



How to: Introduce Dog to Dog

PRE-INTRODUCTION

Before beginning the introduction, it is ideal for your dog to be in a comfortable and happy mood. A quick game of fetch or a short brisk walk to release your dog's initial burst of energy before-hand is recommended.

- ① **Meet at a neutral place:** Meet on a sidewalk, at a park, or parking lot. Your dog should be on a sturdy leash no longer than 6 ft. (flexi-leads are not recommended).
- ② **Take a walk with the dogs next to each other:** **Part One:** Each owner should have their dog at a comfortable heel to their left side, begin to walk at a brisk pace in unison (adults are side-by-side, not the dogs), turn and repeat several times. During this exercise the dogs should not stop to sniff each other. **Part Two:** After a few laps, loosen the leash a bit and continue to walk briskly in the same position, but allow a bit more slack on the leashes and closer proximity between dogs.
- ③ **Cross paths with each other:** Next each owner with their dog should position themselves across from each other approximately 15 ft. apart. Walk towards each other with your dog at a comfortable heel to your left side, pass each other as you continue to walk, then stop when you have "switched places" on the opposite side from where you started. Repeat this exercise a few times.
- ④ **Allow side by side or nose to end sniffing:** Proceed with this same exercise, but loosen the slack on the leash now and allow the dogs to sniff each other as you are passing for a few seconds at a time before continuing to walk by. Remember face to face introductions are considered rude in dog language, so let the dogs **sniff each other side-by-side or nose-to-end** for a few seconds and then continue walking. Keep an eye on your dog's body language. Negative body language may consist of the dog becoming stiff and or still, staring, standing on its toes, hackling of the fur, growling, etc. If any of these symptoms are apparent, continue walking past without stopping.
- ⑤ **Allow supervised playtime:** If steps 1-4 are successful, proceed to a fenced area and remove all high-value items (toys, bones, food). Let the dogs off leash and let them sniff around. Study their body language and interrupt rough play before it escalates into a conflict. You can interrupt play simply by doing some recalls and then releasing the dogs to go and play again after a few moments of calm. If this cannot be accomplished, it's a good idea to end the session for the day and continue again at another time.

Tips/Advice

- ① Another alternative is to take an obedience class where dogs are encouraged to interact in a positive way around other dogs. Talk to the instructor about what class is best for your situation and don't hesitate to shop around for the best class for your dog.
- ② Remember that some dogs just don't want to be around other dogs. Having a loving human companion is much more important to them.
- ③ Please remember that even if your dog seems to get along great with another dog, it is advisable to never leave two dogs out alone together without supervision.