



## Introducing Cats to Dogs

Many dogs and cats get along well, though it may take some time to complete introductions. Unless cats are used to dogs, they usually won't accept one right away. It's even harder if the dog is young, energetic, or big. These dogs can be very intimidating to a cat.

From the cat's viewpoint, a dog is a predator or at least an intruder. Many dogs view cats as prey or toys and want to catch them.



The classic image of a dog chasing a cat is all too real. However, this is extremely stressful to the cat. If a dog is allowed to chase cats, hoping the cat and dog will live together peacefully is often impossible.

Dogs can kill cats even in play. Cats are also able to injure dogs in return. All introductions between cats and dogs need to be supervised for everyone's safety.

Doing it, the right way, will minimize stress and give you the best opportunity for future success.

### **Cats set the pace**

The cat is the one to determine the pace. It may take weeks or months until they calmly accept each other.

Unfortunately, in some cases, it doesn't work and you need to keep them separated or find one of them a new home. Constant stress for either of them is not healthy.

During the process, keep your cat's claws trimmed to help protect your dog.

The dog must be confined to one or two rooms with baby gates. This will allow the pets to see each other but the cat can stay as far away as he wants.



He can gradually take the time he needs to investigate the newcomer. Using something to reduce anxiety may help both pets.

Reward the dog with treats when he calmly watches the cat. Don't allow him to lunge at the baby gate. However, you want to keep any negative reactions on your part to a minimum.

You want the pets to associate good things such as treats with the other pet. Give the cat treats for going near the gate.

### **Together**

Once the cat is comfortable near the gate, you can have a controlled meeting in a room together. The dog must be kept on a leash so you can restrain him if needed. If the dog is barking or lunging at the cat, ask him to "sit" and use only mild corrections.

Remember, you want the other pet to be associated with pleasant things. Again, give the cat treats when he's willing to be near the dog.

The cat must be able to leave the room. Initially he may be more comfortable watching the dog from a perch on high. Let him set the pace. Keep repeating the process until both pets can calmly be together.

Keep the pets separated when you can't monitor them or you leave the house. Once they accept each other, you can leave the dog off-leash and leave them alone.

### ***Other tips***

The dog should not be able to get to the litter box. This will be stressful for the cat and dogs often love to eat cat feces! It also may be easier to feed your cat on a high surface to keep the dog out of the food.

Although it may take time to introduce a new dog to your cat slowly, it is well worth the effort. Keeping stress to a minimum will allow both pets the best opportunity to develop a good relationship.

