

Dogs and Cats

Getting Started: Make sure the cat always has access to a dog-free sanctuary. Sanctuary rooms can be any size but must have a secure door and ceiling. The space should include a litter box, a scratching post, water, a food bowl, and toys. Make sure to cat-proof the space by removing any poisonous plants, medicines, and fragile Knick knacks, and hiding or tying up cords. You might also set up some hiding places or tunnels to help the cat feel safer. Be prepared to manage your pets' interactions for the next several weeks, if not longer. Ideally, your living spaces will have multiple high areas, like shelving or furniture that your cats are allowed on so they can easily escape the dog if needed.

Keep the pets separate for at least the first 3-4 days. Prevent any contact until your new pet has had his vet checkup and been cleared of illness. Confine your new pet in a sanctuary room with the door closed or on a separate floor of your house. The goal is to allow the pets to get used to each other's presence without face-to-face contact. Even if they can't see each other, they can hear and smell each other. During this time give the dog some blankets that smell like the cat so the dog can get used to the smell of the cat before they are face to face. Also, give the cat some dog blankets for the same reason.



Steps:

1. Stock your pocket/pouch with the dog's favorite treats or toy. Put a buckle collar or harness and a 6-foot standard leash on the dog.
2. Ask the dog to do a command the dog already knows very well. (Ex. Sit, down, focus, and leave it) Mark "yes" and reward the dog for every correct command, also reward the dog for calm behavior.
3. Once your dog can do the asked command 90% of the time with distractions, with your dog on a leash conduct meet and greets in a common area of the house. Don't use either animal's sanctuary area. Keep the first few sessions short and calm.
4. Ask the dog to do known commands. Mark "yes" and give the dog a reward for every correct command, also Reward the dog anytime she ignores the cat.
5. When the dog is doing the asked commands 90% of the time, allow them loose in the room together, keeping the dog's leash attached and dragging it on the floor so that you can step on it and prevent him from chasing the cat if he gets excited. If tension erupts, go back to kindergarten, and repeat the process. Make sure the cat always has access to a dog-proof sanctuary room.

Note: Do not restrain either pet in your arms, as injury could result if either pet behaves aggressively. Give your cat treats as well. If either pet demonstrates aggression, calmly distract, and redirect them. Toss a toy for the cat to lure him from the room or call the dog's name and reward his attention. Return the pets to their confinement areas. Keep pets separated when not supervised.

