

**Dog meet Dog. . .  
Hi, what's Your Name?**



## **CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESSFUL DOG INTRODUCTIONS**

A word before starting: when introducing dogs to one another, first impressions matter. Don't be in a rush. Take as much time as needed. **This could be two days, two weeks or two months.** It all depends on the dogs. How the dogs interact in their first few encounters can set the tone for their entire relationship, so care must be taken to set everyone up for success.

Things to know before you get started:

- **Keep excitement, affection, and chaos to a minimum during the initial period. All these things can create stress, competition, tension and fights.**
- **Use crates to ensure all dogs are safe when unsupervised.**
- **Do not leave dogs along together who are new to each other.**
- **Many things in the home can trigger excitement, stress, competition and ultimately fights (doorbells, delivery people, small animals such as birds or squirrels) even in your absence**

# DOG INTRODUCTION CHECKLIST

## Getting Started with Introductions

Take your new dog for a walk around the block, with your new dog is important for you.

Have the dogs meet on-leash on neutral territory first: this can be around the block, a training center, park, etc. Have both dogs on-leash. Take the dogs for a walk together, keeping 10 feet between them so that they cannot greet one another or stare. The idea is to acclimate them to each other's presence without causing tension.

While on leash, walk the two dogs close together allowing them to sniff one another. When you feel like there will be no aggression issues, have the dogs meet with leashes dragging on neutral territory (this should be outside, off your personal property, in a secure location such as a park or tennis court). Avoid problem areas like gates, doorways or closely confined space: the more room they have to move, the less tension there will be. Wait 2 minutes while they sniff each other, then call them away and move around. If they start to play and it seems to be going well, let them play for a few minutes and then end the session. We want each initial interaction to end on a good note!

Finally, have the dogs meet at home: first in the yard, then inside the house. Keep each interaction short and pleasant: if signs of tension arise, separate the dogs immediately and try again later. Remember that the introduction will set the tone for their relationship, so, it's important to set everyone up for success!

## Tips for Continued Success

Teach all dogs behavior basics: walk politely bonding leash, know basic sit/stay commands, be polite both of around humans and their space.

Be aware of whether you have a resource guarder in your midst. This can be guarding you guarding food, guarding toys, guarding space etc. Know how to manage these behaviors successfully.

Know your dogs, be aware if you have a nervous, insecure, or just plain challenging dog in your midst. These guys need more time than the average dog to relax and trust.

Use crates!! Crates are great tool to have dogs simply get comfy around each other. You can crate dogs near each other and help remove novelty, uncertainty And concern. But you must ensure that all dogs near in the crates are practicing awesome behavior. If one or more of the dogs are stressed, barking, whining, carrying on, try to escape, panicky or demanding, then you've got a recipe for disaster brewing. (Imagine living next to the worst neighbor in the world and how stressed, angry and unhappy that makes you feel, same goes for your dogs). If You can't ensure great behavior, crate in different rooms.

Walk the dogs together. They don't need to be right next to each other to benefit from the walk together. As they show more comfort in each other's presence, you can slowly close the distance.

Don't feed new dogs close to each other. Food, Just like affection can create competition and stress.

Be careful with play and toys. As you get more Comfortable, remember that dogs who are cool with Each other in one context and environment can lose Their cool when excitement and competition (toys And play) are introduced. Watch for tension and Serious intent and address/diffuse it quickly.

**Remember, be patient!**

**And when you think you've been patient, be patient some more. You're going to have these dogs for a long time, there's no rush to create a magical bond. Bringing a new dog into your home is an adjustment for everyone, and it takes time for the dogs to build a comfortable, healthy relationship.**



# CANINE RIVALRY



## What is Canine Rivalry?

Canine rivalry refers to repeated conflicts between dogs living in the same household. Animals that live in social groups establish a social structure within the group called a dominance hierarchy. This dominance hierarchy normally serves to maintain order, reduce conflict and promote cooperation among group members. Conflicts arise between household dogs when there is instability in the hierarchy, that is, when the ranking or social position of each dog is not clear or is in contention. Initially, dogs may only snarl, growl or snap without injuring each other. Sometimes, however, the conflict may intensify into prolonged bouts of dangerous fighting which may result in one or both dogs, and humans being injured.

## Getting Professional Help

Ongoing canine rivalry is potentially dangerous since the dogs could be severely injured, as well as family members if they become the object of redirected aggression when the dogs are fighting. Because resolving rivalry problems requires managing the dogs' somewhat complex social behaviors, it's often necessary for owners to obtain assistance from a certified, professional animal behaviorist. Animal behaviorists are trained to observe, interpret and modify animal behavior.

## Why Conflict Occurs

Conflicts between household dogs usually develop when the ranking of each dog is not clear or is in contention. This may occur if:

- You attempt to treat both dogs equally, rather than supporting the dominant dog's position
- You interrupt or interfere with the dominant dog's ability to control the preferred items (food, toys, beds, attention) in his environment by giving preferential treatment to the subordinate dog(s)
- You prevent the dogs from expressing the signals and ritualized behaviors that establish dominance
- A new animal has been introduced into the house
- A resident animal has died or no longer lives in the house
- A resident animal is re-introduced after an absence
- A young, subordinate dog reaches social maturity (usually between 10 months and 2 years of age)
- A dominant dog ages and cannot maintain dominant status

## Understanding Dominance Behavior and Social Structure

You cannot choose which dog you want to be dominant. The dogs will establish this among themselves, and any attempt to interfere may result in increased conflict. Where each dog ranks in the dominance hierarchy is determined by the outcomes of the interactions between the dogs themselves.

- **Determining which dog is dominant:** Individual personality, as well as breed characteristics, are important factors. The dog that demands to be fed first, petted first and through the door first is usually the dominant dog. Remember that the rankings may be different in different contexts (one dog may control food, while another may control resting places) and they may change over time.
- **How dominance is established:** Dogs usually establish their dominance hierarchies through a series of ritualized behaviors that include bow postures and vocalizations that don't result in injury. One dog may "stand over" another by placing his paws or neck on the shoulders of the other. However, because of past experiences, inadequate socialization or generic temperament tendencies some dogs may, with very little warning, escalate dominance displays into aggression.

## Dealing with Rivalry Problems

- If the dogs involved are intact males or females, spay or neuter both dogs.
- Determine each dog's dominance status relative to each other. Remember, this ranking is based on the behavior of the dogs, and not what ranking you prefer.
- Support the dominance hierarchy. You need to support whatever dominance hierarchy or "pecking order" your dogs establish for themselves. Don't undermine their hierarchy by attempting to treat them equally or by preventing the dominant dog from asserting his position. Dominant dogs can, and should, be allowed to take toys away from subordinate dogs, to push in to receive attention and petting from the owner, to control favorite sleeping places, toys and other valuable resources (from the dogs' point of view). Support the dominant dog's status by allowing this to occur.
- Never, under any circumstances, attempt to break up a fight between dogs by grabbing their collars or inserting any of your body parts between them. If you feel you must break up a fight between dogs, do so by squirting them with a hose (outdoors), or squirting them with a vinegar/water mixture from a squirt bottle (indoors). You may also break up fights by wheelbarrowing the aggressor (lifting the hind legs of the dog off the ground).
- With the help of a professional animal behaviorist, elicit and reinforce non-aggressive behaviors using counter conditioning and desensitization techniques. These procedures must be designed and tailored to specifically meet the needs of each individual case and require professional in-home help.

## PUNISHMENT WILL NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM

Punishment can make the problem worse. We encourage you to seek assistance from your veterinarian regarding: spaying or neutering of all pets, evaluating the health status of your dogs and a referral to a certified professional animal behaviorist. Rivalry and fighting problems can usually be resolved so that you and your dogs can live together in peace.