



## How to Introduce Cats to Dogs

### Phase 1 – Cat Smells Dog

- **Successful introductions take time.** DO NOT and we repeat DO NOT try to introduce the new addition to your resident dog(s) immediately upon arrival. You may damage the new relationship irreparably and initiate fear, anger, aggression, spraying and litter box problems in the new cat and/or resident dogs(s). Successful introductions take time.
- **Let the cats sniff out the situation.** Let “smell” be the first introduction as the new cat and dog(s) sniff each other from under the “safe room” door. Within two to four days, begin exchanging the bedding between the new and resident dog(s) daily. This helps familiarize the animals with each other’s scents.

### Phase 2 – Switch Spots

- If there are no other cats in your home, confine the dog to one room and let the cat begin to explore the rest of your house for one to two hours each day until the cat is familiar and comfortable with the layout of your home.

### Phase 3 – Cat Meets Dog

- **Bring the dog in on a leash.** Once the cat is used to your home, let the cat roam loose in one room. Keep the dog on a leash and have dog treats ready in your pocket. If possible, have another person the cat is familiar with on the other side of the room to reassure and distract the cat from the dog.
- **Sit and meet.** Keep the dog seated and focused on you as the leader. Try offering the dog a toy. If the dog focuses on or accepts the toy, reward the dog with a treat. If the dog tries to stand and move towards the cat(s), correct the dog slightly with the leash and reward him or her with a treat. If at any point the dog is not responding to your commands or the cat’s stress level appears elevated, remove the dog from the room. Keep repeating this process until the dog is responding to you and either ignoring or accepting the cat(s). This process helps teach the dog that cats are not prey, toys to be chased, or threats.
- **Watch.** Never leave the dog and cat(s) unsupervised until you are absolutely sure they have built up a mutual, trusting and respectful relationship.
- **Make sure kitty has some space for alone time.** Even once the cat(s) and dog(s) are comfortable with each other, cats still like having the option to retreat to a space away from the dog. Place a baby gate across the doorway of a room in the house where the cat or cats like to hang out, or buy or build a tall cat tower so they can retreat when needed.
- **If a cat runs, most dogs will give chase.**

**Note:** The length of time required to successfully integrate cats with dogs varies depending on the previous experiences of the animals involved. For example, your dog may have had previous encounter with a cat or the cat may have had prior experience with a dog. Often, when the cats and dogs are used to being around the other species, integration can be quicker.

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<https://www.meowfoundation.com/resources/new-cat/>