

HOW SHOULD I INTRODUCE A NEW CAT?

Cats are territorial, so introduce your new cat gradually. Keep the new cat confined to one room, with a litter box. Accustom the cats to each other's scents by switching sleeping blankets, or rubbing the cats with the same towel. Once the new cat seems at home, switch the cats, confining the resident cats and allowing the new cat to explore the house. Return the cats to their original parts of the house, propping open the door just enough for the cats to see each other. Once the cats seem to tolerate each other, open the door. Mild protests (hissing, growling) from either cat are to be expected, but if behaviour starts to intensify (fighting), separate the cats and start over again. You may have to repeat this behaviour daily for a week or more.

Use the same procedure to introduce a cat and dog, ensuring that the first meetings are closely

supervised. With your dog on a leash, allow the cat to explore your home. Reward your dog's positive behaviour with rewards and treats. Until you're sure your cat is safe, keep the cat and dog separated when you aren't at home.

WHAT ABOUT KITTENS AND PUPPIES?

Never leave a puppy alone with an adult dog until you are sure the puppy isn't at risk of being injured (accidentally or intentionally) by the adult dog. Most dogs set limits with a growl or snarl, but some will respond with more aggressive behaviour. Be sure your older dog gets plenty of attention and some quiet time away from the puppy. A kitten may need to be kept separate from an energetic or young dog until she is fully grown.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE FOR MY PETS TO GET ALONG?

The time required will vary, depending on the number and nature of your animals. The important thing is to take things slowly. If, however, the introductions result in aggressive behaviour, or aggressive behaviour doesn't stop, consult your veterinarian or an animal behaviour specialist.

Jeremy was afraid he had made a terrible mistake. He had just brought home a new cat, Snowball, hoping for a warm welcome from Hadrian. But Hadrian hissed and growled at the newcomer, sending Snowball scampering under the bed. Jeremy separated the two cats and called the veterinarian. He learned that, like people, cats need a proper introduction. He kept Snowball confined, letting the two cats become acquainted gradually with each other's scents. Once the cats were re-introduced, Hadrian's welcome wasn't exactly warm, but he tolerated the newcomer. One month later, Jeremy came home to find Hadrian and Snowball curled up on the bed together.



CONSIDERING ANOTHER PET?

The Multi-pet Household



WHAT IF, DESPITE ALL EFFORTS, I FEEL I CAN'T KEEP MY NEW PET?

Giving up an animal is never easy for the owner or the pet. Sometimes, despite your best efforts, a new pet may seem more than you can handle. Consult your veterinarian to discuss new strategies. If that doesn't work, try to find a caring and responsible new home, or surrender your new pet to the Ottawa Humane Society. We will do our best to find your former companion the happy, healthy home he deserves.

Multiple pets can mean multiple rewards, but not without the resources to make it work.

Programs and services provided by the Ottawa Humane Society are made possible thanks to your financial support.

Please support the animals in our community.



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IS HAVING MORE THAN ONE PET A GOOD IDEA?

Given the right resources, a multiple-pet household can be a positive experience for you and your pets. Sharing the house with another animal allows pets to use their natural, instinctive behaviour, communicating in their own language. Multiple cats and/or dogs can keep each other company while you're out of the house, as well.

HOW MANY IS TOO MANY?

Bringing another pet into your home requires a substantial adjustment on the part of current residents, both animal and human. To avoid the challenges that come with too many, or incompatible, pets, consider these questions:

What do the City bylaws allow? In the amalgamated City of Ottawa, residential homes are allowed a maximum combination of five cats and dogs, with no more than three dogs; or a maximum of five rabbits. To learn more about municipal bylaws that apply to other types of pets, contact the City of Ottawa at www.city.ottawa.on.ca.

Is every member of the household committed to the thought of multiple pets?

Will your current pet benefit from a new addition? Think about your current pet's temperament and needs. If your pet has shown dominance behaviour, introducing a new pet would probably not be wise. An older pet could be invigorated, or drained, by a new pet — for instance, an arthritic cat might not appreciate being pounced on by an energetic kitten.

Can you afford another pet? Twice the pets means twice the expense!

Do you have time for another pet? You will have to meet your pets' emotional as well as physical needs.

Do you have space for another pet? Will you, or your pets, feel crowded? Many multi-pet households discover, too late, that there is a limit to the number of pets that the animals, as a group, can tolerate. Sometimes, adding just one more kitten can throw your whole house into turmoil, as cats are territorial creatures.

Will the new pet feel comfortable in your home? Try to envision how the new pet might feel. If you have an energetic dog, a small kitten might be afraid. A bird, even in a cage, may be stressed by a cat's constant surveillance!

Is it a good time for you to add another pet? If you are expecting any major changes in your life, such as a move or a new baby, now is probably not the best time to introduce a new pet.

What will you do if difficulties arise? If your current pet is territorial, if the new pet is skittish, if you find yourself without enough time, will you still work toward a solution? Introducing a new pet is a lifetime commitment.

WHAT CAN I DO TO SUCCESSFULLY INTRODUCE A NEW PET TO MY OTHER PETS?

- Make sure all of your pets are neutered or spayed. Neutering or spaying greatly reduces territorial behaviour and many types of aggression.
- Take your new pet to the veterinarian for a thorough check-up to avoid exposing your current pets to disease.
- Make sure each pet has his own food and water dish. A separate litter box for each cat is also a good idea.
- If your multiple-pet household will include cats and dogs, make sure the cat's food and litter box are inaccessible to the dog.
- Take the time to properly introduce the new pet. Initially segregate your new pet to allow him to adjust to your home and monitor him for illness; then allow your pets to get to know each other gradually.



HOW SHOULD I INTRODUCE A NEW DOG?

Introduce dogs to each other in neutral territory like a park, using praise and treats to let the dogs experience good things in each other's presence. Let them investigate each other, but stay alert for signs of aggression. If you already have two or more dogs at home, it's probably best to introduce them separately. Once all dogs have been introduced and seem to tolerate each other without signs of aggression or fear for an hour, take them home. Let the dogs drag their leashes in the house for the first few days, so you can safely intervene in case they fight.

Extra supervision is required when you take two or more dogs out together, since two or more dogs are a pack and may bully other dogs at the park.



Having more than one pet can be a positive experience for your household. However, if you don't have the necessary resources — time, energy, money and patience — think first before adding another companion animal.

First impressions do count. Take the time to introduce your pets properly.