



No Kill
South Carolina
2024

C H A R L E S T O N A N I M A L S O C I E T Y

DOG RESOURCES

WHEN DOG MEETS CAT

The key to cat and dog cohabitation success lies in the introduction. Although there is a bit of risk, following the steps below can help you through the introduction process as safely as possible. Don't rush it. This process is meant to help you succeed, but it could take 30 minutes, three hours, a couple days, or weeks. The goal is to get your dog and cat accustomed to each other.

1. Familiarize them with each other's scent.

With the dog and cat in separate rooms, rub each animal's body with a towel, then switch towels so that the dog can smell the cat and the cat can smell the dog. Allow the animals enough time with the towels to get used to each other's smell.

2. Place the cat and dog in two separate rooms but adjoined by a common door that you can close.

Once neither animal is scratching at the door to reach their new neighbor, you are ready for the next step.

3. Place your dog on a leash and hold securely, then allow the cat and dog to be in the same room.

Don't draw attention to the fact that they are in the room together. They will figure it out soon enough. The goal is to get your dog interested in you and not focused on your cat. Continue holding the leash and wait for your dog's interest to diminish. Try keeping her engaged in an on-leash activity. Calmly verbally praise your dog and reward her with treats or petting when she is calm around your cat.

To set your pets up for success, the room you choose for them to meet should have a place for your cat to escape, such as a doggie gate that your dog can't get past or the top of a cat tree that your dog can't reach.

Practicing but short on time? Stop where you are and try the steps again another day. Don't put your pets together until you feel confident you have completed Step 3.

4. When your dog is relaxed around your cat, do not take them off the





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leash, but let go of the leash handle. Drop the leash casually without bringing it to the dog's attention. Keeping the leash on the dog will allow you to grab it quickly without putting yourself in the middle of the animals' conflict. As you look on, let your dog drag the leash in the presence of your cat until both animals are able to relax around each other. Do you feel confident? Time to move on to the next step.

5. Under supervision, remove the leash from your dog. Even with confidence, your cat should always have places to escape if they feel fear or want to get away. If at any point you feel either pet is getting too aggressive or overstepping, go back a step or two and slowly build back up. At this point, you should be well on the way to being one big happy family.

Helping a Resident Cat Adjust to a New Dog

1. Consider your cat's personality. Before bringing home a new dog, consider if your cat is "adaptable" enough to get used to a new dog. Overly fearful or timid cats may have more difficulty adapting to a new dog. Confident cats or those who have lived with dogs in the past tend to adjust with time.
2. Select a dog that suits your cat's personality as well as your lifestyle. Consider an older, smaller, calm dog if your cat is on the timid side. Mature dogs tend to be less interested in chasing. If your cat is young, confident, and active, it may not mind living with a puppy, an adolescent, or a young adult dog.
3. Be sure to give your cat lots of individual time after the dog has moved in. Adding a new member to your family doesn't mean you should ignore your cat. In fact, a great way to prevent conflict between your animals is to lavish personal play time on each animal individually to lessen any "competition" between the two.
4. Try steps to prevent territorial marking. Consider using a synthetic pheromone such as Feliway when the new dog arrives. Cats mark their territory with scents called pheromones, and synthetic pheromones mimic the scent that cats use. This helps to calm them in times of stress.
5. Place litter boxes in dog-free areas. If your cat is worried that your dog will disturb her during bathroom time, she may choose to avoid the litter box. To prevent this, be sure the litter box is placed in a "safe" area where the dog does not have access.
6. Be sure that your cats have plenty of "dog-free safe zones" around the house. High areas such as the top of a cat tree or a room where the dog isn't allowed can provide a stress-free zone for your cat. Place your cat's food and water in a dog-free





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area. Ideally, don't allow your dog in the area while your cat is eating to ensure she feels safe.

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