

DOG INTRODUCTIONS



What's the big deal?

Dog introductions often don't go so well. Introducing dogs to one another can be a delicate process, but behavior, body language and history, offer us insight and allow us the opportunity to foster a successful introduction.

Avoiding tight leashes as seen in the picture on the left is one example of setting you and your dog up for a successful outcome. Let's look at a few more.

🐾 Set yourself up for a successful outcome:

- A positive introduction is more likely if the dogs have had successful greetings in their past.
- It's best to proceed with professional guidance if either dog has bitten another dog or person.
- Find a dog of similar size for your dog's first few introductions.
- Find a dog in the same age range as your dog for its first few introductions. 0 – 2, 3 – 5, 6+

🐾 Start with a parallel walk:

- Walk parallel, 20 feet apart from each and decrease the distance over a span of 20 minutes.
- Reward calm behavior with treats or praise.

🐾 Observe body language:

- Use the Stress Escalation Ladder, Fear Posture Poster and Playmate Assessment documents to familiarize yourself with dog body language and only proceed if you observe positive behavior.
- Avoid forcing an interaction if either dog displays stress signals.

🐾 Sniffing and meeting:

- Allow the dogs to sniff each other briefly after about 10 minutes.
- Keep the interaction short and monitor closely.
- Separate if you notice tense behaviors like freezing or hard staring.

🐾 Short positive Interactions:

- After the initial sniff, separate the dogs and parallel walk for another 5 minutes.
- Gradually increase the duration of time they spend together during subsequent sessions.

🐾 Additional tips for success:

- Off leash greetings are better than on-leash greetings.
- Keep the leash loose for on-leash greetings.
- Don't hover and show concern during the meeting. Smile, stay calm and relaxed.
- Start on neutral ground away from your home.
- Avoid giving treats or affection to either dog when they're together.