



Cats living with dogs

A Yorkshire Cat Rescue Guide

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Cats and dogs

Cats and dogs are often seen as natural enemies but dogs and cats can often live very happily in the same family. Cats and dogs can be friends but they need to be introduced under supervision and any cats or dogs that do not get on need to be kept separate. If your dog has an uncontrollable prey drive towards cats, especially kittens, then you cannot have cats in the same house, they would be at risk and your cat would live in fear.

Some breeds of dog are known to have a high prey drive such as huskies, terriers, some ex-racer greyhounds and collies. If your dog is of this type then you will need to be very careful about introducing a cat to your household. Unless you know that the dog is good with cats it may be too risky to consider bringing a cat into your home.

Some cats are always going to be uncomfortable around dogs, usually if they have had a bad experience with them. These cats will always suit a house without dogs. Similarly some dogs have had a bad experience with cats and these too will prefer to live in a cat free house.

Phoebe and Bella. Their owner has a lot of experience with greyhounds and whippets and took a long time introducing Bella to Phoebe.





Before you introduce your cat to your dog

Before your cat and dog meet it is best to have your cat settled into a separate room. If the cat is new to you or the house the cat will need to become established. Usually this only takes a few days but some nervous cats may take longer. During this period you can swap the cat's and dog's bedding over so that each get a chance to know who else lives with them in the house.

The first meeting

Before the cat and dog meet take your dog for a walk as that way he will be more relaxed during the meeting. The cat needs to feel safe during the meeting so he needs to be somewhere high up where the dog can't jump up to. You can put the cat in a cat carrier and put the carrier somewhere high up in the cats room (such as on a dressing table or windowsill). Put the dog on a lead (a retractable one is best) and walk him slowly into the room. Take some treats with you in case the dog needs to be distracted. Let them see each other and see how they react. If both the cat and dog remain calm then you can open the carrier. See if you can get a friend or family member to help as one person can stay with the dog and the other with the cat. Do not pick the cat up at any point as that will make it feel very vulnerable.

Controlling your dog

If your dog barks during the meeting just turn your back on him and remove him from the room if your cat is worried. He may want to sniff the cat, let him get near only if the cat is staying calm. Do not let him sniff the cat if the cat has no means of getting away as the cat may well swipe his nose if it is feeling trapped. Always make sure that your cat has an escape route.

Reward your dog and cat with treats if they both remain calm, this will help them form a positive bond with each other.

Cats and dogs at mealtimes

Friendly cats and dogs have been known to share beds, use each other as pillows and even go on walks together. The one thing they must not share though is food! Dog food and cat food are quite nutritionally different and whilst eating each other's food will not poison them it can cause problems if they regularly share food. Cat food has more protein in it than dog food and a lot of dogs find it very tasty. Dog food lacks certain nutrients that are essential for the well-being of cats. Keeping feeding areas separate will stop any problems. Having your cat's eating area higher up or in a utility room accessed by a cat flap works well.

Two very relaxed friends enjoying home comforts and the company of each other

