

# Integrating Your Dog With A Cat

■ Alana Stevenson

Often when a person brings a new dog or cat into the family, if they already have other animals, mayhem ensues. Introducing dogs and cats to each other can take time, but they can coexist happily together. Many dogs are quite gentle with cats. Other dogs need some training, and still others, need more management. Unfortunately, when people introduce dogs to cats, and vice versa, the usual scenario is the dog chases the cat, and the poor cat ends up hiding, and subsequently living in the bedroom, spare room or basement. This is unnecessary and not fair to either animal, especially your cat. Your cat should not be and does not have to be relegated to a basement. Below are some helpful tips to follow when introducing a dog and a cat to each other.

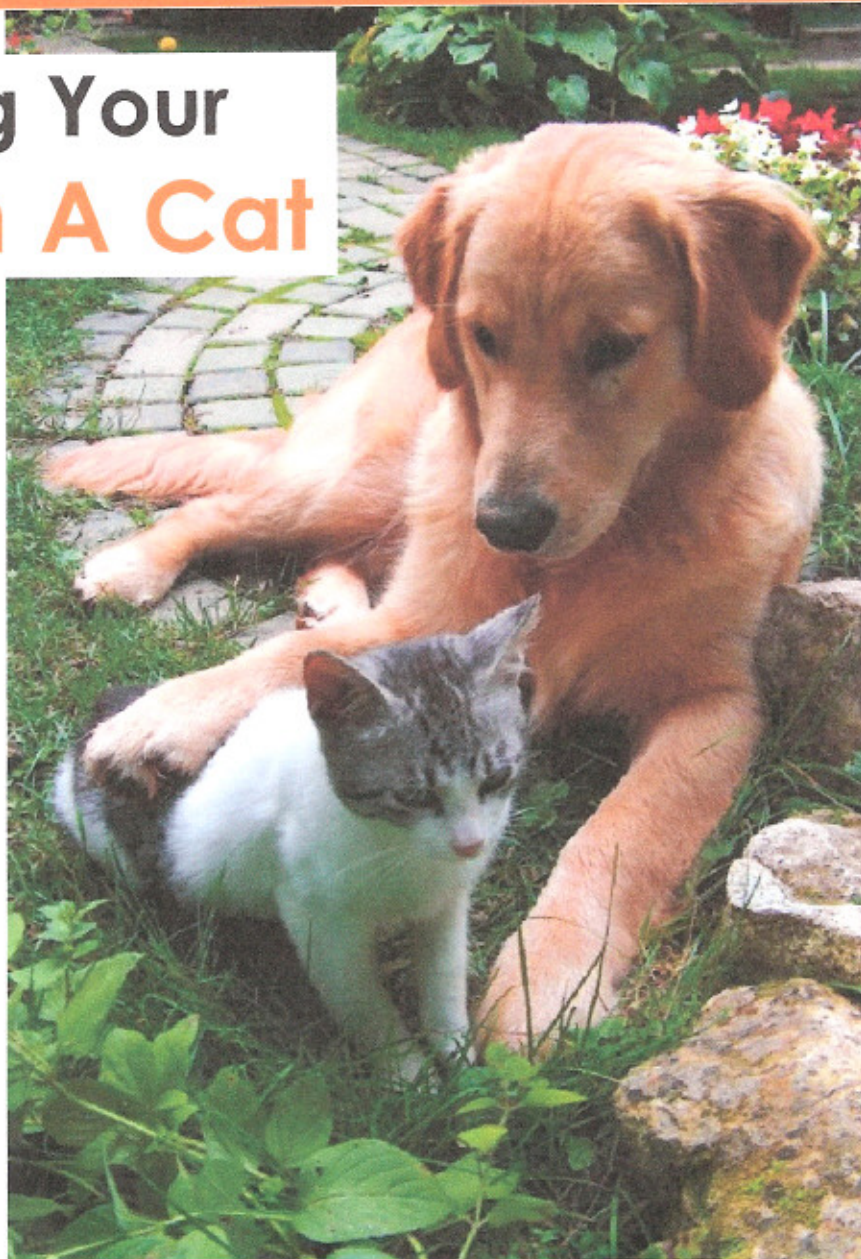
If you have a dog who is shy, fearful or timid and a cat who is aggressive, territorial or confident, reverse some of the below instructions. Modify them so your dog gets some preferential treatment. Interrupt and prevent your cat from becoming aggressive to your dog, and reward your cat for being friendly to your dog.

Designate a room or location in the house that is entirely your cat's territory or domain. Your dog is not allowed in this area.

Your dog should not have access to litter boxes or to your cat's food. In addition, your cat should not be forced to dodge your dog or pass your dog to get to his or her food bowl or litter tray.

Make sure your cat has extra hiding spots and places to climb to escape from your dog. Invest in a few good cat trees or cat condos. Cats love them.

Perhaps investigate using a synthetic pheromone to calm and soothe your cat.



If you frequently wear a certain perfume, cologne or lotion, rub it on your hands. Then pet your animals. You can spray your perfume or cologne on a cloth and wipe your dog and cat with it. This way you can create a "communal" scent. Odor is very important to animals. If they smell similar to each other, they may bond to each other more quickly.

Let your dog and cat get used to each others' smells and sounds through a closed door. Reward your dog for showing calm behaviour. Also, treat and feed your cat when your dog is nearby. When your dog is calmer and more mild-mannered around your cat, your cat will relax around your

dog. Make sure your cat gets top notch spaces, places and your attention.

Exercise your dog before introducing your dog to your cat! If your dog has just run four or five miles or has been on a long hike, your dog will probably be less energetic and hopefully a bit calmer when meeting your cat. Do not introduce your dog to your cat when your dog is too energetic or has not been exercised.

Use a front-clip body harness when introducing your dog to your cat and make sure to have your dog on a lead. This will give you more control over your dog. It will prevent your dog from chasing your cat

and will allow you to reward your dog for ignoring your cat. Reward your dog for behaving gently around your cat. Most importantly, reward your dog any time your dog looks away from your cat.

Feed your cat and dog together. If your cat is afraid of your dog, feed them in separate rooms, but so they can visually see each other. This way, you can begin to establish a positive association between them.

Always place your cat on higher surfaces than your dog. This not only protects your cat, but makes your cat feel more confident. If your cat is less likely to run, your dog will be less likely to chase.

Set your dog and cat up for success. Introduce your cat to your dog when your dog is tired, sleeping or resting. Bring your cat on the sofa or on your lap, or feed your cat treats on a cat condo or cat tree. Reward your dog for ignoring your cat, and if possible, for lying down and relaxing.

Teach your dog polite manners. Train your dog using positive reinforcement when your cat is in the room. This will teach your dog how to behave when your cat is present and teach your dog to listen to you.

Engage your dog in play when your cat is in the room. This is also a good time to feed your dog. If your dog does not chase or pursue your cat, your dog should be given a fantastic reward.

Give your dog and cat reasons to like each other. Feed them extra good food and treats when they see each other. Prevent any negative interactions or altercations from occurring, and manage the environment so that your dog can be rewarded for exhibiting friendly, non-threatening behaviours.

Always praise and reward your dog for friendly interactions with your cat, such as looking away, sniffing, licking, and wagging his or her tail. Prevent your dog from chasing your cat by immediately interrupting your dog and redirecting your dog to a more appropriate behaviour, such as sitting, coming, or lying down.

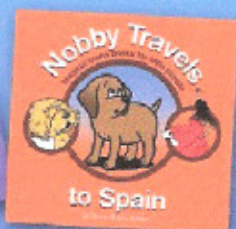
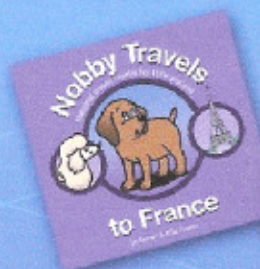
When you are not there to supervise, your dog and cat should be separated until you know they will behave well with each other.

A dog who cannot coexist peacefully with your cat or continues to chase your cat, despite training and following the above guidelines, will need to be managed, so that your cat can live peacefully without being threatened by your dog. It is also harmful to the dog to be constantly stimulated and excited by the presence of the cat, so you don't need to see this as a punishment, but as a management of the environment. If there is a savvy positive animal behaviour specialist or positive dog trainer in your area, seek his or her assistance.



For more information on living in a happy cat and dog household, visit Alana's site [www.K9cat.com](http://www.K9cat.com).

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