

Introducing A New Dog to an Established Dog in the Home (by Debbie Winkler CABG; CPDT & Dorothy Ruck BA; MPA)

Imagine moving into a new home but you had no idea you were moving in the first place. And guess what? There is another person living in your new home! Imagine the chaos that could ensue - two complete strangers are suddenly sharing the same space that one used to have all to him/herself. Now imagine that you bring a new dog into your home. How do you think the new dog and the established dog will adjust to each other? Here are some tips to help make the introductions go as smoothly as possible.

1. Introduce the new dog to the established dog on neutral territory at least 3x so they have the opportunity to become acquainted before the new dog enters the established dog's territory.
2. Allow the new dog to investigate the new home several times a day while leashed, when the established dog is outside or otherwise occupied.
3. When the established dog is present, keep the new dog confined, but able to see, smell, and hear the established dog so they can communicate. This will also give you a chance to observe their interactions to get an idea of how they are adjusting to each other's presence.
4. When both dogs seem to want to interact in the home playfully, begin to schedule several short playtime periods everyday (each lasting just a few minutes), gradually increasing the time until the dogs are not separated anymore.
5. Feed each dog in separate areas and pick up the food bowls/containers before the dogs are together again. This can help to prevent food resource guarding.
6. The toys that are food related or favorite toys of the established dog's should be removed before the dogs are allowed to interact.
7. Walk both dogs, using 2 people, having them head in the same direction several times a day. This will allow them to get used to each other's presence on neutral territory and will help them get acquainted.
8. If an altercation occurs, DO NOT correct either dog - it is communication between them that is necessary. Contact a qualified behavior consultant immediately for advice specific to your situation.
9. Never leave dogs unsupervised if they have not had enough time to become friendly with each other.