
How to Introduce Dogs to Each Other and Help Them Socialize



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Whether you're introducing your dog to people and dogs you already know or you're both meeting strangers for the first time, meeting new people and pooches doesn't have to be a hassle. There are plenty of things you can do to keep anxiety levels low and enjoyment levels high when introducing your dog to potential friends, and that all starts with planning and preparation.

Here are our tips for arranging stress-free socializing for dogs and humans:

Prep Your Pup Beforehand

The most important part of a worry-free meeting is to make sure you prepare your pup before they even meet someone new. Help them feel calm and at ease, and introduce new people slowly if at all possible, allowing your dog to get acclimated over time.

Prepare your guests too! Reassure your friends about how to interact well with your dog and give them a heads up about any allergy or shedding concerns.

If your pooch has reacted aggressively to strangers before, and there isn't time for a slow, controlled introduction, it's probably best to keep them in a separate room or in the yard during the visit.

Plan for a Treat

Try softening a human-to-dog introduction by asking your guests if they'd like to give your dog a treat. Be sure they offer it by extending their palm flatly, letting your dog walk up and take it on their own terms.

Meetings are a big deal for dog-to-dog introductions too. Start by asking the other dog's owner if this is a good time for an introduction — it might not be, so asking first helps keep both dogs safer. It's important to let dogs feel comfortable, but also to pay attention and intervene if either dog gets aggressive or scared.

When a dog you don't know yet wants to say hello, keep both pets leashed with leashes slack so they can get to know each other, and make the intros brief. Maybe take a quick walk together afterward as an active kind of treat!



Pet with Purpose

We all know that giving a pup a friendly pet is a simple way to bond. But it's important to respect dogs' boundaries around petting, especially if the dog and person haven't met before.

Remind new humans to avoid eye contact and reaching for or touching the top of your dog's head during their first meeting, as dogs may see this as a sign of dominance.

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Body Language and Tone of Voice

It's also helpful if new people speak in friendly, non-aggressive tones, so help your guests remember to use a happy and relaxed tone of voice. Your dog can sense both fear and confidence in a person's voice, so be extra careful when introducing your dog to children or people who may feel nervous around dogs.

Remind your human guests to move deliberately and non-aggressively, and not to

approach your dog quickly or suddenly (even if the dog is acting playful). Moving suddenly can make your dog feel like something is wrong and put them on edge.

If your dog is meeting a new pup, [watch out for dog body language](#) that indicates whether the dogs are relaxed or tense.

Know Your Pet

The easiest way to ensure a worry-free meeting is to know your pet. Be sure not to let strangers pick up or cuddle with your dog if your pet doesn't like this kind of attention. And if your pooch prefers their own quiet space, give them that space and let them choose how much they want to interact with new people.

First impressions are as important for dogs as they are for humans. Creating an environment that's as stress-free as possible, preparing everyone to meet someone new, watching for body language and giving everyone space to feel comfortable is the best way to assure a stress-free start to a beautiful dog-to-dog or [dog-to-human friendship!](#)

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