

Introduce cats and dogs in three simple steps

Step 1: Give your cat time to settle

Allow at least one to two days for your cat to settle in before introducing them to your dog.

This may take longer depending on how confident your cat is.

During this period your cat and dog should be kept separate. Keep the cat in one room where your dog is not allowed. Make sure your cat has food, water and a litter tray in the room.

Whilst still keeping your cat and dog separate, you should make them both aware that there is another animal in the house. Stroke your cat and then let your dog smell your hand. Also swap blankets or bedding that they sleep on.

Step 2: Relaxed first meeting

The first meeting should be done when both cat and dog are in a relaxed state.

Keep your dog's lead on and keep it as slack as possible. This will ensure the cat's safety while allowing the dog some freedom to investigate their new friend. Let your dog sniff and learn about their new housemate. It is quite acceptable for the cat to give them a warning 'swipe' on the nose but be ready to intervene in case the dog retaliates. You should remain calm throughout the introduction.

If things are going well, let them continue to interact. Drop the lead but be ready to take control again. From time to time call your dog to you and reward with a treat whenever they respond. After a few minutes, end the session and have some one-to-one time with your dog while another person makes a fuss of your cat in a separate room.

Step 3: Repeat

This process should be repeated two or three times a day for the first few days.

With time, your dog and cat will get used to each other and you will gradually be able to let them interact freely.

Another Way of Introduction

Sometimes leaving the cat in a large crate with a litter box in the middle of the main room can work as well. The cat may hiss and spit for a few days and then calm down. If they do not calm down in a few days then try moving them back to their own private room and try again in a few days. Eventually, the cat should stop hissing and spitting and can come out of the crate to explore. Keep an eye on both dog and cat during this period to make sure they do not have an altercation. It is a good idea to keep your dog on a leash and be able to scruff the cat should an issue arise.

