



How to Introduce your New Dog to your Resident Cat

Slow and steady wins the race. The process of getting these two species to coexist might seem like a long process, but please trust the process.

- 1) Start by keeping the two animals separated. Before even bringing your new dog into the home, put your cat into a room where he feels most comfortable, such as your bedroom.
 - a. Allow the dog to investigate around the house while your cat is in the secure room. The dog will be able to smell the cat and the cat will be able to smell the dog. They both know the other exists without physically seeing one another.
 - b. Now swap. Put the dog into that room and allow your cat to investigate the smells.
 - c. The goal before moving onto the next step is to have both animals relaxed and no longer interested in the smells around them. If at any point the dog is continuing to dig at the door, excessively bark, or try to get out of the room to see the cat, do not move onto the next step. Wait it out. If possible, it would be highly beneficial to keep the two separated for a few days. After a few days, they will still understand the other animal is there but it should be much less exciting to them at this point.
- 2) Leash interactions. Put your dog on a leash and allow the two animals to be in the same room as one another.
 - a. Reward your cat and dog for calm behaviors.
 - b. Continue this introduction until your cat seems uninterested and relaxed (using litter box, eating etc.) and the dog does not seem to care the cat is there.
 - c. If you find the dog is fixated on the cat for a long period of time you are not ready to move onto the next step. Continue keeping them separated and try the leash interaction each day until the dog does not care the cat is there.
- 3) Once your cat and dog seem to show no interest in the other you can let the two of them adventure around the home. Closely monitor the dog and make sure they do not try to chase the cat. If the dog begins acting inappropriately, crate him or put him in another room and allow him to try again in 5-10 minutes.
- 4) Make sure you keep the two separated when no one is home. You can do this by putting up a baby gate, utilizing a crate, or putting one of them back into a room.