



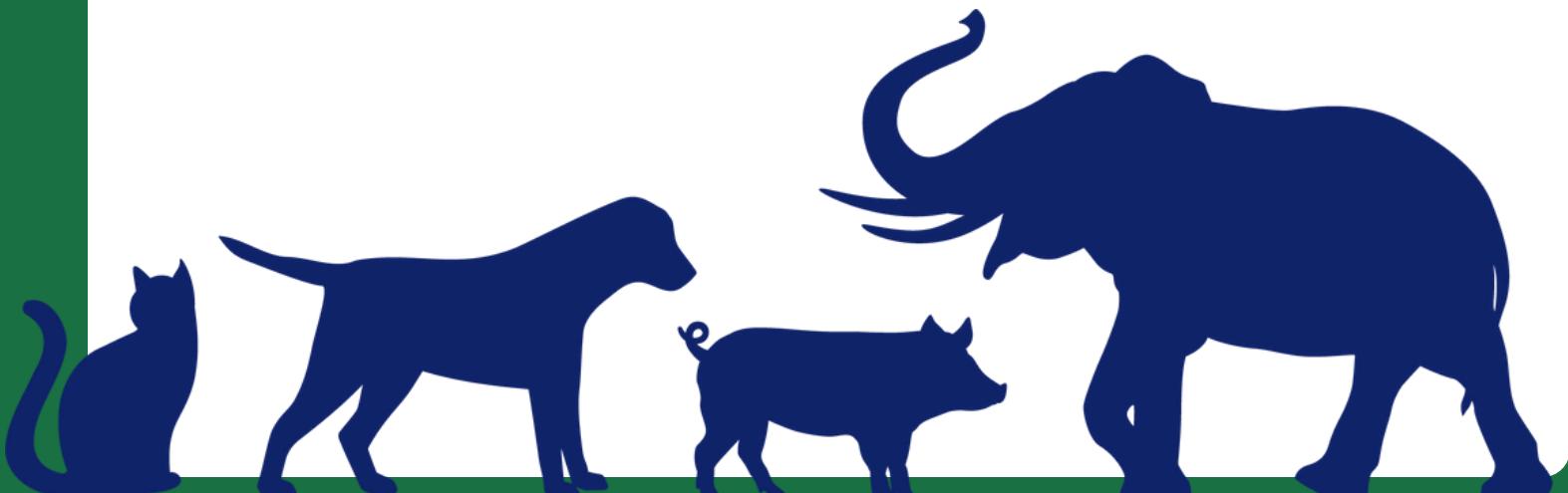
Top 10 Essential Tips for Pet Parents

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Introduction

THANK YOU for downloading this guide. We hope you'll enjoy this selection of articles that we've carefully chosen to help you welcome your new family member, written by the veterinary experts at American Humane Society. These articles represent just a fraction of the resources devoted to pet care we provide — visit our website at americanhumane.org/fact-sheet for more articles like these.

For nearly 150 years, American Humane Society has been working to make the world a better place by protecting the treasured creatures who share and enrich our lives, teaching the power of compassion to our children and by creating simple ways all of us can join hands every day to build a kinder, gentler world. Today, it's easier than ever to make an impact on the lives of our animal friends by choosing a humane lifestyle and supporting humane rescue and conservation, choosing humane certified foods, pet providers and entertainment, and helping to harness the remarkable power of the human-animal bond.

Thanks to our community of animal advocates, we're able to:

- **Save, shelter, feed and care** for countless animals that are lost and abandoned during natural disasters.
- **Protect animals working film and television** productions through our historic *No Animals Were Harmed* program.
- **Help ensure the welfare and humane treatment** of remarkable and endangered species living in the world's zoos, aquariums and conservation centers.
- **Save the lives of veterans and animals** by finding dogs in need of forever homes and training them as free, life-saving service animals for discharged warriors struggling to cope with Post-Traumatic Stress and Traumatic Brain Injury.
- **Help ensure that more than a billion farm animals** have proper space, food, water, heat, cooling, lighting and numerous other humane protections.

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Are you ready for a pet?

AS SOON AS YOU ENTER AN ANIMAL SHELTER, all of the cute, cuddly animals will immediately tempt you to adopt. That's why it's so important to consider whether bringing an animal into your life is right for you before any adorable faces find their way into your heart and home.

Far too many animals in this country are initially loved and then neglected or abandoned over time because owners decide — too late — that caring for pets is more responsibility than they actually want. The truth is, adopting a companion animal is a big step — one that will affect your lifestyle for many years.

So before you adopt, there's some things to consider. Have you thought about what it means that a pet will be completely dependent on you for their entire life? What will happen if you decide to move? And have you considered whether your lifestyle and personality would make you a better dog owner or cat owner?

Is a puppy/kitten right for you or should you consider an older pet? It's important to remember the lifespan of an animal and consider what is likely to be happening in your own life in the future. With good care, most dogs can live 12 to 15 years and most cats can live 15 to 20 years. Adopting a new pet means committing to them for the rest of their life, so it's critical that you take that into consideration.

What major changes might happen to you during a pet's lifetime? Marriage? Children? New job? Long-distance move? Are you willing to continue spending the time, energy, and money to care for your pet when taking on new responsibilities? What will you do if your spouse or child is allergic to, or cannot get along with, your pet? If you're getting a pet for children you have now, are you willing to take on the responsibility of caring for this pet when your children grow up, lose interest, or move away? Have you previously owned a pet that died prematurely due to a preventable accident or illness, such as being hit by a car or suffering from heartworm disease? If so, what will you do differently with a new pet to prevent the same thing from happening again?

If you consider all these questions and decide "**YES, I am ready for a pet!**" the next step is to decide what pet is right for you...



Is a dog right for you?

MAYBE YOU'VE HEARD DOG OWNERS SAY,

"Having a dog is like having a child who never grows up." This statement often brings skeptical looks from people who have never shared their lives with a dog, but those who have, know all too well.

Like children, dogs are completely dependent on their owners for all their needs — food, water, medical attention, exercise, shelter and, most important, companionship. But unlike children, dogs will never learn to pour themselves a drink or fix their own breakfast. Dogs never learn to look both ways before crossing the street, and they can't stop and ask for directions if they get lost. You can't even send them to the babysitter when you need a night off.

People who decide to open their homes to a dog are choosing to change their daily lives and routines. For many, the years of companionship and unconditional love and devotion they receive from their dog far outweigh the daily responsibilities, but some lifestyles might make it impossible.

If you decide that a canine would fit perfectly into your family, there are some things to consider...

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR IN A DOG?

Consider the qualities and personality you want, before size and appearance. For example, a large shepherd-mix might do better than an energetic terrier in an apartment. Think about your lifestyle and habits to determine which breed is best suited to you. Know everything you want in a dog except what the animal looks like. Very often the pet that has the qualities you're looking for will come in an unexpected package.

YOU MAY BE THE PERFECT DOG OWNER IF YOU . . .

- Believe caring for a dog for 15 years doesn't seem like a lifetime.
- Look forward to big, wet kisses when you come home each day.
- Like sharing your house with someone who sheds, tracks dirt occasionally, and possibly drools.
- Don't mind sharing your house with someone who will never clean up after themselves.
- Want to take care of someone.
- Love a playmate who likes to chase balls and drag off shoes.
- Don't mind a playmate who likes to slobber on balls and toys.
- Would like to spend your extra money on pet food, toys, veterinary care, chew bones... and more chew bones.
- Want someone to adore you even on a bad hair day.

Is a dog right for you?

- Don't mind a playmate that might chew on furniture legs or shoes.
- Believe that spaying and neutering pets will help solve the pet overpopulation problem.
- Can't imagine leaving your devoted pet behind when you move.
- Want to keep an ID tag on your pets, so they can always get back to you no matter what.
- Enjoy unconditional love and constant companionship.

IF A DOG DOESN'T SOUND RIGHT FOR YOU and you still want a furry companion, maybe it's time to consider...



Is a cat right for you?

WHILE CATS MAKE PURR-FECT PETS FOR SOME PEOPLE, they don't for others. Cats are dependent on their owners for all their needs — food, water, medical attention, exercise, shelter, and, most importantly, companionship. For many people, the years of unconditional love and devotion they receive from their furry "kids" far outweigh the daily responsibilities. But for others, their lifestyles make it impossible.

If you have decided that a feline would fit perfectly into your family, there are still things to consider...

DO YOU WANT A KITTEN OR AN ADULT CAT?

This is especially important to decide before you get to the shelter. The attraction of tiny mewing kittens is hard to resist, but kittens need a lot of attention and will have to be house-trained. On the plus side, kittens adapt quickly to their surroundings. For many people, an adult cat is a wise choice, especially if you're at work all day or wouldn't enjoy the boisterous antics of a kitten.

WHAT IS YOUR PREFERRED COAT LENGTH?

Do you want a cat with long, medium, or short hair? Long-haired cats require almost daily brushing to keep their fur from matting, so be prepared to spend regular time grooming these cats.

DO YOU WANT A MALE CAT OR A FEMALE CAT?

Both male and female cats can be equally playful and affectionate! Gender is based purely on personal preference.

YOU MAY BE THE PERFECT CAT OWNER IF YOU . . .

- Believe caring for a pet for 15 to 18 years does not seem like a lifetime.
- Look forward to having your ankles rubbed by an affectionate, hairy animal.
- Don't mind sharing your house with someone who sheds, tracks kitty litter and throws up hairballs.
- Don't mind sharing your house with someone who will never clean up after themselves.
- Love a housemate who will randomly and regularly entertain you with outrageous and silly antics (at their whim, not yours).
- Want to take care of someone every day.
- Like your lap warmed whenever you sit down.
- Would like to spend your extra money on pet food, toys, veterinary care, kitty litter... and more kitty litter.
- Want to be welcomed with a soft purr of appreciation.
- Want to occasionally be awakened in the middle of the night to "play"

Is a cat right for you?

- Believe that spaying and neutering pets will help solve the pet overpopulation problem.
- Can't imagine leaving your devoted pet behind when you move.
- Want to keep an ID tag on your pets, so they can always get back to you no matter what.
- Enjoy unconditional love and constant companionship.
- Believe that keeping your cat indoors is best for your pet's well-being.

IF A CAT OR DOG is right for you and you've decided to adopt, the next step is preparing for their arrival...



Pet adoption checklist

THINKING OF ADOPTING A PET? First, check out these helpful tips.

- If you're thinking about adopting a cat, consider taking home two.** Cats require exercise, mental stimulation, and social interaction. Two cats can provide this for each other. Plus they'll provide more benefits to you. Cats' purring has been shown to soothe humans as well as themselves – and they have an uncanny ability to just make you smile. A great place to start your search is online. Sites like petfinder.com let you search numerous shelters in your area simultaneously to help narrow your search and more quickly find the match that's right for you and your new feline friend.
- Find a pet whose personality meshes with yours.** Just as we each have our own personality, so do animals. Adoption counselors can offer advice to help you match the pet's personality with your own.
- Pick out a veterinarian ahead of time and schedule a visit within the first few days following the adoption.** You'll want to take any medical records you received from the adoption center on your first visit.
- Make sure everyone in the house is prepared to have new animal before it comes home.** Visiting the shelter or animal control facility should be a family affair. When adopting a new pet with existing pets at home, discuss with the adoption facility how to make a proper introduction.
- Budget for the short and long-term costs of a new pet.** Any pet is a responsibility and there's a cost associated with that. A cat or dog adopted from a shelter is a bargain; many facilities will have already provided spaying or neutering, initial vaccines, and a microchip.
- Stock up on supplies before the new family member arrives.** Be prepared so your new pet can start feeling at home right away. A cat will need a litter box, cat litter, food and water bowls, food, scratching posts, safe and stimulating toys, a cushy bed, a brush for grooming, a toothbrush and nail clippers. A dog will need dog toys, a collar and leash, food and water bowls, food, a cushy bed, a grooming brush, dog shampoo, and a dog pen.
- Be sure to include your new pet in your family's emergency plan.** You probably have a plan in place for getting your family to safety in case of an emergency. Adjust this plan to include your pets. Add phone numbers for your veterinarian and closest 24-hour animal hospital to your "in-case-of-emergency" call list.
- If you're considering giving a pet as a gift, make sure the recipient is an active participant in the adoption process.** Though well-meaning, the surprise animal gift doesn't allow for a "get-to know-one-another" period. Remember, adopting a cat or dog isn't like purchasing a household appliance or a piece of jewelry – this is a real living, breathing, and emotional being.



Pet-proofing your home

DOGS AND CATS CAN BE VERY CURIOUS (especially kittens). Here's how to keep your companion animal safe in your home:

KITCHENS/BATHROOMS

- Use childproof latches to keep little paws from prying open cabinets.
- Place medications, cleaners, chemicals and laundry supplies on high shelves or locked away.
- Keep trash cans covered or inside a latched cabinet.
- Check for and block any small spaces, nooks or holes inside cabinets or behind washer/dryer units.
- Make sure your kitten hasn't jumped into the dryer before you turn it on.
- Keep foods out of reach (even if the food isn't harmful, the wrapper could be).
- Keep the toilet lid closed to prevent drowning or drinking of harmful cleaning chemicals.

LIVING/FAMILY ROOM

- Place dangling wires from any electronics out of reach.
- Put away children's toys and games.
- Put away knick-knacks until your kitten has the coordination not to knock them over.
- Check all those places where your vacuum cleaner doesn't fit, but your puppy or kitten does, for dangerous items like string.

- Move common house plants that may be poisonous out of reach. Don't forget hanging plants that can be jumped onto from nearby surfaces.
- Make sure all heating/air vents have covers.
- Put away all sewing and craft notions, especially thread.

GARAGE

- Move all chemicals to high shelves or behind secure doors.
- Clean all antifreeze from the floor and driveway, as one taste can be lethal to animals.
- Bang on your car hood to ensure that your kitten (or any neighborhood cat) has not hidden in the engine compartment for warmth.
- Keep all sharp objects and tools out of reach.

BEDROOMS

- Keep laundry and shoes behind closed doors (drawstrings and buttons can cause major problems if swallowed).
- Keep any medications, lotions or cosmetics off accessible surfaces (like the bedside table).
- Move electrical and phone wires out of reach of chewing.
- Be careful that you don't close your kitten in closets or dresser drawers.
- And look out for paws, noses and tails when you shut doors behind you or scoot chairs.



Choosing the right collar

IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO PLACE THE FIRST COLLAR ON A NEW PET,

especially if that animal is not used to wearing one. However, it is important that all puppies and dogs wear collars and ID tags; in fact, in many areas, it's the law! And for cats, a collar and ID tag may be your cat's ticket home if they accidentally escape or wander off. Even indoor-only cats should wear collars, because if your cat does get out, a well-meaning person may think your cat is a stray and take them to an animal shelter.

Your cat may scratch at the collar at first, since it feels foreign, but she should adjust to it with time and patience. Try using a tasty treat, catnip toy or climbing post to distract your cat's attention from the new collar. By the time she finishes the treat, she may have forgotten the collar entirely. You may have to repeat this trick a few times, but stick with it — the benefits are certainly worth the effort.

PAIN IN THE NECK

Remember that collars don't expand but kittens and puppies both grow quickly! If not checked frequently and loosened as needed, collars can grow into your pet's neck and cause excruciating, constant pain. Be sure to check your pet's collar at least every week until it is full grown, and check your adult pet's collar regularly to make sure it fits properly and is safely secured.

You should be able to easily slip two or three fingers between the collar and your pet's neck, although it shouldn't be so loose that it can slip off over the head.

CHOOSING THE TYPE OF COLLAR

For cats, be sure to buy a "break-away" safety collar that can easily come open if it gets caught on something. This will prevent the collar from accidentally strangling your cat.

For dogs, you should always keep ID tags on with a properly fitted, flat-buckle collar made of nylon, cotton or leather. You may wish to display your dog's ID tags on a body harness as well, but keep in mind that some dogs may chew off body harnesses when left unattended. Training collars — such as head harnesses, choke collars/chains and pinch or prong collars — should never be left on a dog unattended. Such collars are intended only for training purposes while the dog is under supervision, and should be removed when the dog is not being trained or walked.

MICROCHIPPING

Microchips are an ideal way to provide permanent identification that will always stay with your pet. A microchip is a tiny capsule (about the size of a piece of rice) that is injected painlessly under the animal's skin between the shoulder blades.

Choosing the right collar

Each chip contains a unique ID number that can be read by a scanner and then matched with owner information in a comprehensive database. Once your pet is microchipped, be sure to update your contact information in the database if it changes in any way. Microchips do not contain a global positioning system (GPS), so they cannot be used to track your pet. However, they are considered legal proof of ownership in case your pet is stolen.

ONCE YOUR HOME IS PREPARED and you have the right collar picked out, it's time to bring your new family member home...



Introducing cats to cats

SOME PEOPLE SAY CATS ARE LIKE CHIPS — you can't have just one! As one of the 85 million¹ cat owners out there, you may be considering adding a new feline friend to your home. Whether your current cat is lonely, her companion cat recently passed away or you simply love cats, it is important to take a few precautions to ensure that your cat-to-cat introductions go as smoothly as possible.

CONSIDER YOUR CURRENT CAT:

Perhaps the most important step in adding another cat to your home is carefully considering the resident cat's personality. Features such as looks, size, breed, gender or any quality other than personality are not factors that should weigh heavily in the decision. Instead, focus primarily on personality matching:

- If you have a very laid-back, elderly or frail kitty at home, it is best to avoid kittens and very playful or rambunctious cats.
- If you have a rambunctious cat who zooms all over the house, getting a very laid-back or quiet, shy cat is probably not wise.
- Try to focus on cats who have personalities similar to that of your current cat.

THE INTRODUCTION PROCESS

By planning ahead and taking things slow, your chances of success when introducing cats are much greater. If you rush into things and attempt to "force" a relationship, you might inadvertently sabotage a relationship that could have otherwise worked out. Here are six steps that can help you ensure a successful introduction:

Step 1: Trade Scents

Once you have selected a potential new cat, ask the shelter or breeder if you can take home a blanket the cat has slept on to give to your resident kitty. Also ask if it would be possible to bring a blanket from home that your resident kitty has slept on, to give to your new cat. In some cases, this will not be possible — especially with kittens (due to disease concerns), but if you can exchange the cats' scents with one another, you will be introducing a very important identification and communication signal right off the bat.

Step 2: Prepare a Separate Room

Some cats can be dropped into the middle of a new home and adapt just fine, with everything working out between the kitties. However, that approach can also end in disaster, injuries, or a failed adoption. Before bringing your new cat home, we recommend that you:

Introducing cats to cats

- Find a quiet room in your house (a bedroom or bathroom) where you can keep the new cat safely separated from the resident cat for a few days.
- Make sure it's a room where the resident cat has been, that can be easily accessed by all human family members for social interactions and playtime, and that it is set up with food, water, litter, toys and soft beds.
- Choose a room that has an inch or two of space under the door for feline introductions.

Step 3: Dinner Time on Opposite Sides

Place both cats' dishes close to the door, on their respective sides. If one of the cats refuses to eat, you can feed them elsewhere, but still place dishes of tuna or some other tasty snack on either side of the door. By having both cats experience something positive (a meal or yummy snack) while they are nearby, they can learn to form positive associations with each other.

- If either cat is growling or hissing at the other through the door, do not put them together anytime soon; take things very slowly and continue feeding this way. If the problems continue for several days, it is likely the match is not going to work out.

Step 4: Exchange Scents Around the House

If both cats are eating well, and appear calm and relaxed on their respective sides of the door, then it's time for the big scent exchange:

- You should confine the resident cat to a room and allow the new cat to roam the house. Each cat should use the other cat's (scooped!) litter box, food and water dishes, beds and toys, so the only thing being exchanged is the cats themselves.
- Continue to feed both cats close to their respective sides of the door.
- While the new cat is exploring your home, you may want to close bedroom and bathroom doors at first so she does not feel overwhelmed. Over the course of a few days, open a door or two at a time and increase the amount of space the new cat has access to.

If either cat appears stressed, nervous or fearful, you might want to do the exchange described above multiple times, for example:

- The new cat spends a few days in the room, then a few in the house, then back in the room — while the resident cat is in the opposite location. This can help ensure lots of scent exchange and desensitization.

Step 5: Let Them See Each Other

If everything seems to be going well, and everyone is acting, eating and using the litter box normally, you're doing great! The next step is to open the separating door, but keep a gate of some sort across it so they can see, smell and have contact with each other. The gate should prevent complete access. (A baby gate is perfect, but usually not high enough for cats, so you may need to stack two on top of each other.)

Introducing cats to cats

Continue feeding both cats on their respective sides of the door, and continue switching them back and forth.

Step 6: Allow Them to Meet

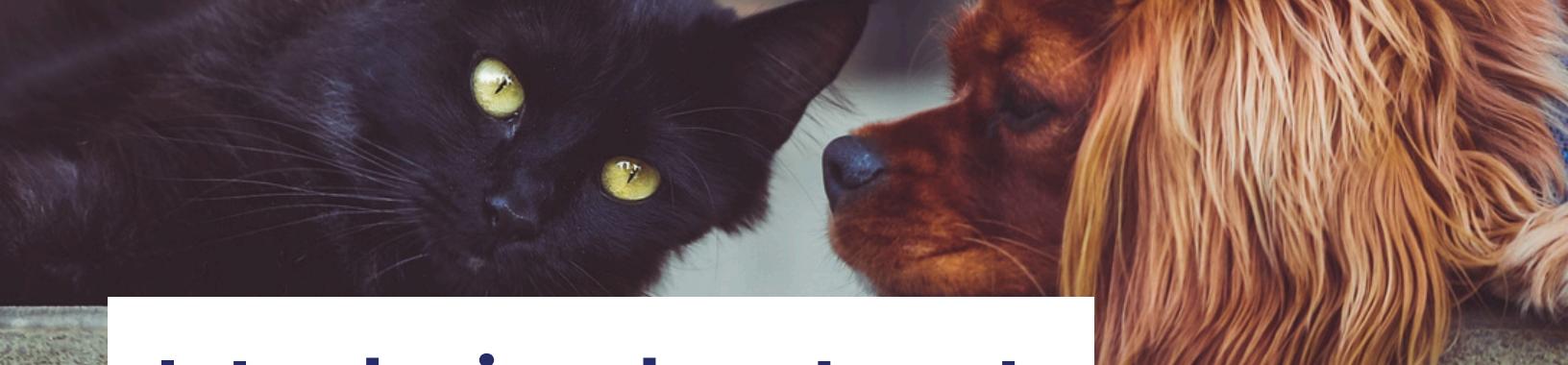
If everything seems fine, and everyone is acting, eating and using the litter box normally, then it's time to take down the gates.

There may be some hissing or swatting, but cats often will work things out by themselves. If there is a fight in which one of the cats is traumatized or injured (and you have followed all of the above steps), then the match will likely not work out. If the cats seem to tolerate, ignore, enjoy or interact with each other – that's great news!

Leaving Cats Alone Together

It's a good idea to separate the cats at first when you will not be around to supervise them. You want to ensure that you see all their interactions and know exactly what is going on. After you feel that the cats are getting along, you can ease up on this step.

Getting another cat will have a big impact on your resident cat, so considering your decision carefully and introducing them properly is the right thing to do. Good luck!



Introducing dogs to cats

WHETHER YOU ALREADY HAVE A DOG

and are considering getting a cat, or vice versa, it is very important to think about their first introduction. By letting a loose cat and an off-leash dog meet each other in an open room for the first time, you are probably setting up both animals to fail. Instead, plan ahead and take your time.

MATCHING CATS AND DOGS

If you're thinking of getting a cat for your dog or a dog for your cat, it's important to consider both animals' personalities. It may be helpful to look for a companion that has already been exposed to the other species in the past.

- If a dog attempts to aggressively chase, pin, pick up or otherwise "manhandle" any cat, it is best to not even consider getting a cat — or at least to proceed with caution. Additionally, a dog who growls, lunges at or obsessively barks at a cat would probably do best in a cat-free environment. Likewise, a cat who growls, swats at, runs from or hides from dogs would probably prefer to not live with a dog.
- If a dog loves chasing things, then a fearful, shy cat who runs away probably wouldn't be the best choice, as it could trigger the dog to chase. Similarly, an energetic cat who runs and pounces would fall into this same category.

- If a dog plays roughly, it is best to avoid kittens or elderly cats who can easily be hurt. Instead, stick to playful adults who are interested in play, but are also confident enough to take care of themselves. If a cat is rambunctious or playful, a dog that is playful, but gentle, could be a great option.
- If a dog or cat is elderly, laid back, quiet or anxious, then a calm counterpart would be best. Avoid rambunctious companions who may annoy, frighten or otherwise bother the other pet.

THE INTRODUCTION PROCESS

Regardless of whether you are getting a new cat or a new dog, the first introduction between your current pet and your new pet is a very important part of the process. Here are four steps that can help you ensure a successful meeting:

Step 1: Choose the Proper Meeting Location

- Resident cat to new dog: If you are adopting a dog, you should **not** take your cat to meet him at a shelter, or other establishment which houses a number of animals for health and safety reasons. Instead, the introduction should take place at home.
- Resident dog to new cat: If you are adopting a cat, do **not** take your dog into a shelter and expose him to the cats.

Introducing dog to cats

This can be highly stressful or traumatic for all of the cats. Also, it's not necessarily a good indicator of how the dog will react at home. Instead, ask the shelter's adoption counselors whether they have any dog-savvy, confident cats they will allow to meet your dog under controlled conditions. If this is not possible, an alternative would be to have your dog meet a dog-savvy cat who belongs to a friend or relative. As a last resort, you can bring your new kitty home and do an introduction at home.

Step 2: Separate the Animals

- Across a few days, rotate which animal has freedom and which is confined to allow each animal plenty of time to investigate the other one's scent.
- Sometimes the dog should be confined to a crate or another room (or taken to another location if he can't be left alone) to allow the cat time to roam free and investigate the smell of the dog.
- If the dog obsessively digs at the separation barrier or barks at the cat for more than a day or two, the interaction likely won't work without proper training. You may need the help of a professional.
- When no one is home, the dog or cat must always be securely confined so unsupervised interactions are not possible.
- Once the dog is calm (or at least not obsessed with the cat) and the cat is calm, eating and using the litter box normally, you can proceed to the next step.

Step 3: Make Leashed Introductions

- Allow both animals to be in the same room at the same time, but keep the dog securely leashed. Securing the cat in a harness with a leash for the introduction is also a good idea if the cat is comfortable wearing a harness.
- Continue with this type of introduction until the dog is calm and ignores the cat, and the cat is calm, eating and using the litter box normally.
- If there is any fear or aggression displayed on either animal's part, stay at step 2 longer.
- Continue indefinitely until both the dog and cat seem happy and relaxed around each other.
- When no one is home, the dog or cat should be securely confined to separate areas so unsupervised interactions are not possible.

Step 4: Allow Unsupervised Interactions

Unsupervised time together can occur after the cat and dog have been supervised around each other for a significant period of time (a month or so) and you are positive they will not hurt each other.

TRAINING TIP

If the dog stares at the cat or the door separating the cat, try to distract him and get him to look away with treats, a happy voice or by gently guiding the dog away on a leash. Once the dog is away from the cat, try offering a treat. If he takes it, repeat this process until he is no longer focused on the cat or door.

Introducing dog to cats

WARNING SIGNS

- If the dog remains overly focused, does not take his eyes off the cat or the door, completely ignores you or lunges suddenly as soon as the cat moves, this is probably a dangerous match. If you are looking for a dog for your resident cat, try another dog. If this is your dog, you should probably not get him a cat.
- If at any time the dog lunges toward, growls, snaps at or shows any aggression toward a calm, quiet, still cat, this match will probably not work out. The same holds true if a cat attacks a calm, quiet dog. If you are committed to make the relationship work, you will probably need a professional at this point.
- If you are looking for a cat for your dog, and your dog displays questionable behavior around a cat who is growling, hissing and swatting, try again with another, calmer cat. If he continues to display questionable behavior around multiple cats, it is likely he should not live with cats.
- If it is your cat who is growling, hissing or swatting, give the cat a break and try again on another day. You might also need to try a different dog. A cat who continually hisses and growls at all types of dogs will likely not want to live with dogs. Your cat may tolerate a dog, but she probably won't be happy — which is an unfair situation for her.
- If the cat stops eating, drinking, using the litter box, visiting with family members, or constantly stays hidden in another room, she is not happy. You might want to consider finding a better match or contacting a professional animal behaviorist for advice.



Housetraining puppies & dogs

ARE YOU DEALING WITH A POOPY PUPPY?

Or a urinating Yorkie? Don't give up on Fido just yet! Housetraining a new puppy or dog can be difficult and can take a lot of patience but it's important to stick to it and get your new family member on the right track. Hopefully these tips and tricks help you deal with your housetraining woes.

UNDERSTANDING NORMAL DOG BEHAVIOR

- It's not instinctive for dogs to relieve themselves outside; it's only natural for them to not go where they sleep. Everywhere else is fair game!
- You must be patient. Regardless of whether you have a puppy or have recently adopted an adult, the dog won't automatically understand the routine in your house or know where the door is. It's up to you to train your dog.
- If your dog has an accident indoors it's important to not rub their nose in the urine or feces — you should never punish your dog for an accident. This will only teach your dog to fear you and potentially hide when they have to go.

GETTING STARTED

- If you want to read more on housetraining your dog, we recommend [Way to Go! How to Housetrain a Dog of Any Age](#) by Karen London and Patricia McConnell.

- Pick a special treat that your puppy/dog will only get after pooping or peeing outside.
- Keep the treats handy and take them every single time you take the dog out.
- Treats should be small (about the size of your pinky fingernail), and you will need at least three to five treats for each potty break.

SCHEDULING YOUR DOG'S FEEDINGS

- It's always better to feed by schedule, rather than free feeding. Eating all day = pooping all day! Feeding at a more consistent scheduling means pooping on a more consistent schedule.
- You can get your dog on scheduled feedings by:
 - Talking to your veterinarian to help you determine the appropriate amount of food your dog needs and the number of feedings per day.
 - Removing any uneaten food after 20 minutes.
 - Not offering the dog more food until the next scheduled meal.
 - Stick to it! Your dog might whine for more food but if you stick with it, your dog should be eating on schedule within one to four meals.

Housetraining puppies & dogs

CLEANING UP MESSES

Dogs are attracted to spots where they urinated/defecated previously, so it's important to clean up messes thoroughly. Pet urine is very difficult to get out, and standard household cleansers don't cut it. You can rent or hire a carpet cleaner with a special pet-urine enzymatic cleaner or use an enzymatic cleaner, such as Nature's Miracle or Simple Solution, which can be found in most pet supply stores or online.

To clean thoroughly with the enzymatic cleaner:

- Saturate any dried spots with lukewarm water.
- Press the area with paper towels until there is no more moisture.
- Follow the instructions on the container and repeat three times.

USING CHEMICAL ATTRACTION TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

If your dog has an accident inside, your first response might be to clean it up and dispose of it right away. But since dogs are attracted to going to the same places over and over, you can use this to your advantage! To do this:

- Pick up any indoor accidents and bring them outside to the potty area.
- Put the poop right onto the ground, or secure the material used to wipe up the urine to the ground with a rock or stick.
- These can be removed after the pet has pottied in the area.
- When they do poop outside, leave the most recent poop in place to encourage your dog to go again in that area. After each new poop has been left in that area, you can clean up any previous poop.

- Be sure to go back inside the house and immediately clean any soiled areas according to the instructions above.

SUPERVISING YOUR DOG

It's important that you see everything that comes out of the dog so you can interrupt inside accidents and reward outside potties, so supervising your dog properly is key.

If you notice a mess after it has happened, it might mean you are not supervising closely enough and may want to take steps to supervise them more closely.

Always watch for signals your dog has to go. These may include sniffing, squatting, circling, or their tail pointing out straight. When you see any of these signals, take the dog out immediately.

If your dog begins to poop/pee inside:

- Immediately interrupt by clapping and saying "Ah ah!"
- Get the dog outside as soon as possible (carry your dog when possible and put the leash on as you head out the door).
- Stay with your dog outside so you can praise them.
- Once you are outside, take the dog right to the area where you want him to "go."
 - Walk back and forth or around in little circles.
 - Do not play or converse with your dog until they go (this may take some time, but be patient).
 - When the dog begins to go, quietly whisper a command you plan to eventually use to tell him to "go," such as: go potty, get busy, etc.
 - Quietly praise them and get that special treat ready.

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- As soon as the poop/pee is complete, immediately praise your dog, quickly give them several treats and then play.
- Now your dog gets to do whatever they want (go for a walk, run back inside, etc.)

SCHEDULING POTTY BREAKS

- During this process, make sure to take your dog out at regular, predictable intervals.
- Most puppies will need to relieve themselves immediately after they wake up or finish eating.
- The frequency of potty breaks depends on age, breed and previous training (anywhere from every 10 minutes to once an hour).
- Set a watch alarm or timer to remind you of potty breaks.
- Stick to the intervals until your dog is successful for several days.
- Slowly increase the amount of time between intervals if your dog succeeds.
- As your dog succeeds, gradually allow more and more freedom inside the home.
- If you see accidents, go back to more frequent potty breaks, increase supervision and reduce freedom inside.

HOUSETRAINING TROUBLESHOOTING

- If none of this works, or a dog that you've had for years suddenly starts having accidents inside, contact a veterinarian or animal behaviorist right away. Determining health issues may resolve the problem.
- Intact males may be marking, in which case neutering can help significantly (not to mention there are added health benefits of neutering).

If you take your dog out and nothing happens:

- Be patient. If nothing happens after 10 minutes or so, come back in, keep the dog on leash and go back out 10 to 15 minutes later. Repeat as needed.

If you take your dog out, but all they do is run around and play:

- Make sure your dog is on a leash about 6 feet long.
- Make sure there are no play triggers around, such as toys, pets, children, etc.
- Ignore the dog. Don't talk to or play with them, don't yell, and don't point out any poop.
- Just walk back and forth, and don't make a big deal about anything. Dogs can be easily distracted and love to get attention, so if you give them attention, they'll never figure it out!

If you keep finding accidents:

- You are most likely not supervising properly. Go back to our "Supervising Your Dog" section for more guidance.

Your dog is having accidents inside the crate:

- If the crate is too large, your dog can have a potty area and a sleeping area, so make sure the crate is the right size. Your dog should be able to stand up, turn around and lie down.
- If your dog goes to the bathroom and gets it all over them, take your dog to the vet to rule out any medical problems.
- If medical issues are ruled out, contact a trainer or behaviorist.
- Do your best to determine if the dog had previously been kept in cages for long periods of times. This makes housetraining more difficult, and advice from a professional may be required.

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Your dog is crying in the crate in the middle of the night:

- Your dog may be telling you that they have to go to the bathroom, or might be begging for attention.
- Check your journal to see if it is time for a break.
- If you're not sure, take your dog directly outside, but do not acknowledge them.
- If they go to the bathroom, quietly and briefly acknowledge them to avoid teaching your dog that midnight potties are fun.
- If your dog doesn't go to the bathroom, put them back into the crate and go back to bed.
- Make sure your dog has been adequately exercised before crating for the night.
- If you are certain your dog isn't full of energy, doesn't have to go to the bathroom, and is healthy, they may need to just cry it out.
- If your dog seems to be panicking, digging, destroying bedding, etc., contact a behaviorist or trainer right away, as you may be dealing with separation anxiety.

You can't seem to keep an eye on the dog:

- Keep your dog tethered to you at all times or gate them in an area with you.
- Restrict home access with gates and closed doors.
- If you can't keep your eye on your dog, they should be crated (such as at night, when you are gone, etc.).
- Do not let the crate become a substitute for training! Dogs need plenty of exercise and social interaction.

HOPEFULLY THESE TIPS WILL HELP

decrease the accidents in your house and increase the happiness in your household — for the humans and pets!



Grooming your pet

GROOMING YOUR PET is an important part of caring for them and keeping them healthy. Both cats and dogs need regular brushing, and animals with longer hair require frequent trips to a professional groomer. Fur that becomes matted can cause serious health issues for your pet. Dirt and oils can accumulate under mats and cause painful skin infections, and the mats themselves can be painful as they pull and stretch the skin underneath. Severe matting can even affect your pet's ability to see, walk and eat normally.

Long and medium-haired pets generally require daily brushing. Short-haired pets should usually be brushed once or twice per week. The frequency of professional grooming and haircuts varies depending on your pet's breed. Consult your groomer or veterinarian for a recommendation.

All dogs also require regular bathing to keep their skin and hair coat clean and healthy. The frequency of bathing depends on your dog's lifestyle, breed and coat type. Ask your veterinarian to recommend the best bathing regimen for your dog. Also, always use a shampoo specifically formulated for dogs. Many human shampoos can be too harsh for your dog's skin. If your dog has itchy, red, dry, flaky or oily skin, you should consult your veterinarian.

Since cats groom themselves, they generally do not need to be bathed, unless they have fleas or a medical condition that warrants it. Before bathing your cat, always consult your veterinarian.

Pets also require regular nail trims. For dogs and cats, long nails can become painful and interfere with their ability to walk. Keeping nails short also helps you protect your floors and furniture from being scratched and your clothes from being snagged. Here's what you need to know to groom your pet's nails.

DOGS

Before You Clip

- Get your dog used to having his paws handled. This is easier if you start when the dog is still a puppy, but with patience, you can also train most older dogs.
- Begin by speaking softly as you massage each paw, gently separating the toes.
- Your pet may instinctively pull away. If this happens, repeat whatever it was your dog didn't like, but do it slower until he begins to accept it.
- When you think your pet is ready, cut one or two nails.
- Have a treat ready for positive reinforcement.
- For dogs that are nervous or resistant to handling, try having someone assist you with holding your dog still and gently petting and reassuring him.

Grooming your pet

- Dogs that are unruly or that try to bite should be taken to a groomer or veterinarian for nail trimming in order to prevent injury to both you and the dog.

CATS

Before You Clip

- Most cats do not like to be restrained so it is best to accustom them to being handled while they are still kittens. But if you have adopted an adult cat don't despair!
- Try the "less is best" approach first when it comes to restraint. Try clipping your cat's nails while he is napping or snuggling on your lap. Be sure to pet him and reassure him after each nail.
- Give treats for positive reinforcement
- If possible, have a friend or family member hold and pet your cat while you are trimming his nails.
- If necessary, wrap your kitty in a towel to prevent him from scratching you during nail trimming.
- Cats that are unruly or that try to bite should be taken to a groomer or veterinarian for nail trimming in order to prevent injury to both you and the cat.

HOW TO CLIP NAILS FOR DOGS AND CATS

- Use an appropriate pet nail trimmer. These are available at any pet supply store and come in a variety of styles and sizes for both dogs and cats. If you are unsure which one to use, ask your veterinarian or groomer for a recommendation.

- Hold the paw in your hand and locate the pinkish part of the nail. This is a blood vessel, often called the "quick," and should be avoided. The nail should be clipped slightly above this area.
- If you cannot see the pinkish part, just clip the very tip of the nail.
- Always have a clotting agent on hand in case you accidentally cut below the quick and cause bleeding. This is usually in the form of a powder and is available at any pet supply store.
- Most pets should have their nails trimmed every 2 to 3 weeks. Some dogs that are frequently walked on paved areas will continuously wear down their nails and may need less frequent trimming.
- If you are unsure about the process, consult your veterinarian or groomer.

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We hope this guide gave you some guidance on how to best care for your pet. American Humane Society is committed to ensuring the safety, welfare and well-being of animals, and providing these resources is only one way we do so. For more resources, visit americanhumane.org/factsheet. And to learn more about our life-saving programs, visit americanhumane.org/program.



Save animals' lives every day.

Your tax-deductible donation helps us rescue animals in floods, hurricanes and other disasters, work tirelessly to stop unthinkable cruelty in puppy mills, reunite our brave retired military dogs with their handlers, provide those K-9 heroes with the lifelong healthcare they deserve and all of American Humane Society's life-saving and impactful programs.

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