



STRONG HEARTS  
dog rescue

# Intro Guide.

Introducing your new companion to existing dogs and cats

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# Tips on Introducing a New Dog to Your Existing Pack

Bringing a rescue dog into your home is an exciting step, but it's important to ensure the introduction to your resident dog is smooth and stress-free. By taking the process slow, allowing both dogs to adjust at their own pace, and following these simple steps, you can help them build a positive relationship.

## Step 1: Neutral Territory Introduction

Begin the introduction in a neutral, non-territorial space like a park or open area, allowing them to sniff and observe each other at a safe distance. You can use a long-line lead if you're not in a secure area, but let them interact freely and naturally.



If they show curiosity or calm behavior, start walking them parallel to one another, keeping a few feet of space between them. Gradually decrease the distance as they become more comfortable. Monitor their body language closely— look for relaxed signals like wagging tails and soft eyes. If they remain calm, offer praise and treats to positively reinforce their behaviour. If you notice tension or stiff body language, calmly redirect their attention.

## Step 2: Introducing the Home

Once the dogs are comfortable outside, bring them home, but let your new dog explore the space separately at first. Keep the resident dog in another room while the new dog adjusts to the new environment. When you're ready to introduce them together inside, ensure there's plenty of space for each dog to move around and provide barriers like baby gates if needed. Continue to reward calm behaviour with treats and praise, and always monitor their body language for signs of stress or relaxation



## Step 3: Establishing routine and separate space

As the dogs settle into the home, establish a routine that includes separate feeding areas to prevent any food-related tension. Feed both dogs in different rooms or at a safe distance from each other to avoid any potential resource guarding. Gradually increase their time together, but continue supervising interactions and providing each dog with their own space to retreat to when needed. Consistency and positive reinforcement will go a long way to helping them adjust to their new dynamic.

READ ON

**Cat** Introductions

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# Introduction to Cats

## Step 1: Provide vertical space for the cat

Cats naturally feel safer when they have higher ground. Create vertical spaces like shelves, cat trees, or window perches that allow your cat to observe the dog from a comfortable distance. This gives the cat control over the environment and reduces stress during the introduction process

## Step 2: Use a physical barrier for the dog

When it's time for introductions, keep your dog on a leash or behind a baby gate. This physical barrier ensures your dog can't approach the cat too quickly and gives the cat space to approach or retreat as needed. Always supervise their interactions closely during this phase.

Note: Even if you follow these steps perfectly, your dog and cat may not bond right away. Some introductions take days, weeks, or even longer. Be patient and let them adjust at their own pace. Rushing things can cause setbacks, so stay consistent, calm and positive. With time, many dogs and cats learn to coexist peacefully— and some may even become best pals!

[strongheartsanctuary.org](http://strongheartsanctuary.org)

## Step 3: Reinforce relaxed behavior

Pay close attention to your dog's body language. If the dog exhibits calmness, disinterest, or relaxed posture, immediately offer positive reinforcement such as treats, praise, or affection. This teaches your dog that calm behavior around the cat leads to rewards.

## Step 4: Redirect arousal or excessive interest

Pay close attention to your dog's body language. If the dog exhibits calmness, disinterest, or relaxed posture, immediately offer positive reinforcement such as treats, praise, or affection. This teaches your dog that calm behavior around the cat leads to rewards.

