

## Introducing and Managing Dogs in Your Home

When bringing a new dog into your home, it's important to let both dogs settle in and keep introductions calm, considerate and brief. Allow them to meet, then separate them and involve them in separate activities. After a time, allow them another short meeting. Keeping introductions fragmented and allowing interactions to progress at their own pace helps to prevent any escalation of tension.

Always observe the dogs' body language as you're introducing them. Ensure they are inviting and offering happy body language. Defensive or guarded body language may mean you have moved too quickly and the dogs need more time to get used to each other.



It is important to put away toys, treats or favourite things in the home environment to remove any impetus for conflict between the dogs. Ensure that each dog has their own "safe space," which can be a crate or a room that is theirs, and a separate area for meal times and "time-outs". If there ever appears to be any tension between the dogs, keep interactions short and controlled until both dogs become more comfortable together.

Time and patience will be your biggest asset. Sometimes implementing a crate-and-rotate system is best for the early stages of adding another dog to your home. This is a management system that keeps two dogs separated in the home when you can't be there to monitor their interactions. The dogs take turns being loose in the house and being confined. This can be accomplished using baby gates, exercise pens, crates and different rooms in your home. This allows dogs to coincide without the stress of having to constantly be in each other's space and allows for each to spend family time. It's like playing a game of musical dogs! It helps each dog to acclimate to the new situation.

Try implementing this basic management technique whenever you invite a new family pet or foster into your home. Keep everything low key and give both the dogs and you and your family time to adjust. If you have any issues with integrating a new family member, enlist the help of a certified trainer or veterinary behaviourist near you.

