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## Introducing Your New Cattle Dog

When you're introducing two dogs to each other, first impressions matter. How the dogs interact in their first few encounters can set the tone for their entire relationship.

- 1. Let them get to know each other slowly and carefully.** Throwing them together in the back yard and letting them work it out can lead to misunderstanding and occasionally serious injury. Dogs sometimes may not like another dog for no apparent reason.
- 2. Have the dogs meet on-leash.** Keep this meeting on neutral territory like a new park or baseball field. Ask someone to help you and have both dogs on-leash. Take the dogs for a walk together keeping 10 ft between them. They can't greet or stare but must simply walk parallel together. The idea is to acclimate them to each other's presence without tension.
- 3. Have the dogs meet with leashes dragging.** Avoid problem areas like gates or closely confined spaces. The more room they have to move away, the less tension there will be. Wait one minute while they sniff each other then call them away. After the break, if they start to play and it seems to be going well, let them play for a few minutes, then end the session. Don't let play escalate. End each play session on a good note. Give lots of praise.
- 4. Have the dogs meet at home.** Remove any high-value items that either dog may guard such as a food bowls, toys or beds. First meet in the yard, then go inside. Leave leashes on the dogs when in the home, so you can get immediate control if needed. Be alert and make the reintroductions gradually and calmly. Talk and act normally, letting the dogs know that you are fine and they are fine. Even if they got along great at a park, one dog may be territorial in the home. Keep each interaction short and pleasant. If signs of tension arise, separate the dogs and try again later. Set them up for success.
- 5. Keep the dogs separate while you are away.** Don't leave your new dog unattended with your resident dog(s). Even if they seem to get along well in your presence, you should separate the dogs when you leave. Keep them in separate rooms or crates. This is both to prevent fighting and injuries, and to prevent your new dog from developing behaviors like destructive chewing or barking from the window.
- 6. Work to prevent conflict.** In multi-dog households, dogs' roles change depending on the context involved. Reward polite behavior and manage the environment to prevent conflicts from developing. Feeding should happen in separate rooms or crates and bowls or puzzle should be picked up when mealtime is done.

Adapted from *How To Introduce Dogs* by the [Animal Humane Society](#)