

Introducing a New Dog

First part of Introduction: Take a walk – Walk both dogs together with one human per dog. Don't force them to meet. Let them sniff each other but don't force it. If they don't approach each other just keep walking in the same direction. Let the dogs make the first moves. A good introduction is to let the sniff for about 5 seconds then call each dog away and walk away from each other. Do this several times increasing the greeting longer and longer. Don't yank the dog away. Simply call the dog and begin walking in opposite direction of dog. Sniffing back ends is very appropriate! This is how they learn more about the other dog.

Keep dogs on leash for first greeting in open space. Once the dogs have met while walking move to a neutral location. Keep a leash on both dogs but drop them so the dogs are dragging the leashes. This will allow you to easily break up the dogs should anything occur. It also signals to the dogs that you still have control. Once dogs are socializing well, remove your dog's leash but leave the leash on the new dog. Again, give them time to continue socializing. If you feel comfortable, remove the new dog's leash. If not, feel free to wait a day or two before doing this.

Introduce dogs on neutral ground. Introductions should be done with two people and at a neutral location (i.e. fenced school yard, tennis courts, a neighbor's fenced yard, etc.) If this is not possible, introduce the dogs outdoors. These environments are less likely to cause territorial issues and the outdoors provide more space and fewer 'traps'. If the new dog feels threatened he can move away.

If you have more than one dog, introduce dogs one at a time.

Dogs get tense around gates and doorways so avoid introductions in these areas. Do your introduction in the middle of an open area. Dogs that feel too close together will cause tension to develop.

At the start of the meeting, keep moving. If people move around with purpose, the dogs usually follow which avoids tense greetings.

Monitor play time. Allow dogs to play for 5-10 minutes then give them a break. Don't allow the dogs to play endlessly for the first few days. Problems occur when one dog wants to stop and the other dog wants to continue. Always supervise play sessions.

Favorite toys/bones. Remove any toys or bones from the initial play area. Your dog may not want the new dog playing with his things until he adjusts to the new dog.