



GET THE SCOOP - INTRODUCING A NEW PET TO YOUR HOME

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So you've done your research and have chosen the right pet for your family. Do you think you have all the equipment you need for their arrival? Here are some tips to help make the transition easier for your family, your current pet and your new family member! The key is to take your time, expect some problems and be patient!

Part of your research should have included the personality of your current pet ...how your current pet acts around you and around other animals. Some animals can be very territorial and aggressive towards members of their own species. Learn what you can beforehand, and you will have a better idea about much of a peaceful interaction you can expect your animals to have. You cannot force your pets to like each other!

Moving into a new home is enough of a challenge without the added stress of meeting your other pets. If you can, set aside a room for your new pet to stay in for the first few days. Keep your current pet's schedule as normal as possible. If you are going to house your new pet in a separate room to start with, restrict the current pet's access to that room well in advance, so the change can feel more gradual. Make sure your current pet still gets all the time care and attention he or she is accustomed. It is hard to not pour attention on a new family member, but remember that your current pet is watching you and could be jealous if the new pet is getting all the attention! For cats especially, a slow integration into the entire house will keep the stress level lower for everyone. Don't try to force animals together!

Give each animal items with the scent of the other animal on them. Allowing the animals to smell each other's scent before they actually meet can help make the face-to-face meeting easier.

Letting dogs meet on neutral territory prior to coming into your yard or house can help, too. Take the dogs for a walk together and let them meet in a controlled neutral area.

Introduce animals slowly and for small periods until they are well adjusted to the sight and smell of each other. Use a crate, child gate, or a leash to control the animals during the interactions. Try to keep the animal who has the most potential to hurt the other one under direct control, through either a leash or a crate. Give the animal that is more likely to be frightened a safe haven where the other pet cannot reach him or her.

Remember that not all animals are going to be friends, so even disinterest is positive. Offer praise, treats, toys, and affection to promote good interactions. Don't just throw your animals together in a sink or swim situation. Pay attention to the way they interact during different times of the introduction. Lastly, Be patient. The introduction process can take days, weeks or sometimes MONTHS! Don't expect them to be best buddies immediately and don't give up on them after a couple of days.