

Cats and Dogs

Cats and dogs have different views on life. Can the two species live together peacefully?

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"You can engineer the worst learning totally by accident. The other species is seen as something completely different and if something negative occurs, it can leave an indelible negative image," Dodman says.

Although it may mean a more difficult adjustment period, the situation is not necessarily hopeless for older animals or even animals that have had some negative experiences. The answer lies in the structure of the introduction process.

Lachman believes in practicing the art of patience.

"I believe the introduction needs to be done very gradually. It is important to build from one step to the next without trying to hurry," he says.

He points out that in most cases, it is best to get the cat first, so the dog can see the cat as a fellow pack member. It also makes sense to have each animal spayed or neutered, to cut down on any tendency toward aggressive behavior.

New Cat in a Dog HouseholdIntroducing a new cat into a dog household can be tricky but not impossible, notes Carole Wilbourn, a cat therapist in New York City, "Cats on the Couch" columnist and author of *The Total Cat*.

"It's important to realize it will take longer for an adult cat. You should also be careful that the dog isn't too big and dangerous to a kitten. It makes sense to wait until the kitten is at least 3 months old," she says.

Before introducing a cat as a new member of the household, Wilbourn suggests giving each of the animals an object with each other's scent so they will become familiar with their new housemate's smell. When the cat arrives, keep it inside its carrier at a healthy distance from the dog, so they can observe each other safely. Take the cat out of the carrier gradually, but keep them separated by a screen and a gate. Let them explore one another at their own pace.

When the day arrives that you feel confident to bring the two together, do so under close supervision, and keep a water spray bottle handy. You can squirt in case you need to separate the two. Maintain a relaxed, positive attitude and heap on the praise for good behavior as the two intermingle.