



HOW TO INTRODUCE YOUR NEWLY ADOPTED DOG TO YOUR CAT

Tips from H.O.P.E. Animal Rescue

Bringing a new dog into your home is exciting—but when you have a cat, it's important to manage introductions carefully. These steps will help ensure a safe and smooth transition for everyone.

1. Create a Safe Space for Your Cat

Set up a quiet, dog-free area where your cat can retreat. Include their litter box, food, water, and **vertical space (like a cat tree or shelves)**. This allows your cat to feel secure and observe from a distance.

2. Let Your Dog Decompress First

Give your dog 3–7 days to settle in before introducing them to your cat. Use this time to establish routines and allow both pets to become familiar with each other's scent through closed doors or bedding swaps.

3. Start with Controlled, Leashed Introductions

Keep your dog leashed. Allow your cat to approach freely, with an escape route available. Keep sessions brief and calm. Reward your dog for relaxed behavior. Never force interaction.

4. Watch Body Language *(If either pet becomes agitated, separate them and try again later.)*

Positive signs: relaxed posture, soft eyes, mild curiosity

Warning signs: lunging, barking, growling, hissing, swatting, fixated staring

5. Repeat Short Sessions Daily

Gradual, repeated exposure helps build tolerance. Progress at the pace of the more stressed animal—often the cat. Be patient; this process can take days or even weeks.

6. Use Baby Gates or Crates for Safe Observation

Barriers like baby gates or crates allow for safe interaction. Feed both pets on opposite sides of the barrier to create positive associations.

7. Supervise Until You're Confident

Don't leave your dog and cat alone together until you're sure they're relaxed around each other and showing no signs of aggression or fear.

8. Be Patient and Stay Positive

Not every dog and cat will become best friends—and that's okay. Peaceful coexistence is a great goal. If issues persist, reach out for professional advice.