



## Introducing Your Dog To Other Dogs

You've picked out a new dog and everyone in the family can't wait to meet him, but will your resident dog be as thrilled to have a new family member? Introducing a new dog to your current pets can be a tricky situation, especially if you're bringing a new puppy home that hasn't yet figured out how to communicate with adult dogs. It's important to help both dogs, the new addition and the residing pup, learn and adjust to the new living situation.

The first step in introducing a new dog is to identify a neutral space where the initial interaction can take place. You want to have the dogs meet in an area that neither has "claimed", and that preferably is outdoors. Be sure to keep the dogs on-leash but hold with a loose grip and allow them to roam. Anything that can cause a scuffle should be put away, such as food, treats or toys.

After the first interaction, have a friend or family member parallel walk the dogs with you. This means walk the dogs in the same direction with enough distance apart that they aren't fixated on each other. After walking for a bit, have the dogs switch places so they can sniff where the other dog has walked and become more familiar.

As the introduction is happening, be sure to keep an eye on both dogs' body language. If one or both dogs are displaying tense, stressed or fearful body language, it's best to keep both dogs on a leash and separate until they start to feel more comfortable around each other.

If both dogs seem relaxed and are willing to be social with one another, allow them to come closer and eventually drop the leashes so they can fully interact.

As the dogs play, watch for mutual give-and-take and respectful interactions. End the introduction with a short walk together.

### Introducing A Puppy To Your Adult Dog

Puppies have a lot of rules to learn, both from you and the existing dog, when they enter their new home. Full of energy, puppies will immediately start looking for someone to play with and typically go straight for the adult dog. Some adult dogs will be more open to this than others. As their owner it's important to recognize if an adult dog's behavior is appropriate when correcting a puppy, such as a soft growl or grumble. This is the way older dogs communicate that the puppy needs to take a step back, and it is acceptable as long as the adult dog does not make inappropriate contact and injure the puppy.

Growling is how dogs let others know that they are unhappy about something, and in this situation, it can be a good lesson for your new puppy. It's important to always supervise these initial interactions to be sure that more intense aggression doesn't take place.

If you notice that the adult dog is becoming overly agitated by the puppy, it's best to separate the two and redirect the puppy to another task. When you are not able to directly supervise the puppy, he should be placed behind a gate or in a crate.

Throughout the day, give the adult dog a break from the puppy, as it can be exhausting for him to be around a puppy continuously, and also requires undivided attention from you, the owner. Periods of separation during the day can take the pressure off the adult dog and give everyone much needed breaks.

Whether your adult dog takes to the puppy immediately or not, reward both dogs for behaving appropriately around each other. It's also important to make sure your puppy is getting enough exercise, both mentally and physically, so he doesn't take out all his energy on the older dog. A great activity is taking both dogs on a walk together.

If you are patient and are sure to care for each dog's needs equally, your dogs will grow to love each other.