

## Introducing a New Dog to Your Dog

Tension between dogs that live together is very common, especially when a new dog is introduced into the mix. Existing dogs are not able to choose their new 'brothers and sisters', so it is up to you to ensure introductions go as smoothly as possible by following some general guidelines.

### Tips for Safe Dog-to-Dog Introductions:

- If the existing dog is a controlling male, then it is wise to introduce a more submissive female into the mix and vice versa. Inter-female aggression is very common, as are fights between competing males, while dogs of the same sex can co-habit peacefully, it is often better to mix the sexes up.
- It is advisable that the second dog is either close in age or temperament to the existing dog, making sure their energy levels match. If a puppy is bought into a home with an established older dog, every effort must be made to keep puppy's desire to play with the older dog to a minimum. In some cases a younger dog will breathe new life into an older one, but age gaps can also be the cause of major irritations!
- Initial introductions need to be made on neutral territory with both dogs on loose leashes, so that they have the ability to interact without the frustration of being held too tightly. If the initial meeting goes well, both dogs should be allowed to interact off leash in a safe area, giving them freedom to form a relationship.
- Established dogs can become *jealous* when too much attention is given to the new addition. It is important that both dogs get equal attention as well as having quality one-on-one time with the owner.
- Feeding the dogs separately for the first couple of weeks will ensure that there are no fights over food bowls. After this period the dogs can be brought together for supervised feeding, but high value chews or toys need to be given to the dogs in separate rooms as even the best of friends can fight over *valuable resources*.
- Rewarding the existing dog when he or she behaves well around the new arrival and taking away the reward when the new dog is out of the room, will show the dog that the new dog's presence means good things happen.
- Taking both dogs out on a walk together and doing activities such as *compliance teaching* and *agility* will help to improve the bonding process.

If relations do not go well, then the above tips can still be used to form a program where the dogs are slowly conditioned to feel good about each other's presence.

Both dogs need to be carefully managed so that they are never left alone together without supervision and should be provided with separate areas for safety and relaxation.

If fights continue to occur on a regular basis resulting in trips to the veterinarian, the decision to re-home one of the dogs needs to be made. As much as we humans do not like to fail, it can be very stressful for a dog to live daily with the continual threat from a canine adversary.

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