

Garston Animal Rescue

Introducing a New Cat to your Pet Dog

Before the new cat is due to arrive

Before your new cat is due to arrive, arrange somewhere for the new cat to run to, somewhere your dog can't get to. Maybe extra shelves, even introduce a baby gate, and that could be the room where the cat's food, water, bed and litter tray are kept. Organise this before the day that the cat is to come to you.

Choose a day for the arrival of the new cat when you and the family can spare the time to introduce them properly. You have to allow lots of time and patience. The integration cannot be



rushed and needs to be when you and the rest of the family are calm.

Dogs are not 'mad': they are bored. Lots of fun and exercise, off the lead, is the best way to calm down dogs. So aim to give your dog at least a good hour on exciting fun-filled walks each day before the arrival of your new cat. This is good practice every day, and especially important on the day the cat is due to come.

Day of arrival, and until the new cat has settled in.

Have your TV, radio, etc, at a far lower volume than usual. Consider playing something calming. Try Classic FM.

Your dog will be very excited by all the fuss and highly interesting scents of a new cat. A few extra treats may help by rewarding your dog for responding to you and leaving the cat alone.

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Settle your new cat in one room (where you have placed litter tray, bed, food and water). Continue to allow your dog to roam around the rest of the house as usual. Only introduce when it is calm in your household.



A frightened cat, especially one scared for its life, may easily lash out at your dog and scratch its nose or even worse its eyes. So be especially careful when you pick up your new cat when they are

frightened/stressed as they could easily lash out at you too, not appreciating that you are trying to help them. Watch your face and eyes. This is especially important when there are children in the family.

Whilst you need to keep an eye on their progress, try not to shout at your dog if they are following the cat everywhere. You want your dog to have a positive and pleasant association with the arrival of the new cat. Your dog is entitled to be curious!

Don't intervene unnecessarily – they have to be allowed to establish a relationship. Remember also that it may not be the new cat who feels threatened.

Consider having fewer visitors than usual for the first few days of the arrival of the new cat so that your home is as calm as possible.

Remember

Even if your dog is used to your Auntie's/sister's/brother's cat this doesn't mean he/she will be ok with your new cat. And the new cat will certainly be scared of him/her, at least at first.

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There is no reason why dogs and cats cannot get on. What you have to watch is that if the new cat runs then your dog will chase the cat through sheer instinct. Once your dog gets used to the new cat he/she will become bored with chasing. Equally, when the new cat realises that your dog is not a threat then he/she is less likely to run. But it's still essential to have places the cat can run to, where the dog can't reach him/her.

If anyone is going to be restricted it should be the new cat not your original dog. The new cat needs to learn their place in the pecking order. Continue with lots of walks. Good for you and your dog!

Never leave the new cat alone with your dog until you are sure that he/she will not chase the cat. Better to be safe than sorry.

If you've taken in a stray cat, it's worth getting him/her checked by the vet in case he/she is micro-chipped. Maybe you've found someone's lost cat.

If you have any ideas we can add to this leaflet, we'd love to hear from you. Our only aim is to help the animals.

Thank you.

In addition to the above, you're welcome to telephone Kenny on 0151 425 4166, as he's had years of experience of introducing new rescue cats to his rescue dog. Kenny will be happy to give you whatever advice you need over the phone, and if you want, would even be willing to go down to your house to give advice there, whatever is best for you.