



Tips on Introducing

WOOF!

# a New Dog to Your Canine "Pack"

**Bringing a new dog into the family is an exciting time for the human "pack" members but can create stress for your current canine. Understanding how to manage dog introductions can help ensure a lifetime of harmony for everyone.**

## General Tips for Canine Introductions

- Set reasonable goals. Knowing each dog's background as to how well they were socialised will help you manage what might happen. Remember and respect that your resident dog may perceive the new dog to be encroaching on his established territory which can be very stressful.
- Proceed slowly and calmly. Slow-paced introductions may help prevent any fear-based or aggressive reactions from developing. Bad behaviours not reined in from the start can become habit and be very hard to change.
- Be sure all the dogs are current on their vaccinations to avoid any risk of infection.
- If you have more than one resident dog, introduce each one to the new dog individually to prevent the group from overwhelming the newcomer.
- Stay in control of the introduction. If you are not sure how your pet will react, take the necessary precautions to keep him (and you) safe.
- Never leave new dogs unattended. When dogs are getting acquainted the situation can change suddenly.

## Going Nose to Nose

- Introduce the dogs in a neutral location that is unfamiliar to both dogs.
- Have each dog handled by a different person on a loosely held, six-foot lead. Stay relaxed and calm.
- Don't force an interaction between the dogs. Just walk them near one another for a few minutes. Its fine if the dogs ignore each other. Stay upbeat and give them time to get comfortable with the situation.



- Next, allow the dogs to sniff each other briefly. If they show positive signs praise them in a high-pitched, happy voice. Then lead the dogs away from each other.
- Do several sets of brief introductions. As you walk away from the other dog, refocus each dog's attention with obedience commands or short walks. This allows the dogs to meet and tolerate each other without exhibiting any bad behaviour and keeps the meetings friendly so the dogs learn to associate good relaxed things with being together.

- Watch the dogs' body language. Things are going well and you can proceed to the next step if you see:
  - Loose body movements and muscles
  - Relaxed open mouths
  - Play bows or other playful posturing
- If you see unfriendly reactions, quickly lead the dogs away from each other and get them to refocus on their handler. Then try a brief introduction again, but at a further distance.

**Take caution if you see:**

- Stiff, slow body movements
- Hair standing up on the back
- Tensed mouth or teeth-baring
- Growls
- Prolonged staring



*Only proceed to the next step when you see the dogs are tolerating each other. Be patient and adaptable.*

**Managing the New Dog in Your Home**

- Pick up pet toys, food bowls, beds, etc., before you bring the new dog into the house. This prevents any tiffs over prized possessions. You can return the resident dog's toys to him in a few weeks, and give the new dog some toys of his own.
- Put your current dog in a separate area of your home, and then walk the new dog on a lead throughout your home to show him where he will sleep and eat, where the other pets sleep and eat, etc.
- Establish boundaries. Use baby gates and close off rooms and areas while all the pets acclimate to the new situation. This way, they can see and get used to one another. Allow the resident dog to roam the house while confining the new dog behind a barrier at first.
- Create separate areas for each dog's eating/sleeping activities. This helps keep the resident dog from feeling his territory is being threatened. Pick up food bowls after feeding time, and keep the dogs confined in separate areas of your home any time you are away or can't watch them.

Remember to devote plenty of time to each dog individually for both training and play. If one dog is much older or less energetic than the other, be sure you give him time and space to himself so he can rest and feel secure.

**Introducing a Puppy to an Adult Dog**

Not all resident dogs will welcome a new puppy into the home. Puppies are notorious for looking for attention from adult dogs (and everyone else) and must be supervised when they are with other animals.

Very young pups may not pick up on an adult dog's body language that says he's had enough playing. A well socialised adult dog may growl to tell the pup to back off, which is appropriate behaviour that helps the puppy learn boundaries. An adult dog with poor social skills, however, may present a danger to the puppy, as he may only know to bite rather than growl. Thus, do not leave the dog and puppy alone together. Respect the adult dog's need for puppy-free quiet time, and be sure to spend one-on-one time with him as well.

Handle the puppy-to-dog introduction as you would between adult dogs. Keep both animals leashed, carefully watch their body language, allow brief sniffs, and offer praise when they behave well.

