



Introducing a New Dog to Resident Dogs

Bringing home a new pet should be a family decision, and that includes any pets currently living with you! Pets have different personalities just like people and though many pets learn to get along just fine with their new furry friends, it's always best to introduce them carefully. The following tips will help introductions go smoothly.

- The first meeting should be in a neutral location, such as the park, if at all possible. If introducing more than two dogs, introduce them to each other one at a time.
- Take the dogs for a walk together, with one person walking each dog. This gives the dogs a chance to enjoy a pleasant activity and get used to each other without pressure to interact. Start out with the dogs far away from each other and gradually get closer over 20-30 minutes, longer if you see any warning signs, such as staring at each other, stiffness, high tails, growling, or showing teeth.
- If you don't see any warning signs, the next step is to let the dogs sniff. Keep the leashes as loose as possible. Pressure from the leash can inadvertently cause tension between the dogs. Allow short (4-5 seconds) periods of sniffing and then call the dogs away for several seconds before allowing them to sniff again. This keeps things from getting too intense. If you see any warning signs, separate the dogs and walk them for several minutes before trying again.
- When you get home, take the new dog inside first and give him a few minutes to explore his new house. Then bring the resident dog in.
- Be especially cautious around food, toys, bones, etc. Some dogs guard these things from each other, and things can quickly get out of hand.
- Give each dog a space of his own to retreat to when he's had enough. This could be a crate or small room. Remember, neither dog had a choice in this new living arrangement, and not all dogs will take to a new roommate immediately.
- Separate the dogs any time you cannot supervise them for at least the first month. Without you around to make sure things go smoothly, small spats can easily escalate into full-blown fights.