

# Cat & Dog Introductions



Before embarking on the journey of cross-species integrating, it is very important that you expect to give adequate time for your new dog & kitty to co-exist – what’s a few weeks of training for a lifetime of friendship?! Dogs will look at cats one of three ways: Playmate, Prey, or Benign. Regardless of previous behavior around other animals, expect mediation until both animals are comfortable and a few rough days where one or both animals find each other a bit stressful.

The Introduction Process – ensuring a successful meeting:

## Separate the animals

- Across a few days, rotate which animal has freedom and which is confined to allow each animal plenty of time to investigate the other one’s scent.
- Confine the dog off and on to allow the cat time to roam free and investigate.
- **When no one is home, the dog and cat MUST be physically separated.**
- Once the dog is calm (or at least not obsessed with the cat) and the cat is calm, eating and using the litter box normally, you can proceed.



## Make leashed introductions

- Allow both animals to be in the same room at the same time, but keep the dog securely leashed and reward his attention on YOU when he turns from the cat.
- Continue with this type of introduction until the dog is calm and ignores the cat.
- If there is any fear or aggression displayed on either animal’s part continue to keep them separated.
- Continue indefinitely until both the dog and cat seem happy and relaxed around each other.
- When no one is home, the dog and cat MUST be physically separated.

## Allow unsupervised interactions

- Unsupervised time together can occur after the cat and dog have been supervised around each other for a significant period of time (a month or so) and you see that they are comfortable in each other’s presence. Most importantly, **always make sure your cat has an escape route** as this will keep him “in control” when he begins to get uncomfortable. Never force them to be nearer to one another – allow this to happen naturally.

## Warning Signs

- If the dog remains fixated, completely ignores you or lunges suddenly as soon as the cat moves, this is probably a dangerous match.
- If it is your cat who is growling, hissing or swatting, give the cat a break and try again on another day. If the cat stops eating, drinking, using the litter box or visiting with family members, she is not happy. You might want to consider finding a better match or contacting a professional animal behaviorist for advice.

Source: Content adapted from San Francisco Animal Care & Control