

Bringing a New Dog Home to Live With an Existing Dog

Preparations for Introducing a New Dog

- ▶ Introduce your dogs **before** you bring your new dog home
- ▶ Be patient! Everyone will need time to adjust. Keep things positive and upbeat
- ▶ Each dog should have their own food bowl, water bowl, bed, and toys
- ▶ Get your new dog an ID name tag as soon as possible
- ▶ It usually takes 2-4 weeks to know if your dogs will be friends, but it can also take more or less time
- ▶ It is important to spend time alone with both dogs. If you only interact with the dogs when they are together, you will miss opportunities to bond with your new dog and may create jealousy from your existing dog. The first few weeks of your relationship with your new dog can set the stage for the rest of your dog's life



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Step One: Introduce On Neutral Territory

Use the largest, safe space available. Animal Care & Control has a space available for this meeting. The more your dogs can move around, the better they can observe each other's body language and get to know each other.

Step Two: Introduce At Home

Both dogs should be leashed when meeting at home for the first time. Keep the leashes loose because a tight leash can cause frustration in the dogs that may be redirected as aggression.

If you have more than one dog, introduce them separately.

Watch the dogs' body language. Hard stares, low growls, raised hackles, and stiffening of the body are all warning signs. If you see these signs, step in with a loud noise, and then separate the animals.

Toys, bones, and balls could be a fight trigger for dogs. Pick up anything they could become possessive over before allowing dogs in the same area.

Step Three: Build Comfort

During the first weeks together, the only time the your dogs should be around each other is while supervised. Your new dog should be crated or confined when you are not there to supervise.

After introducing outside, once calm, bring your dogs inside, keeping the leashes on. Allow brief (10-15 minute) interactions inside, ending them on a positive note.

Slowly increase their time together. As they begin to get more comfortable, you can leave leashes attached but drop them while in an enclosed area. This way you can separate them safely, if necessary.

You will know your dogs are beginning to accept one another when they start to ignore each other. The goal is to show the existing dog(s) that the new dog is now a part of the pack.



Troubleshooting

Common fight triggers include:

- ▶ Chasing a squirrel or a ball in the yard
- ▶ Rushing to the door when the doorbell rings
- ▶ Receiving your attention
- ▶ Play sessions between the dogs that get too exciting
- ▶ Tug of war games

If your dogs get overexcited, take action using a loud noise and immediately separate them to different areas until they have settled down.

Remember to **always** separate your dogs when you are not home or not able to supervise.

If you have any questions or concerns while integrating your new dog into your home, please contact Anne Arundel County Animal Care & Control for advice.