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Dog to Dog Introductions

Problems can occur when a new dog is introduced into a house that already has one or more dogs. This can be a period of adjustment for everybody – the new dog, the old dog, and the owners. Below are a couple brief tips on how to make this transition go as smoothly as possible.

Before Adopting a New Dog

Make sure your current dog is a good candidate for accepting a new dog into the family. This test is important even if you already own multiple dogs that get along with each other. Does your dog really enjoy meeting new dogs? Is he tolerant when other dogs aren't so nice to him? Does he share his toys and his favorite people? These are the types of dogs who will love having a new sibling. If your dog gets stressed around other dogs, insists on being the bully, guards food, toys, locations, and/or people, they may not be the best candidate. Also dogs that get jealous easily or are very competitive may not make good candidates.

Some dogs behave differently on neutral ground or at other dog's homes than at their own home, so if possible, have some doggy sleepovers and see how your dog does. Some dogs are just fine with the opposite sex, but not the same sex. Some dogs are fine with adult dogs but don't have patience for puppies. Do your homework. Same goes for your prospective new dog. If you can, see if you can take him out and expose him to lots of different dogs in settings around toys, food, and play, and see how he behaves. Introduce your dog to the new dog beforehand to see if they get along. Some dogs get along better with certain types of dogs. Where one dog may not work out, another will fit into the household perfectly.

After Adopting a New Dog

1. Meet on neutral ground. Take the dogs to a local park or a walk around the neighborhood first.
2. While the relationship is developing, keep play brief. Over arousal can start fights especially around dogs who don't know each other yet.
3. Supervise all interactions and when you can't supervise, separate the dogs into different areas.
4. The new dog should have his own space/area to retreat to.
5. Feed and give Kongs and chews separately. Put them in different rooms.

6. Interrupt and separate when there is any kind of growling or snapping and let them “cool down.”
7. Make sure to provide individual time for each dog daily.

If you do your homework and follow these simple guidelines the transition of a new dog to your family should go smoothly. Expect to do follow these guidelines for at least 2-4 weeks upon introduction.

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