



Caring Hands Humane Society

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New Pet Introductions

There are several ways to introduce pets into a new home. I have found that these two options have worked best in my experience. The 'crate method' works best for small dogs, puppies and cats. The 'room method' works best for cats.

CRATE METHOD-I realize that when you adopt a new pet from a shelter, where s/he has spent some time in a caged area, that you just want give him or her as much freedom as you possibly can, however this may not be the best way to go about it long term. When bringing a new pet into a home with other dogs or cats, a safe way to go about the introduction is to place the pet in a large crate, complete with food, fresh water, bedding and a litter box containing fresh litter for cats. Place the new pet in this crate the moment you bring him home and leave him be. He will adjust to all the new sounds, sights, smells and people/pets while in a safe place of his very own. It would be a good idea to leave him to adjust alone for a couple hours. This will give him time to settle in peacefully on his own terms. After you have noticed he is cozy, allow one pet to come into the room his crate is in. They will sniff noses, hiss or ignore each other completely. There is no bad response (unless a dog is rolling the kennel trying to get the new cat, in this case, a cat may not be the most wise choice as a pet in your home!!). Allow them to get to know each other on their own terms while observing. After an hour or so has passed, allow another pet to introduce themselves and so on. I recommend one at a time so there is no 'pack mentality' going on. Have your easiest going cat or dog meet the new addition first, saving the most troublesome for last introductions. This way, if the troublesome pet sees the others already accepting the new addition, then s/he is more apt to accept as well.

ROOM METHOD-This method is very similar to the 'crate method', the only real difference being that you use an entire room as opposed to the crate. I personally recommend a room that you spend considerable amounts of time in for your new pet, such as a bedroom, if allergies allow. This way, you don't have to create new time in your day to go into a room that you typically don't frequent much, such as a garage or mud room. In this new room, have a bedding area for the new pet, fresh litter in a new or well cleaned litter box (having other cat's scents on it may cause the cat to not use it), fresh food and water. I also highly recommend a scratching post in this room. A cat that is new to an area is more likely to scratch on things, as a way of marking them, if he felt threatened in any way. Showing him an appropriate scratching place immediately will help curve his desire to mark other things in this room, such as your antique 4 poster bed!!

Your cat was brought home in a box or crate. Place this box/crate into the new room. Close all doors to this room and make sure no pets are in the room at this time. Open the crate/box and allow the cat to come out on his or her own terms. If s/he is particularly shy, placing the box or crate along a wall where she can see most of the room and kicking yourself back in a chair with a good book is ideal. He will come out on his own terms and when he does so, praise him in a positive voice. Feel free to entice him to come out, but respect his wishes if he chooses not to. For the shyer cats it is a good idea to leave him alone in the room to explore. He may be more inclined to come out on his own if he is left alone.

If your new pet doesn't eat for the first few days, not to worry. This is very common. It has to do with stress. See my article on this topic.

Lori Smith, Kennel Manager, CHHS