



Introducing Your Feline to a Canine

Quick Tips - Take it one *sense* at a time - Provide a stress free environment - Allow normal feline/ canine communication and behavior - Redirection is your friend

See Introducing Your Housecat to a New Feline for Cat Behavior Signals

Normal Canine communication and behavior - Play Bows (front legs down, hind quarters up) - Prey (chasing, pursuing) - Cautious Interest or Avoidance - Whimpering All of these behaviors are normal, but need to be managed. Never allow your dog's play to become out of control, and never allow them to chase their new feline housemate. Use redirection, or keep your canine friend on a leash until the situation is easier to control.

The Introduction: Dogs and cats need to be introduced very slowly and cautiously in order for there to be a successful acceptance of one another.

Step 1—SANCTUARY: Make sure your cat has a 'sanctuary'. This is a safe place that your dog cannot get to. This room needs to have your cat's litter box, food, bed and toys, as it will be housing them for anywhere from a few days to a few weeks. Have "hiding spots" in this room for your cat. Boxes make great hidey holes for cats that are feeling a little shy and intimidated for the first few days. Both animals will be curious— sniffing under the door. See "Normal Feline/Canine Communication and Behavior" information above and what to do if it escalates. Never allow the under the door interaction to escalate (barking, growling, etc.).

Step 2—ONE SENSE AT A TIME: After your new cat starts feeling comfortable in their environment, you can start feeding special treats/meals to each animal on either side of the door. See how close you can get the bowl to the door, but don't push it. Over the next few days, you'll gradually decrease the distance between the two animals and the door. The intent is to get each animal eating on either side of the door without any problems. You can also Room Swap; switch one animal out with the other. Allow your dog to explore your cat's sanctuary, and your cat to explore your house. This gives them an opportunity to smell each other's food area and housing. Only do this for an hour at a time maximum and at most twice a day. We also suggest rubbing each animal down with a cloth, and placing the cloth under the other animal's food dish. This helps them associate the other animals scent with a good thing— food.

Step 3—INTERACTION: Once both animals are comfortable, and are not exhibiting stress/fear signals you can open the door to the sanctuary and allow them visuals. It's always a good idea to go slow; open the door a crack, then a little more, then a little more still. Keep your dog on a loose leash—only tighten the leash if you are pulling your dog back/away from the introduction. If you see tensions mounting be sure to *redirect* with toys or treats. If this doesn't help, do not continue and try again tomorrow. If everyone remains relaxed, allow your cat to explore the household while keeping your dog on leash to ensure safety.

Step 4—HAPPY HOME: Now that both animals get along they should be able to be out and about together happily! It is suggested that you do not leave them out alone together when you are not at home for the first few weeks. If something happens, you want to be present! Do not get rid of the sanctuary right away! Allow your cat time to become comfortable and slowly start removing items from the room. You can also place a baby gate at the doorway of your cat's sanctuary. This way, the dog can't get in and the cat always has a place to retreat to.

If after trying these suggestions you are still experiencing undesirable behaviors in your cat, SUBMIT QUESTIONS by clicking the link under Ask A Trainer on the Behavior and Training page of the Wayside Waifs website: www.waysidewaifs.org.

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