

SEVEN STEPS TO INTRODUCE NEWCOMERS — WE DIDN'T SAY IT WAS GOING TO BE EASY

With time and patience, you can introduce new pets — cats or dogs — gradually and safely, with a minimum of stress for all involved.

To introduce a cat and dog:

1. Isolate a new cat for three days to a week in a room with a litter box, soft bed, food and water. That gives him time to become accustomed to the new home's smells and sounds before encountering other pets. Do this even if no other pets are in the home so the cat can develop a sense of place.
2. Let the cat explore the house while the dog is outdoors, confined to a crate or restrained by a leash.
3. When you bring the animals together, keep the dog on a leash so you can control playful or predatory lunges. Give them both treats as long as they react calmly. You want

them to associate good things with each other.

To introduce a new cat to the resident one:

1. The same as the previous Step 1. Isolate a new cat for three days to a week in a room with a litter box, soft bed, food and water.
2. Exchange their odors. Rub each cat with a washcloth, especially on the cheeks and the top of the tail, which has scent glands that cats use for identification. After letting them sniff the washcloth, rub each cat with the other's washcloth so they can become accustomed to each other's smell. If a cat sniffs the washcloth and hisses or swats at it, expect to spend extra time getting them to accept one another.

3. After the first seven days of isolation, set up a situation in which the cats can see each other but have no physical contact. You can separate them with a glass or screen door or use another see-through barrier such as two baby gates on top of each other. This separation period should last three to seven days. During this time, feed the cats within view of each other. You want them to associate good things with the presence of the other cat.
4. Finally, introduce them with both cats wearing collars and leashes so you can separate them if they fight. Give them treats if they react calmly. Go slowly and they just might become fast friends.