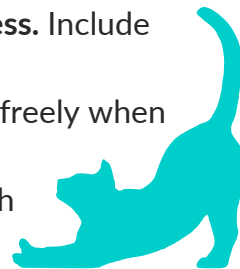


Most dogs and cats can live together peacefully, but not all are a perfect match.

Success depends on their personalities, experiences, and ages.

### 1. Set your house up for success

- Create a secure “safe room” for your cat with a door the dog can’t access. Include litter, food, water, toys, scratching posts, and hiding spots.
- Provide raised cat trees or shelves for easy escapes. Let your cat roam freely when the dog is contained (e.g., crated or in your bedroom at night).
- Swap bedding or blankets between the pets to help them adjust to each other’s scents.



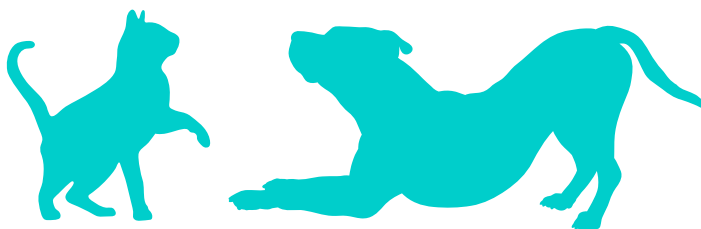
### 2. Feeding time

- Feed pets on opposite sides of a closed door to associate each other’s presence with positive experiences. Gradually move the bowls closer as they stay relaxed.
- When both can eat calmly next to the door, you’re ready to try an introduction in a shared space, like the living room.



### 3. Introductions *don't rush!*

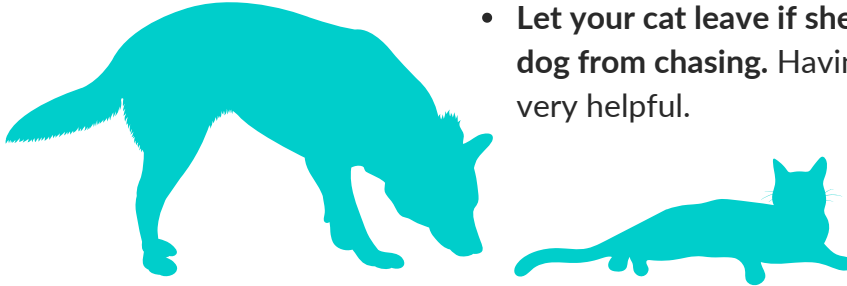
- Keep pets separated for several days, then introduce them gradually with short, controlled sessions. Take your time—introductions may take weeks or even months.
- Use a secure leash (e.g., martingale collar) for your dog, and ensure your cat has access to their safe room. Keep initial meetings brief, ending before signs of stress appear.
- Watch for stress signals (hissing, growling, flattened ears, raised hackles). If either pet shows distress, distract them calmly and give more separation time.
- Reward your dog for calm behavior around the cat. If staying calm is difficult, consider a training class to teach impulse control (e.g., down, stay).



4.

## Repeat exercise daily

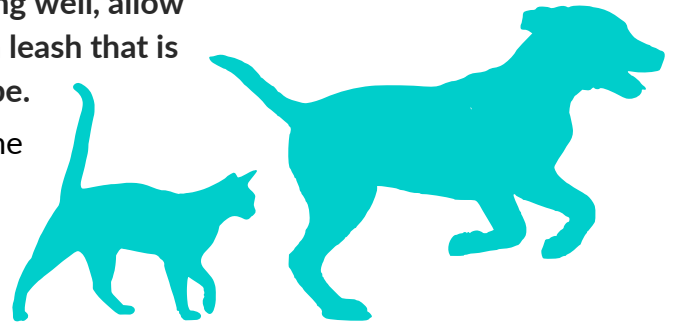
- **Repeat introductions daily.** If your cat enjoys treats, save her favorite treat for the session. You can also hand feed your dog his meal so both pets associate one another with something positive.
- **Let your cat leave if she wants, but prevent your dog from chasing.** Having a second person can be very helpful.



5.

## Allow them to be loose together

- **When both animals appear to be calm and doing well, allow them loose in the room, keeping your dog on a leash that is dragging so you can quickly step on it if need be.** If there is any sign of tension, calmly remove the dog, making sure your cat always has access to her “safe” room.
- **Continue to keep your pets separated when you cannot supervise them.**



## Still need help?

Visit the Behavior Resource Library at [ashevillehumane.org](http://ashevillehumane.org). We also offer six-week training courses to help prepare your pooch for a paw-some lifetime at your side.



[ashevillehumane.org/behavior-resources](http://ashevillehumane.org/behavior-resources)

