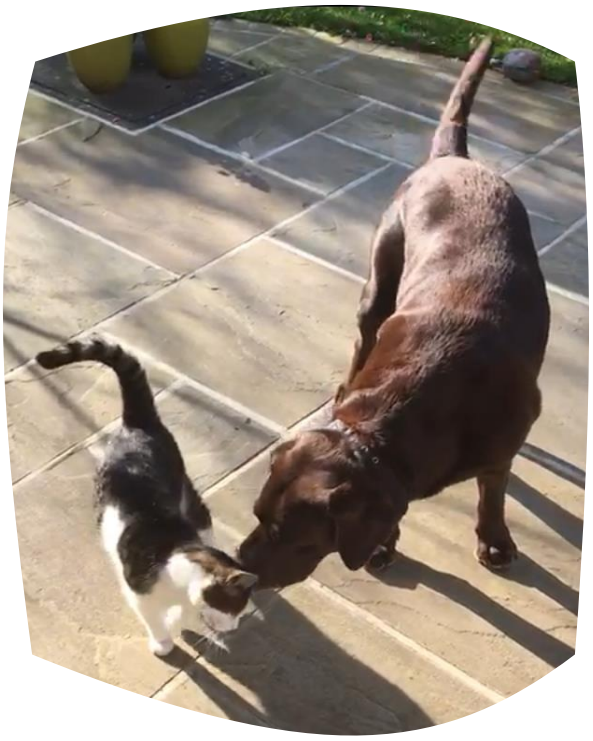
Cats and Dogs

Living Together Harmoniously

Many dogs can live peaceably with cats, often forming a close relationship where they sleep together or clean each other. However, this is not always the case. Not all dogs can or should live with cats, and similarly, not all cats should live with dogs.

Some cats may be very nervous of dogs, and even a calm dog may scare your cat so much that their welfare is compromised. Likewise, there are some dogs whose predatory drive is so strong they cannot safely be left with cats at all.

If your dog consistently shows signs of being over-excited around cats and can't be calmed down, it may not be safe for them to be together. If your dog behaves like this around cats, we recommend keeping them separated at all times and contacting a qualified behaviourist for advice.



Safe introductions

Introductions should be **gradual** and **controlled**. Chasing is very rewarding for dogs, so it's vital that they don't get to practise this behaviour with cats! Prevent chasing with physical separation and provide lots of places for your cat to get away and hide.

Scent is an extremely important form of communication for both dogs and cats. Try to introduce your pets to each other before you bring your new family member home. Ask for a blanket or toy that smells of your new pet and place it in the middle of the floor for your resident pet to investigate at their own pace.

Give the current carer of your new pet a blanket or toy that smells of your existing pet so that they can do the same!

Set up a '**core area'** for each pet where they will feel secure eating, drinking, resting and going to the toilet. Make sure that your cat can access all of their resources without being followed by your dog and that they can always escape your dog if they do ever feel threatened.

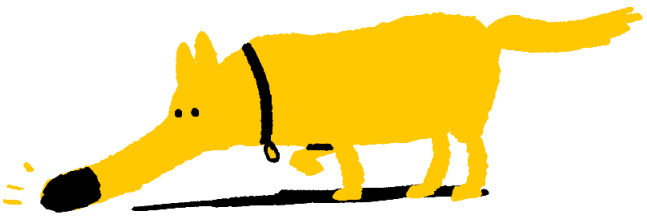
Make sure that your existing pet/s is comfortable spending time in their core area before bringing home your new arrival.

Make sure you can keep your pets separated with physical barriers, such as baby gates or by keeping doors shut, at least in the short term.

In the first week or so of bringing your new pet home, continue to 'swap scents' by exchanging items, such as bedding or a piece of cloth that the dog or cat has slept on. Continue until there are no signs to suggest that your pets are upset by these scents, such as the cat avoiding the items.

Now you can start gradual introductions. Your cat and dog should be kept physically separate at all times unless you are there to actively supervise and reward appropriate behaviour. Should your cat choose to enter the same room as your dog, it's important that your dog is on their lead (or preferably a house-training line) and rewarded for calm behaviour.

Your cat should never be forced into the same room as your dog and should have access to lots of shelves and escape routes in case they do feel threatened by your dog. Baby gates usually work well in allowing the cat to escape without the dog being able to follow.



Always go at your cat's pace

Introductions should be at your cat's pace. Never restrain your cat in order to introduce them to your dog, they should always have the option to move towards or away from your dog, as long as they are also showing calm behaviour.

If your cat shows threatening behaviour to your dog, even if the dog is calm and you have swapped scents successfully, then keep them physically separated and seek the advice of a qualified behaviourist.

For advice on sourcing a behaviourist please visit:
dogstrust.org.uk/help-advice/behaviour/finding-behaviour-and-training-support

Keep direct control over your dog and reward them for being calm in the presence of your cat. Over time your dog should be able to stay calm and focus on you in the presence of your cat, and your cat should gain confidence in the presence of your dog.

If your dog tries to chase your cat, or is excited by their presence, move them further away or out of sight and build up more gradually. Do not tell your dog off – simply move them away and try again at a greater distance

Always have a physical barrier between your pets and/or keep your dog on a lead until you are confident they are calm and relaxed around one another.

Remember that your cat still needs free access to all of their resources, including access to the garden (or litter tray), without having to pass the area where your dog is initially kept and where your dog will spend most of their time in the future.



Keeping the peace

Once your cat and dog have been successfully introduced, there are lots of things you can do to make their lives as harmonious as possible.

- Maintain a core area for your cat where they can eat, sleep, drink, play and toilet without having to come into contact with your dog if they choose not to.

- Provide your cat with lots of vertical space so that they can move around without having to pass your dog at ground level. Things like bare shelving or ledges to jump onto work well.

- Always reward your dog for calm behaviour around your cat.

- Don't tell your dog off for being inappropriate around your cat – this will be confusing and may result in a negative association, which could make their behaviour worse. If they can't be trusted around your cat, keep them separated and/or your dog on a lead to prevent chasing.

- A tired dog is more likely to be calm around your cat, so make sure you keep your dog mentally and physical active.

Remember, as the smaller more vulnerable animal introductions should always be at your cat's pace, and they should always be able to move away easily if they want to.

Contacts for further support

We provide lifelong telephone-based behavioural support for all our adopted dogs. If you need help for your **Dogs Trust dog** please email:
postadoptionsupport@dogstrust.org.uk

Everyone else can access support by emailing our training and behaviour helpline:
behavioursupportline@dogstrust.org.uk

Your nearest Dog School Team are also happy to help and can be contacted via:
dogstrustdogschool.org.uk

The advice contained in this handout is of a general nature and is no substitute for specific behavioural or veterinary advice. If you are worried about your dog, then do consult your vet.

A dog is for life ®
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