

# Cats and Dogs.

## Tips for introducing cats and dogs and dogs and cats

by Loni Ice

Looking to add a new member to your family? It is increasingly common to find cat and dog lovers who do not restrict themselves to being exclusively cat and dog people. Such people, like you, want to welcome both species into their lives and homes.

However, as there can be significant problems between the two, a few points should be taken into consideration before trying to live with both. Carefully research the dog's prey drive, previous socialization with cats, obedience training, and the cat's previous experience with dogs before you make your decision.

### Introducing dogs and cats.

Some dogs have a strong prey drive. Prey drive is the canine instinct that causes them to obsessively chase moving objects. This is what drives dogs to chase balls, Frisbees, squirrels, birds, and cars. Greyhound training in particular accesses this drive; it's what makes the hounds run after the mechanical rabbit. In dogs with a high prey drive, a cat looks like a perfect target, so testing how strong a dog's prey drive is before introducing him to a cat is important.

If you already own the dog, test her on other cats first before buying one to bring home. If you try to introduce the dog, be prepared to test several on your own cat. Always have the dog on a short leash for these tests, and observe your dog's reaction carefully. If the dog reacts cautiously or in a gentle, friendly fashion, you'll be able to introduce a new cat into your house. However, if the dog tries to chase or gets overly excited, you'll want to work with him or, if adopting a new dog, try a different one. Some dogs can be taught rituals for the introduction of cats and dogs inside the home given enough time, however, some have too strong a prey drive and will not be able to get along. For the physical and psychological good of the cat in question, please be honest about the dog's capabilities, whichever breed is new to your home.

### Introducing cats and dogs.

Cats frequently come with previous negative conditioning regarding dogs, and de-clawed cats cannot defend themselves from overly enthusiastic dogs. If possible, research the cat's history before introducing canine friends. Cats who experienced previous trauma from dogs may not ever be able to tolerate their company, no matter how gentle the dog. If the cat seems overly skittish or aggressive, or if the cat is de-clawed, please reconsider. Psychological stress can be deadly to our feline companions. Cats are much less trainable than dogs, and they have absolutely no motivation to change their views.

Be aware that dog breed impacts prey drive. Some dogs are more laid back by nature, whereas some have an intense need to chase. Sighthounds in particular, reflexively run down moving things. The sighthound family includes greyhounds, Afghan hounds, whippets, Siberian Huskies, Labrador Retrievers, Alaskan Malamutes, and Irish wolfhounds. Any large dog that has large eyes, set relatively close together, and a long face are probably a part of this family. They can be socialized so that cats and dogs live successfully together; many are quite gentle with cats inside the home. However, no matter how well they get along inside the house, a sighthound will reflexively chase anything moving while outside. Greyhounds are the fastest breed of dog, reaching speeds of 45 mph from a standing start, which is faster than most cats can ever expect. Please do not try to have both cats and dogs outdoors or a dog with an outdoor cat, you will have a tragedy in your backyard.

While other breeds have less of an inbred hunting reflex, and many crossbreeds have wonderful personalities that socialize together in record time, cats and dogs outdoors do not mix. When choosing a new dog to bring into your home, remain open to all possibilities. You never know when the perfect canine is going to walk into your life.

Once you've picked out your new friend, putting some time and effort into preparing for them is absolutely necessary. If you are introducing cats and dogs, be sure that your dog has obedience training first. If you will be introducing dogs to cats, get the dog into obedience training as soon as possible if he's not already a graduate. It's imperative that you maximize your control over the dog's behavior for two reasons; the first is that

your dog is more dangerous to the cat than the other way around. The second is that out of cats and dogs, it is the dog who is the only one that you are going to control.

When first bringing your new animal home, ensure that the cats and dogs territories are clearly and physically separated. In addition, the cat's food should not be available to the dog at any time because cat food is high in fat and protein, also known as dog junk food. Just like junk food for humans, your cat's food, no matter how tempting, will cause your dog some health problems. Keep the litter box out of canine reach as well because dogs are frequently attracted to "remains" from cat litter boxes. It's extremely unhealthy for the dog and household.

Keep the cat away from the dog's food, toys, and sleeping area. Some dogs get very defensive about what they know is theirs. Putting baby gates up is a good method for defining territory, as the cat can jump the gate and the dog cannot. However, if too excited, a dog could go through a baby gate right after the cat jumped over it. When leaving cats and dogs alone for long periods place the cat, her food, and her litterbox into a separate room and close the door. Never leave cats and dogs in the same room while you're out, even for litter and potty training purposes.

### **Cat dog introductions.**

Before the animals' first meeting, if possible, make sure that they have traded scents. Take a blanket or towel that the cat has slept on and put it in the dog's sleeping area, and vice versa. This practice ensures that the cats and dogs are sufficiently familiar with each other's presence and species so that the first meeting does not come as a complete surprise. After all, humans don't always like meeting someone by surprise, and neither do cats and dogs. It's can also be another good test of how they react to each other. If the dog tries to rip up the towel that has the cat's scent on it, or if the cat hisses and shies away from the dog's blanket, that's an important clue to the psychological history of the animal.

Allow the cats and dogs time to explore and get comfortable in the house by confining the other for a few hours at a time. Alternate frequently, giving both animals plenty of affection when alone with each. You don't want your faithful friend to feel supplanted by the newcomer, after all! However, always feed and pay attention to the cat first upon coming home and when the cats and dogs are together. This will establish the cat as dominant over the dog in the dog's mind. Most dogs don't mind being the low critter on the totem pole, so long as they have a consistent place and are rewarded for good behavior and your attention. Cats, on the other hand, do not have such a clearly defined hierarchy in their social behavior, they don't understand canine social rules, and can get injured or killed if the dog is looking for submission from the cat and doesn't get it.

Supervise cats and dogs closely during all meetings until the two are verifiably acclimated to each other. Keep the dog on a leash and under a down/stay command to prevent sudden chasing sessions or overly aggressive play behavior. Always keep their meetings short and controlled. When the cats and dogs are behaving well towards each other, load on the affection and praise. When they are not getting along, do not punish either of them under any circumstances. Simply end the meeting and try again later when both are calm.

Carefully watch the cats and dogs relationship over the first few months. They may only ever get to mutual tolerance, but that is enough. As long as the cat does not appear constantly stressed and the dog does not react to the cat's presence with aggression or immediate rough play, they can probably continue to get along. However, if those initial fear/aggression reactions continue past one month, it's time to try again with a different animal, or accept that your long-term pet cannot handle the presence of the other species.

Be prepared to take one of the animals back to his or her previous owner and try again if necessary. If taking the animal back for a refund is not an option, do not purchase or adopt the animal. Some breeders will only give a partial refund due to shipping and sale expenses, however, any responsible breeder or private adoption organization will take cats and dogs back for any reason whatsoever, and so does the SPCA. Responsible animal owners, breeders, and sellers always put the needs of the animal above immediate monetary concerns. Do not deal with anyone who fails in this.

### **To recap:**

- Do test all animals involved first for prey drive/prior trauma/suitability.

- Do be prepared to look around for some time for the perfect addition to your house.
- Do all of your homework regarding what the new addition will need. A new pet deserves the same level of care that your existing pet gets, but cats and dogs don't have the same needs.
- Do make sure you have the time and resources to provide for both animals. If you don't, you need to know that before adopting a new family member.
- Do prepare your home ahead of time. Make sure both animals have clearly demarcated territory for their dens, food, and littering places, and that they cannot access each other's territory under any circumstances when no human is present.
- Do clip both animals' claws before their first meeting.
- Do give the animals each other's blankets/towels to acclimate to the presence of the other without the stress of immediacy or surprise.
- Do give each animal time to explore and acclimate to the house without the stress of the other animal's presence.
- Do give each animal plenty of attention and praise when one on one.
- Do give the cat food and attention first when the two animals can see each other.
- Do supervise the first thirty days of meetings closely, with the dog on a leash and under a down/stay command.
- Do stop the meeting at the first signs of stress or aggression from either party and try again later.
- Do give massive amounts of praise and affection to both animals for any good behavior.
- Don't make the decision to bring a new animal into your home lightly or quickly.
- Don't deal with any breeder, dealer, or adoption society who is not willing to take their animal back if she is unsuitable to your home.
- Don't rush to bring a new animal home because he will be unavailable unless you take him now. There will always be more animals out there in need of a home, and all parties need to be sure they can get along.
- Don't assume your existing pet can acclimate well to the other species. Test first, and if the answer is no, accept it.
- Don't try to introduce a dog and a de-clawed cat. The risks and stresses are too much for the cat.
- Don't have a dog and an outdoor cat. In fact, it's not advisable to let cats outdoors at all, but some of them will not be happy any other way. However, if yours is an outdoor cat, she relies on your yard to be dog-safe territory. Please don't take that away.
- Don't punish either of them if they do not behave well upon meeting. This will only increase the negative associations each has towards the other.
- Don't ever leave them together while no one is home before they have really bonded. This takes at least thirty days, sometimes more. Always separate them behind a solid door, not just a baby gate. In addition, if they never get to more than mutual tolerance, always separate them before leaving for an entire day.
- Don't keep trying with the same animal if it becomes clear that the two just do not like each other. Determine which pet has the problem, and either try with a different animal or accept that your home is multi-species enough with just one.

# High prey drive breeds list

Dogs that were bred to hunt, such as terriers, have an inborn desire to chase and sometimes kill other animals. Anything whizzing by -- cats, squirrels, perhaps even cars -- can trigger that instinct. Dogs that like to chase need to be leashed or kept in a fenced area when outdoors, and you'll need a high, secure fence in your yard. These breeds generally aren't a good fit for homes with smaller pets that can look like prey, such as cats, hamsters, or small dogs. Breeds that were originally used for bird hunting, on the other hand, generally won't chase, but you'll probably have a hard time getting their attention when there are birds flying by.

Whippet – poacher's best friend – rabbits and small game

Tibetan Mastiff – primitive breed – guard dog

Sussex Spaniel – developed to flush birds for hunters

Staffordshire Bull Terrier – created as a fast fighting dog

Sloughi - this desert sighthound originated in North Africa to hunt small, speedy prey.

Siberian Husky - intelligent dog can be independent and challenging for first-time dog owners.

Saluki - easy to groom, challenging to train, and not to be trusted off leash.

Rat Terrier - feisty, funny, energetic, lively, vermin-chasing, and incapable of being boring

Plott - to hunt bear and wild boar. They are still used as [hunting dogs](#) today and have proven their worth

Pharaoh Hound - He was the dog of kings and may have hunted gazelles with pharaohs, hence his name.

Otterhound - originally [bred for hunting](#) otter in England. Built for work, keen nose and renowned stamina

Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever - Their prey drive, may send them [careening after cats](#) or other animals that look like good sport.

Norwich Terrier - used for hunting both vermin and foxes, and today he can still be seen hunting.

Norfolk Terrier - strong hunting instinct is easily triggered by the sight of a squirrel, rabbit, or other small animal dashing by.

Kuvasz - he's protective of his people and suspicious of strangers.

Jack Russell Terrier - Developed in England some 200 years ago to hunt foxes

Ibizan Hound - The Ibizan Hound was originally bred to hunt rabbits and small game

Harrier - Harriers originally were bred to hunt hares and foxes

Greyhound - need a solid fence to keep them from chasing they might see as prey, such as squirrels, rabbits, or trespassing cats.

Goldador - usually get along with other dogs and pets, especially when they're raised with them or socialized to them at an early age.

German Shepherd – herding stock, can also live peacefully with other dogs and pets, as long as he was taught to do so from puppyhood

Finnish Spitz - originally were bred to hunt a variety of small and large game, and then bark when they found something.

English Foxhound - originally a hunting dog, designed to pursue foxes in the English countryside

Doberman Pinscher - He's also friendly with other dogs and animals in his home, especially if he has been raised with them

Dachshund - were bred to hunt badgers and other tunneling animals, rabbits and foxes – good small game hunters

Catahoula Leopard - created to track and drive feral hogs and cattle when it was time to butcher them, and not surprisingly they are aggressively resolute in their work.

Bull Terrier - developed in the 19th century as a fighting dog - cats and other furry animals who enter their territory should beware.

Brussels Griffion - Originally bred to hunt and kill rats

Border Terrier - originally bred to assist in driving foxes out of their hiding places and out into the open for the hounds to chase.

Border Collie - a herding dog, which means he has an overwhelming urge to gather a flock. That flock could be sheep, children, cats, squirrels, or anything that moves,

Blood Hound - Bloodhounds are pack dogs and will enjoy the company of other dogs. A cat will do in a pinch.

Blk/Tan Coonhound - They get along well with other dogs and can even be buddies with cats if properly introduced.

Black Russian Terrier - They will be fine with nondominant or small dogs, as well as cats, horses, rabbits, and other pets.

Belgian Malinois - can be aggressive toward other dogs and cats unless they're brought up with them from puppyhood.

Azawakh - they're sighthounds, they're attracted by motion and are likely to chase animals, people on bicycles or skateboards

Australian Terrier - Bred to hunt and exterminate rodents and snakes,. He also has a penchant for chasing cats and small animals, so he isn't best suited to homes with rabbits, mice, or hamsters. However, with patient training, the Aussie can be taught to respect and leave alone the animals he lives with--but only those he lives with. He will eagerly chase the neighbor's cat or a squirrel at a park

Amer. Foxhound - American Foxhounds can get along well with cats, rabbits, and other pets if they're raised with them in the home. Even so, don't leave them unsupervised with other pets until you're sure they all get along.

Alaskan Malamute - He may chase small animals such as cats unless brought up with them and taught not to. It's vital to properly introduce him to other animals in the household and supervise their interactions. He'll consider outdoor cats and other small animals fair game.

Akita - He should live in a one-pet household, however, because he is aggressive toward other dogs and will chase other pets.

Afgahn Hound - Not surprisingly, the Afghan's hunter's instinct leads him to chase small animals, especially if they run away.