



Dogs are social animals by nature. However, introducing a new dog into a home with another dog present is not always easy. Factors that have an effect on the success of an introduction include a dog's early life experiences and appropriate socialisation in puppyhood. Introducing puppies gradually and calmly using rewards to all species which he will later encounter certainly helps introductions to dogs and other animals later in life. Attending suitable puppy socialisation classes is commonly thought to be very valuable for improving later dog behaviour and can help to reduce the incidence of dog-dog behaviour problems should you decide to introduce a new dog later on.



Whether you have had your current dog from a puppy or acquired him as an adult, it is important that you introduce a new dog to your family carefully. Introductions can be tense for both you and your dogs so appropriate procedures should be followed to minimise stress.

PREPARING FOR THE INTRODUCTION

- Scent is an important method of communication for dogs. You can help to integrate the new dog into your home by ensuring that he smells of "home" before being introduced to your current dog.
- To do this, gather scents from the new dog's head by gently stroking with a soft cloth and dabbing this around your home and furniture to mix and spread the scents. You may also wish to swap the bedding of your animals to enable them to smell each other prior to meeting.



INTRODUCING YOUR DOGS FOR THE FIRST TIME

- It is best to introduce dogs on neutral territory - a good suggestion is to take the dogs out for a long walk together. The interest of the walk will make the introduction less intense and they can all get to know each other as they walk. At least two people should walk the dogs to ensure safety at all times.
- Keep the dogs on longer leads (e.g. 1.5m length) when they are walking so that you are not too close if squabbling between the dogs occurs. If squabbling does occur, walk the dogs away from one another and re-introduce when they are both calm and relaxed.
- When bringing the new dog home, remove anything they are likely to fight over, such as toys or bones, before allowing your dogs into the house.
- Attention from members of the family may also be a resource to fight over, so ignore them until they have settled down.





Introducing dogs

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- Try to ignore any small disagreements and scuffles, although be ready to lead the dogs away and isolate each of them until they have calmed down.
- Feed your dogs apart until they are used to each other, separate them before answering the door and do not make such a fuss of the new dog that others feel excluded.
- Care should be taken not to leave them alone together until it is obvious that they have become friends.



Usually introductions go smoothly and the new dog is treated, and acts, like a visitor. The relationship between dogs is sorted out during the first few weeks and disagreements are possible during this time.

If introductions are unsuccessful or you are having difficulty, ask your vet to refer you to a suitably qualified animal behaviourist. They will check both dogs over first to make sure there are no underlying injuries or illnesses.

Puppy class trainers and animal behaviourists should have a combination of appropriate qualifications, up to date knowledge, skills and experience and should work in a way which doesn't put the welfare of your animal at risk.



The RSPCA would like to thank Julie Bedford (BSc (Hons), PGCE, PG.Dip (CABC), CCAB) for her involvement in producing information on introducing dogs.



OTHER POSSIBLE LINKS:

- Dog welfare needs [webpage](#)
- Find a vet [webpage](#)
- Find an [animal behaviourist](#)

Links to the web pages of other organisations are provided for additional information only and do not imply any endorsement by the RSPCA of those organisations or of any content on the website.



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