

Tips for adding another dog to your family:

First, follow the steps for proper dog introductions when adding a dog to your household.

Second, remember that your new dog needs to decompress.

Before you bring the dogs home:

Make sure all potential resources are put away. That includes dog beds, toys, bones, and food.

Make sure each dog has their own space, ideally a crate. They will need breaks from each other from time to time. The crates should be in separate rooms initially, to ensure each dog gets a true break from one another.

When you get home:

Start with a parallel walk. There should be a handler for each dog. Following the walk, one handler should bring your resident dog, while the other handler brings your new dog, into a fenced-in yard or a living room space. Avoid tight spaces, like doorways and stairwells.

Allow the dogs to meet. Supervise their interaction. Start off allowing for short play and interaction sessions. Remember that your new dog needs to decompress.

Moving forward:

Supervision is a must. If you can't supervise, separate the dogs using crates or baby gates. When you supervise play, watch for body language that indicates one or both dogs are getting overly excited or stressed. If either dog is overly excited or stressed, stop play.

Spend time with each dog individually, every day. This may include training, grooming, walking, running, playing, or snuggle time.

Be aware of dog interactions while in the kitchen. With food preparation and eating, this can be a source of tension; a piece of dropped food can lead to a fight. Initially, keep the dogs separate from you when cooking and during times when people are eating.

Feed the dogs separately and separate them before you even get the food out. Arousal is often high at mealtime. A situation could escalate when moving to the eating location if the food is already present.

Separate your dogs in all high arousal situations. If your resident dog gets overly excited when your children come home from school, separate the dogs and have them in crates prior to your children arriving home.

Ultimately, you want to teach each dog impulse control and patience. This will minimize conflict in the future and create a happy home for all.

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