

Introducing a New Dog to a Home with Another Dog

Bringing a new dog home is a big change for everyone. **Take things slowly.** The new dog needs time to decompress and learn that this is a safe place before expecting them to interact freely with the resident dog.

1. When you first arrive home

- Keep the dogs **separate at first**.
- The new dog should have their own quiet area where they can rest undisturbed.
- They can see and smell the resident dog, but **do not allow them to be off lead together yet**.
- Keep the atmosphere calm and quiet. Avoid visitors, excitement and too much handling.
- Let the new dog explore their area at their own pace.
- Don't worry if they hide, sleep a lot, seem unsettled or don't eat much initially. They have had a big day.

2. Give the new dog time to decompress

For the first few days, the priority is **security and routine, not introductions**.

- Keep the dogs separated when they are inside.
- Allow them to see each other through a baby gate, doorway or from a distance, provided both dogs are relaxed.
- Don't force interaction or encourage them to play.
- Give both dogs plenty of individual attention and rest.
- Keep the resident dog's normal routine as much as possible.

3. Feeding

- **Feed the dogs separately.**
- The new dog should eat in their own quiet area with the door or barrier closed.
- Do not allow either dog to approach the other while they are eating.
- Keep high-value treats, chews and toys separate initially.
- Never leave food or chews between dogs until you are confident there is no resource guarding.

4. Start parallel walks

Once the new dog is beginning to settle, start taking the dogs for **parallel walks**.

- Have one person with each dog.
- Walk in the same direction with plenty of space between them.
- Don't expect them to walk side by side immediately.
- Gradually reduce the distance if both dogs remain relaxed.
- Allow them to sniff and look at each other without forcing interaction.
- Keep the walks calm and positive.

Parallel walking is about helping the dogs become comfortable in each other's presence, not making them interact.

5. Gradually increase contact

When both dogs are showing relaxed body language during walks and around the home:

- Allow brief, calm interactions while supervised.
- Keep leads on initially if necessary, but avoid holding the dogs tightly together.
- Keep sessions short and end while things are going well.
- Gradually increase the amount of time they spend together.
- Continue to give both dogs their own beds, spaces and time apart.

6. Never rush the process

Every dog is different. Some dogs may become comfortable within a few days; others may need several weeks.

The aim is not for the dogs to become best friends immediately. The first goal is simply that they feel safe and comfortable living alongside each other.

If either dog becomes uncomfortable, overwhelmed or overly excited, calmly separate them and give them some time to settle before trying again.

Slow and steady is much easier than trying to fix a rushed introduction.