



Introducing Dogs to Cat

SEPARATE THE ANIMALS

- Set up a safe room for the cat. A spare bedroom or the master bedroom are great choices, not the laundry room. Set the room up with a cat box, scratching post, food, water and toys.
- Once the cat is comfortable with you and its surroundings (she lounges on the bed, watches birds in the window sill, meows at door to come out), 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.

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.

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.

WARNING SIGNS

- If the dog remains overly focused, does not take his eyes off the cat or the door, completely ignores you or lunges suddenly as soon as the cat moves, this is probably a dangerous match. You should probably not get him a cat.
- If at any time the dog lunges toward, growls, snaps at or shows any aggression toward a calm, quiet, still cat, this match will probably not work out. The same holds true if a cat attacks a calm, quiet dog. If you are committed to make the relationship work, you will probably need a professional at this point.
- If you are looking for a cat for your dog, and your dog displays questionable behavior around a cat who is growling, hissing and swatting, try again with another, calmer cat. If he continues to display questionable behavior around multiple cats, it is likely he should not live with cats.
- If the cat is growling, hissing or swatting, give the cat a break and try again on another day. A cat who continually hisses and growls at all types of dogs will likely not want to live with dogs. The cat may tolerate a dog, but she probably won't be happy – which is an unfair situation for her.
- If the cat stops eating, drinking, using the litter box or visiting with family members, she is not happy. You might want to consider finding a better match or contacting a professional animal behaviorist for advice.

If you have any trouble or have questions, you can contact our cat behavior volunteer at GoodKitty@HumaneTomorrow.org.