

## Dogs and Cats

It is perfectly common for these traditional cartoon enemies to coexist in a household, even to be friends. This is best achieved by introducing them as puppies/kittens, however, adult dogs and cats can sometimes be taught to live together. Some dogs with high prey drive may never be suitable to live with cats, however, many dogs can learn.

**Large dogs can kill a cat, and cats can severely injure a dog's eyes or nose.** So if you are wanting to introduce one to the other, it is imperative that you need to manage the situation and teach the dog how to behave.

### *Separation Is Essential*

The safest way for cats and dogs to coexist is to stay away from one another.

- Don't try to push them together, don't feed or use treats to lure them together. (Food is a high value item that can increase aggression rather than making happy associations.)
- Put up baby-gates to divide the house, with the cats safely on one side - dog on the other.

### *"Cats Are Off The Menu"*

- If the dog is showing too much alert interest in the cats (staring at them, intensely, ears perked, body tense) - use a spray bottle with water to "scare dog away" from the baby-gate so they start thinking "I better stay away from cats". Do this a few times right at the beginning when first bringing a dog (or cat) home.
- Crate you dog in the room where you spend time and have the cats out (use a wire crate so they can see each other well). Switch, so you put cats in the crate and the dog is "out". It is good for them to smell each other on the bedding in the crate so they get used to each other's smell, too.

It can take over a month, sometimes longer, for cats and dogs to learn to coexist. Cats are normally slower than dogs and often we hear that cats have been hiding under beds and such for weeks. Be patient, consistent, do not try to push them together, your job is to keep both dogs and cats safe, and be prepared it will take time. A few months is worth it for a lifetime of harmony.