

Introducing a New Dog to Your Resident Dog

Training Tips... by Ken Piening

<http://www.thepetcenter.com/gen/scent.html>

For the sake of this article your new dog coming into the home will be referred to as the "New Dog". The resident dog will be referred to as the "Old Dog."

The introduction of unfamiliar dogs to other dogs may be a perilous journey. This can be very stressful for the dogs and the owners. To help alleviate this stress, we must understand why the introduction is difficult for our dogs...

When the new dog enters the home, territorial instincts tell the old dog that he is to defend his home. These territorial feelings are the reason why dogs can not meet "the wrong way." To understand the proper introduction, we must know that dogs live in a world of scent. Dogs rely on their keen sense of smell to introduce themselves to their surroundings. Therefore, training is based on their highly developed sense of smell. This is a difficult concept to grasp because humans depend on sight more than smell. With this in mind, the home must be set up in a way that separates the two dogs so there is no visual contact. Visual contact creates posturing (a cold stare, growling and hackles raised). Dominant or submissive posturing immediately triggers a reaction in a the other dog and often leads to stress and tension between the two.

Introducing two dogs to each other...

Our **FIRST STEP** is to have two cages in separate areas of the home (or one cage and a laundry room); this is vital in allowing for a stress free meeting. The reason we allow both of the dogs to have their own cage is for the feeling of comfort and security. We use the cage as a training tool; the dog however uses it for security. It is very important that the dogs do not make visual contact during this sensitive **FIRST STEP**. We cannot let them see one another, but we *will* let them smell each other. This will be done by simply placing a toy, tug, or even a blanket in their cages. These toys are called "scent articles". The *switching* of these scent articles alone will allow a deeper relationship between the dogs. We are completely communicating to the dogs by the way they understand... through their nose!



The **SECOND STEP** we will be to let our new dog roam around the house. He will be getting accustomed to his new home and his new owners. Your older dog should be out of harms way (under your control and out of sight) when the new dog is out of his cage. The newcomer will be exploring your home while leaving his scent on a territory that is not initially his. The new dog should only be out of his cage for fifteen to twenty minutes, several times a day. This is plenty of time for him to check out his new environment and leave his own scent about the house. (As you will see, later on after the introduction period is over and the dogs are comfortable with each other's scent, they no longer have to be separated. The new dog might need his own cage for other behavioral training not associated with the introduction period, for example, housebreaking a younger dog.) When the new dog goes back in his cage place the old dog's scent articles with him.



When playtime is over for the new dog, The **THIRD STEP** is to switch the dogs. This means that the new dog goes to a confined area and the old dog is allowed to play. The old dog comes out of the hidden crate and the new dog goes into his

own cage (or room). The first time the old dog goes exploring he will vigorously explore the scent left around the home by the new dog until he is satisfied the intruder has "escaped". Your older dog might be overwhelmed and confused and now needs your comfort. Allowing him to sit on your lap or by your side through a good book or a rerun of Lassie will serve as the quality time he needs during this scent discovery period. For the old dog to understand the new smell, he should be let out of the cage as many times a day as possible. The old dog should only be let out after the new dog has played, and has been put away. With these short routines, both dogs are familiarizing each other at a faster rate. Actually, the concept is quite simple. The more times you let your new then old dog out, the quicker they will be acquainted. Your older dog will display his permission as to when the two should meet. When he comes out of the cage and does not follow the scent of the new dog, your older dog has given his permission. **NOW THE NEW DOGS CAN MEET FACE TO FACE**, since they are familiar and comfortable with one another's scent. Read on...

The **FOURTH STEP** is to introduce the dogs face to face. For territorial reasons, when introducing the dogs it should not be on your property. A neighbors fenced in yard, a fenced in ball field (when no other dogs or people might interfere), or any other fenced in area will be an appropriate meeting ground. Leashes may not take the place of a fenced in area; holding the leashes may potentially bring out aggression. If possible, let the old dog run around the field, while the new dog is out of sight. The old dog is laying the now familiar scent. Now it is time for the new dog to play in the field. The old dog is out of sight and the new dog also smells the familiar old dog's scent. They will both detect the familiar scent just like in the home. Since the dogs have already been formally introduced via each other's scent, they are ready to meet face to face. The area is safe because they are confined and can not run away. The dogs will run over to greet each other, smell, posture... and they will not have any inclination to fight.

This outlined routine has demonstrated a stress free and safe way to introduce new dogs. A dog's sense of smell is considered by many as its primary sense. Therefore, this training is based entirely upon the scent. This method will easily work with trained or misbehaved dogs. We are working hand in hand with the dog's natural instincts. Allowing the dog's instincts to teach the lesson will make learning simple yet efficient.