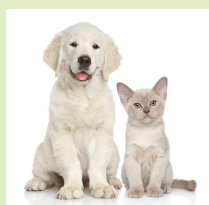


SETTING DOGS AND CATS UP FOR SUCCESS

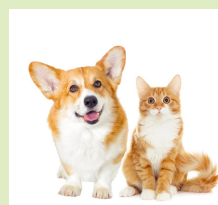


Before your get a dog

Allow your cat to see a dog on the lead in the garden before thinking about getting one in the first place - see how they react. You can see by their body language how they may react.

Consider your cat's temperament are they nervous are they exclusively an indoor cat.

Consider the breed your dog you'd like to bring home - do they have any inherent chasing instincts? If so this may not be suitable for life with a cat.

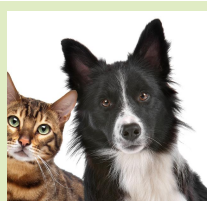


Home preparation

Have some baby gates installed so your cat and dog can have their own space initially.

Have some high vantage points for your cat such as cat trees.

Have an exclusive area for your cats/dog to be and access key resources undisturbed and add some more so they don't need to share . Where do they usually like to be and spend most of their time ? If it's in the living room then that may be the room.

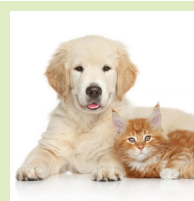


More home preparation

Have an area in your home that's just for your dog (and not occupied by your cat) initially. Think about if your cat can access the cat flap undisturbed and your dog can access the garden.

Bring blankets your cat has slept on so they can smell them before they meet them.

Get a playpen and crate for your puppy so he can relax in and not bother your cat/can get away from your cat when he prefers.



The homecoming

Keep the dog and cat separate initially. All of these steps should be done gradually and slowly:

Do some scent swapping - show your cat your dog's blanket they will have a sniff of it and may lie on it or bunt on it - then bring the blanket back to your dog so they get used to each other.

Allow the cat or dog to investigate each others area when the other is not in it. Then when the other pet has left then introduce your dog back to the area where your cat has been.

I spy

When you have done all the above you can think about visual introductions through a baby gate. Make sure that the baby gate is covered with a blanket and keep the pets calm on the other side by playing with them or giving them a puzzle feeder to keep them occupied. Think of the 4 'S' - spying, shortness supervision and safe distance!

Gradually uncover the baby gate. Make sure your cat has somewhere to go up high like a stool - but don't put it too close to the baby gate. If they seem comfortable then let them sniff each other (when they want to through the gate).

Eventually the dog and cat can meet without a barrier under supervised and proactive supervision being mindful of body language at all times. Think about introducing them after the dog has exercised and eaten and the cat has eaten too. Keep the dog on the lead initially, allow the lead to trail if safe to do so.

Check out the 5 pillars of a feline friendly environment and International Cat Care website for more information about how to make your home more feline friendly.



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