



Multi-Dog Households

Introducing a new dog to a house where there is already an existing dog can be problematic. However, if you follow some simple guidelines, you will minimise the risk of any possible conflict.

Even if your dog(s) have met the new addition and they appear to get along, remember that your dog(s) may feel differently on their own territory. The meeting of the new dog and your existing dog(s) in the home is crucial and can be a stressful time for all involved. It therefore helps if the dogs have met on neutral ground several times before the introduction in the home is made. This helps the dogs to form a bond and reduce any potential conflict.

- Walk or socialise the dogs together away from the kennels or your home. This meeting should be kept as calm as possible.
- Allow the dogs to then socialise calmly in your garden. Watch for any signs of tension between them. If you have more than one existing dog, the introductions in the garden should be done one at a time.
- Do not feed the dogs together. As food can be a source of conflict it is best to feed the dogs in separate rooms out of sight of each other. This is also the case when giving chews and bones. Over time, the feeding areas can be moved together.
- Toys can also cause competition between the dogs. For this reason, it is best to initially remove all toys. They can be gradually introduced at a later date but if you see problems arising, you may need to restrict access to them.
- Do not leave the new and existing dogs alone together unsupervised until you are completely confident that there are no problems between them. This may take several weeks. In the meantime, use a stair gate or keep them in different rooms when they need to be left unsupervised.

***** © Jane Sigsworth & 4 Paws and You 2009 *****

- Avoid chasing and high-energy play sessions between the dogs as these can escalate into predator versus prey type games. They will also increase the dogs' adrenaline and stress levels. Keeping the dogs as calm as possible will help them to settle in together.
- Remember that your existing dog has had all of your attention until now. Therefore, do not over fuss the new addition in the early days to avoid any problems of jealousy.

Remember, that these are not guidelines that you will need to follow forever. However, you will hopefully have your dogs for a long time to come and it is worth putting the time and effort in now to ensure that they become the best of friends.

***** © Jane Sigsworth & 4 Paws and You 2009 *****