

Dog & Dog Integration

You have selected a dog that you feel has the potential to succeed at home with your resident dog(s). It is now up to you to take the time and follow the steps to integrate everyone at home. You can do it.

When helping unfamiliar dogs bond, it is a matter of building trust and avoiding conflict. Your dogs do not know each other yet and, without familiar trust, may overreact to simple things like play or possession. The best advice is to level the field and avoid triggers.

TEAM BUILDING:

The absolute best activity you can do to help bond your dogs is to walk them together. This is a controlled time where they are sharing experiences under your guidance. The more they walk, the more they look to each other as a partner in life to share things with and to trust. Walk as frequently as you can at first to build a bond. Every day your dogs experience positive time together (without conflict), they are building a bond for life.

AVOID CONFLICT:

Until your dogs have had enough time to build trust, it is best to avoid these three common triggers: **Food, Toys & Affection**. A dog can get possessive of things that are important or are considered “theirs”.

FOOD:

When you bring in a new dog, feed dogs separately. Food can be a resource many may want to guard. With time and trust, you will know when and if you can feed closer.

TOYS:

With toys can come two triggers. First, toys may be viewed by some dogs as a resource that needs to be guarded. Secondly, toys may cause excitement and elevate play to a level that may make one dog uncomfortable and cause an unwanted reaction. It is best to let everyone hang out under supervision while you observe and learn about each other.

AFFECTION:

You are often viewed as a possession by your dog. Just like a toy or food, a dog may resource guard their humans. Some see this as jealousy. This is easy to avoid by not allowing yourself to be put in the position where one dog is guarding you from the other. It can be a subtle gesture from one dog to the other, so it is best to give everyone space. If one dog comes to you for affection and the other is looking on, simply get up and move away so you are not the focus of attention anymore. Over time, trust will build and dogs will realize there is enough love for all.

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FIRST DAY:

When you arrive home with your newly arranged dog family, take some precautions to help everyone feel safe. Before you go into your property, take a short walk with the dogs to shake off the car ride home. Keeping dogs on leash, you can tour the house. Your new dog will be excited, so keeping them on leash will help avoid overwhelming your resident dog. Then take the dogs into your yard and, with leashes on, allow them to explore. Just let them be dogs while you observe and supervise.

PLAY:

We highly recommend supervising initial play sessions to ensure that excitement does not rise to a level of discomfort or fear that could cause an unwanted reaction. Let dogs play and watch body language carefully. A loose, wiggly dog with an open mouth is not a concern. When a dog becomes stiff or quiet, the mouth closes, and the gaze becomes fixed, it is time to break it up. It is best to distract a potential overreaction with a whistle or call to redirect attention back to a good place. Separate dogs if needed so they have only positive time together in the beginning formative stage.

SLEEP:

Until a new dog understands their place in the new home, having them sleep in a crate can prevent overstepping boundaries with the resident dog. Having the new dog sleep in a controlled environment can also aid in house training.

Building a lifetime bond may not happen overnight with all dogs, but with time, positive interaction, supervision, lots of walking together, and avoiding triggers, dogs can come to trust and love each other. Dogs are pack animals, and with your guidance you are on the way to helping them build a lifetime bond.