

"Puppies & Cats"

If you have a cat and are planning on bringing a puppy home, this article is for you!



Consider your cat's age and temperament!

- If you have a nervous cat, an old cat and/or one that hasn't been exposed to many dogs, you may want to reconsider getting a puppy altogether. Having to separate cats and dogs in the same home indefinitely is not fun for anyone. There is increased stress, increased conflict and a high risk of injury in trying to keep them separate.
- If your cat is pretty easy going, it's more likely that with the right introduction and puppy training, your puppy and cat will learn to get along quite nicely!
- If you have a kitten in the home, I would suggest waiting until he is older and more settled before getting a puppy. Photos of kittens and puppies together are ADORABLE however, each are playful and full of energy at this stage and innate traits may put them at risk of injuring each other.
- It takes time and patience to help puppies and kittens learn how to live with people. Working with kittens and puppies at the same time may prove to be unpleasant.

Let's make this transition smooth for everyone!

- Your household will be going through a transition in bringing a puppy home.
- We want to help ease this transition for everyone involved, especially for your cat and puppy!
- Let's work on keeping puppy safe so that he is not the recipient of scratches or bites along the way.
- Let's also work on raising puppy in a way that he won't give in to 'chase and grab' tendencies which is quite innate in our domestic dogs.

Let's consider the breed and temperament!

- Some breeds of dogs have a higher prey-drive instinct than other breeds. Do your homework to see how elaborate and strong the prey-drive instinct is in the breed you're considering.
- Just because a breed is said to have a friendly disposition towards other pets in the home, doesn't mean the puppy you are bringing into your home will be so inclined.
- The source of your puppy plays a HUGE role in how your puppy will behave. Breeds coming from good breeders will behave more like textbook description for that breed than the same breed coming from poor breeders. The prey-drive intensity and sequence will be more accurate when buying from a reputable breeder.
- Ask your breeder to help you pick the right puppy for your home. A calmer, quieter and more easygoing puppy for an older cat would be much better than a high-energy, exuberant and boisterous puppy for such a cat.
- **Follow the steps below and be proactive in training your puppy. Remember ALL PUPPIES need training and guidance!**

Exercise

1. Your puppy and cat should meet on the first day puppy arrives. If possible, trim your cat's claws just before bringing puppy home.
2. Before introducing puppy to your cat, give puppy the chance to explore the room a little bit on his own while off leash. Letting him adapt to his new environment is important as we want him to be comfortable and content in his new space.
3. Play with puppy a little bit to tire him out before bringing your cat into the room. Put puppy on leash to ensure he's comfortable with it. See your "Leash Training" exercise found in [The Happy Puppy Training Kit](#) for assistance here.
4. When you are ready to introduce puppy to your cat, have a pocket full of treats and work on getting puppy to come to you for a tasty reward while on leash.
5. Keep your energy calm and your excitement level low while you are getting puppy to respond and come to you with your voice (not by pulling the leash).
6. We want to keep puppy on leash to ensure he doesn't chase your cat!
7. When you are ready, bring your cat into the room. Give your cat freedom of movement so he can go where he pleases in the room. Ensure he has a place to go to in order to get away from puppy if he wants to (ie: furniture to climb on). Don't force the pets together.
8. If your puppy stays calm when he sees the cat, reward that behaviour with a soft "good boy" and a treat reward.
9. If your puppy gets excited and wants to run to your cat, re-direct him to come to you in a calm manner, just as you have been practicing, and give him a treat reward for responding. Puppy is not allowed to chase the cat nor approach hastily or excitedly. By controlling this first interaction, you are establishing rules and showing your cat that you have things under control.
10. When puppy is calm, you can loosen the leash some more and allow puppy to approach your cat. Keep re-directing his attention to you for a treat reward when puppy is behaving himself. Remember to encourage the cat with your voice and soft praise too! **Our goal right now is for puppy to see your cat but not chase your cat. Right now, it doesn't matter if they get nose to nose!**
11. If puppy is calm from a distance but gets more excited as he approached your cat, you'll have to establish what distance works best for puppy.
12. We want to work within a distance that is not too overwhelming for puppy. So if puppy is calm 4 feet away but excited 2 feet away, we want to keep working at that 4 foot distance with redirections and rewards for good calm behaviour.
13. After a few days of practice, you'll find puppy will remain calm and return to you for a reward as the distance shortens.
14. Keep things short and sweet at first. A few minutes at a time is wonderful. Doing this exercise several times a day initially with lots of repetition over the next month will work wonders.
15. For those of you with [The Happy Puppy Training Kit](#), continue with your daily exercises and once puppy is ready to be off leash with the cat in the room, use the "leave it" command to give your cat space when he wants it! If your puppy doesn't leave it, you'll have to practice the "leave it" exercise found in [The Happy Puppy Training Kit](#) while puppy is on leash with your cat in the room until he is responsive. Remember calm energy and positive association is important here!
16. Always supervise interactions between your puppy and your cat. Initially, you'll want to restrict free access so have your puppy in the crate at times throughout the day so that your cat can roam around freely. See "Crate Training" in [The Happy Puppy Training Kit](#) for assistance here. Also, place a baby gate at the door so that your cat can come and go with supervision.
17. As you build on positive interactions and continue to get a great response from your puppy, practice the above while your cat is playful and running around so that your puppy learns at a young age that his job is never to chase your cat.
18. If your cat goes outdoors, practice the exposure and re-direction exercise outlined above outdoors too! Some dogs are great with cats indoors however chase and grab outdoor.

Tips & Bits

- Have a few "puppy free" rooms in the house where the cat can spend time alone when he wants to;
- Place the litter box, cat food & water bowls, cat toys (choking hazard) and bed in a space away from puppy;
- Be proactive, patient and repetitive! Puppies learn best with lots of practice and lots of fun!