

Dog Introductions

Adding a new dog to a home with a resident dog can be great fun and offers both your family and your dog extra companionship. However, dogs need time to build relationships. The smoother you can keep the early stages of the sibling relationship the stronger it will be—and

Before Bringing a New Dog Home

Get supplies

Your new dog needs her own food and water bowls, dog bed, and toys. Don't ask your resident dog to share; he might get possessive of what he sees as his.

Prepare your house

Pick up all toys, chews, bones, food bowls, and your resident dog's favorite items. When dogs are creating a relationship, these items can cause problems. (They can be introduced after a couple of weeks.) Give each dog their own confinement area. Set up a crate, spare room, or dog-proofed area with each dog's food, water, and toys.

Introducing the Dogs

Pick a neutral location

The first meeting should take place on neutral ground—not your house or yard. For example, a neighborhood street or park would work.

Manage the first meeting

Have someone help you with the first meeting. With both dogs on leashes, allow them to sniff each other briefly (two to three seconds only), then call them away and praise each with treats. Next, take a short walk in the neighborhood and let them interact for short periods along the way.

Look for positive body language like play bowing—the dog crouches down on her front legs with her hind end in the air.

Interrupt negative body language with distraction. This could be hair standing up on the dog's back, teeth-baring, deep growls, a stiff body, or a long, hard stare. If you see one of the dogs doing any of these, call each dog back and ask for a command like Sit or Down. Reward with a treat and praise. Try letting the dogs interact again, but this time for a shorter time period and/or at a greater distance from each other.

If you have more than one resident dog, introduce them one at a time to the new dog.



Taking the Dogs Home

The first time the two dogs are inside your house together, keep them both leashed and keep the introduction short, around five minutes.

Build the relationship

The length of this phase is different for every set of dogs. Carefully watch both dogs' body language for clues before you increase their time together. Until then, follow these guidelines:

- Keep all dog play and socializing positive and brief. That way, you avoid over-stimulation or quarrels that may erupt during overly rough or extended play.
- Feed dogs in separate areas, completely closed off from one another.
- Spend time with each dog individually.
- Keep the dogs separate when you can't supervise their interactions.
- Always supervise dogs when around family members, toys, or sleeping spots since dogs can become protective of these.
- Praise the dogs in a cheerful voice for having positive interactions.
- Interrupt any growling or bullying behavior, separate the bully to a different area for a few minutes, and then try again.
- Most dogs enjoy walks. Walk your dogs together, so they learn that good things happen when they are together.

Introducing a Puppy to an Adult Dog

Puppies usually annoy adult dogs without a break. Before the age of four months, puppies may not be able to read body postures from adult dogs signaling that they've had enough. Well-socialized adult dogs with good temperaments may set limits with puppies with a growl or snarl. These behaviors are normal and should be allowed.

Adult dogs that aren't well-socialized, or that have a history of fighting with other dogs, may attempt to set limits with more aggressive behaviors, such as biting. For this reason, a puppy shouldn't be left alone with an adult dog until you're confident the puppy isn't in any danger. Be sure to give the adult dog some quiet time away from the puppy as well as individual attention.