the dog stares at the cat or the door separating the cat, try to distract him and get him to look away with treats, a happy voice or by gently guiding the dog away on a leash. Once the dog is away from the cat, try offering a treat. If he takes it, repeat this process until he is no longer focused on the cat or door.

Source: <https://www.americanhumane.org/fact-sheet/introducing-dogs-to-cats/>