

Introducing new cat to existing dog

While dogs and cats are often regarded as enemies, it is usually easier to introduce a new cat to a dog than to another cat. Often, the cat will take charge of the situation immediately! A gradual introduction can make all the difference when introducing a cat and a dog to each other.



Provide a room or area of the house for the cat that is not accessible to your dog. Firstly, exchange the dog's and cat's scent, before introducing the animals physically, introduce them to each other's scent. Swap scents by:

- stroke the cat & dog with different clean, soft cloths and leave the cloth in the other's environment to sniff when the cat is ready to investigate.
- keep swapping the scents over a period of several days until they show no reaction to the smell. If they avoid the scent cloth, then the scent swapping stage is going to take longer.

Making face-to-face introductions:

- keep your dog on the lead and keep them calm – it may help to take your dog for a good walk first.
- train your dog to show relaxed, non-threatening behaviour around the cat, such as 'down' and 'stay' and ensure you are in control at all times.
- ensure your cat doesn't feel cornered. They should be somewhere where they feel relaxed with a safe escape route – preferably a high ledge where the dog can't reach them. Ensure external doors and windows are kept closed to avoid the cat escaping.
- ignore the cat – your dog will feel the cat is more important if you are focussed on it. Do some training tasks with your dog to keep their attention, using treats and praise to reward good behaviour.

- never restrain the cat or force them to approach the dog. Let your cat leave the room whenever they wish.
- don't allow your dog to give chase if the cat runs away. Praise and treat the dog if they remain calm and then return the cat back to their own room.
- repeat short introductions until the dog shows little or no interest and the cat is not fearful of the dog. Progress to the dog being on a long line which can be picked up if necessary.
- give your cat treats so they associate the dog with something positive.

Once your cat and dog are unconcerned with each other's presence you can take your dog off the lead, but make sure your cat can escape onto high ledges or furniture. Never leave the dog and cat together unattended until you are absolutely sure they are happy and secure in each other's company. Remember that cat food and litter trays can be appealing for dogs, so ensure they are not accessible to the dog, but ensure the cat is able to eat and toilet in peace.

Please contact the Centre on 01823 490333 if you have any concerns.

