



Jasper County Animal Rescue League and Humane Society
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Introducing New Dogs to Resident Dogs

Dogs are pack animals by nature, and it is important for your dog to be able to socialize with other dogs on a regular basis. Going to obedience class, agility, fly ball or other activities involving dogs will help socialize your dog. Another way is to have more than one dog in your home. Before you add another dog to your family, it is important that your animals have been to a veterinarian in the past year and have a clean bill of health.

Choosing the Right Dog

The personality, training and background of your current dog(s) and the one that you are considering are of the utmost importance. If your dog is active and outgoing, adopt a dog with similar qualities. Try to find out if the adopted dog has been around other dogs before. Dogs have to “learn” how to get along with each other. If the dog you are considering is poorly socialized to other animals, it might be best to consider another dog with better social skills. The same goes for your own dog; make sure he has had plenty of experience with other animals.

When should I introduce them?

Once you've decided on which dog to adopt, it is best to introduce them on neutral territory. Do not introduce the new dog in your yard or home. The resident dog may feel the need to protect his territory. It is best if the area is neutral to both dogs. Some suggestions might be a park, empty parking lot or a friend's backyard, but be aware that if your resident dog has spent much time in the location you chose, he might consider that his territory. We encourage anyone adopting a second dog from NHS to do the introductions at the humane society before the adoption. At the meeting location, keep both dogs on leashes. One person should hold the leash of only one dog, so you might need a friend or relative to help with the introduction. Stay calm and relaxed. If you are tense, you are more likely to be holding the leash tightly which the dog may interrupt as a cue to protect you. It might be advisable to have a friend hold your dog's leash and you hold the new dog. Allow the dogs to approach each other and sniff. Use happy talk to reinforce a positive interaction. If you have more than one dog, it is best to initially introduce only one dog at a time. Two dogs together may gang up on the new dog. The initial meeting should be kept short. Don't force the dogs to be together.

What do I look for?

A normal greeting for dogs is to stand rigidly still while they sniff each other. The hair (hackles) on their backs may go up, the dogs may stand on tiptoe and may mount each other. Again, this is normal and should be allowed. Give both dogs as much room as they need. If you notice any low growling, snarling, lip curling, or long intense stare with very rigid body posture, then calmly move the dogs away. Redirect each dog's attention to you and ask the dog for some obedience commands. After a few minutes, try to introduce the dogs again only this time at a greater

distance. If the same reaction occurs, these two dogs will probably not get along well and it may be best to select another dog.

You may notice the dogs jumping around and one or the other offering a play bow, where the front legs are lowered and his rear end is in the air. This is an invitation to play and usually elicits a friendly reaction from the other dog. One dog may lick the corners of the mouth of the other dog or roll on his back. These are submissive gestures, letting the more dominant dog know there is nothing to be threatened by. In either case, these matches will probably learn to live peacefully together.

What about at home?

Once both dogs are in the home environment, expect some growling, pushing around and minor scuffles. Some fights may LOOK and SOUND ferocious, but allow them to continue. It is all normal and natural. This is how dogs settle their differences and establish pack order. Unless one dog is being shook or grabbed by the other dog or if you see blood, do not interfere. Do NOT leave the dogs alone together until you are sure they will get along. It may take several months for the dogs to work things out.

Try to keep the resident dog's routine as normal as possible, for example if he usually gets the run of the house while you are gone then kennel the new dog. Another reason to crate train the new dog is to help him learn the house rules like where to eliminate and what he can and can't chew on.

When you are able to supervise, allow the dogs to interact with each other. It is a good idea to keep leashes on both dogs during the introduction period so you can separate them if necessary. NEVER break up a fight by pulling the dogs apart with your hands because you are likely to get bit. Please be aware that screaming and shouting may only excite the dogs. Put each dog in a separate area for a while and try again when things have settled down.

Until you are done with the introduction process, you need to keep food bowls, bones, and toys separate. These items are very valued to some dogs and may initiate a fight. Be sure to spend some quality time with each dog individually.

Puppies and Adult Dogs:

Puppies tend to pester adult dogs continuously. The adult may give a warning to back off by a growl. This is perfectly acceptable behavior; however most puppies younger than 4 months lack the physical and mental development to interpret an adult dog's signals. If the puppy does not respond to the signal, you may need to step in and give the adult dog a break from the puppy. Remember adult dogs are very powerful and may accidentally injure a puppy. Constant supervision is recommended until you are sure the puppy is not in any danger. Most dogs can learn to live with each other.