

# Did You Know?

## Positive Animal Introductions

There are three fundamental aspects to making the most optimal introduction between a resident animal and a new animal, whether dog-dog, dog-cat, or cat-cat:

- 1 Help create the new **communal scent**
- 2 Help form **positive association**
- 3 Make a **gradual introduction**



### Communal Scent

Every home with more than one inhabitant has its own communal scent. The communal scent is the scent that is created by everyone living in that environment. It is on our furniture, on our flooring, on our clothing, and on ourselves—people and animals both. We all have our own scent, and our scents intermingle as we each interact with each other.

When a new animal arrives into a new environment—your home—they will contribute to that communal scent. We can help introduce animals to each other before they physically meet by beginning to create the new communal scent that will be part of your home.

During this stage, we need to keep the new animal sequestered to either a comfortable—and comfortably sized—room, such as a bedroom (not a bathroom) or to one level of the home if it is multi-leveled, for the first three days your new animal is in their new home. Your new animal will not be interacting with your resident animals during this stage. Do not sequester your resident animal, as this will likely cause frustrated behavior towards the new animal.

### Supplies Needed

- Hand towels: 1 hand towel per animal in the home
- Canned food

### Steps to Creating a Communal Scent

1. Sequester new animal for three days
2. Dampen hand towels lightly with water. This will help absorb more of the pheromones of your animals, and during this stage, we want to swap their pheromones together.
3. Wipe the hand towel on the cheeks and body of all of your resident animal(s). Next, wipe the same towel on the cheeks and body of your new animal(s).
4. Put that towel underneath the food dish of your new animal.
5. Next, take another hand towel and repeat, this time starting with your new animal, then the resident animals. Repeat this for every resident animal, and place one hand towel underneath the food dish of each resident animal you have.
6. Perform these steps three times per day: breakfast, dinner, and either a midday snack or nighttime snack.

You have now helped each animal smell a little more like each other, by swapping their pheromones with each other. This also helps them start to become accustomed to the new communal scent your home will have by having added a new animal to your living area.

### Positive Association

While creating a communal scent, we are also creating a positive association by placing the swapped hand towels underneath their food dishes. When each animal eats, they will also be smelling the new animal or resident animals, and the new communal scent. Receiving something good, positive, and of high-value—their food—while also intaking the new communal scent helps create a positive association for both new and resident animals.

#### Steps to Creating Positive Association

1. Perform the aforementioned steps of creating a communal scent.
2. Next, add some canned food to their food dish. Canned food is high-reward and the higher the reward, the stronger the positive association we can facilitate between the new and resident animals.

### Gradual Introduction

After a new communal scent has been created and some positive association has been formed, the new animal and resident animals can be introduced. **In some cases, it can be premature to introduce animals to each other when no positive association has been formed.**

Further, we will help animals accept each other if there is already a new established communal scent. This is why it is crucial—for the best possible possibility of harmony, and for the longevity of a friendly, cohabitated relationship to introduce animals in this manner (i.e., not a dog you are meeting at the dog park, or another animal a friend has brought over to your house for the day).

We suggest three days of creating a communal scent and positive association. For some animals, it could be four days, for others, it could be one to two weeks. The amount of time is decided both by your animals, and by the accuracy and consistency of following these steps.

The new animal can now be introduced, having hopefully already made some positive association with your resident animals, and vice versa.

#### Steps to a Gradual Introduction

1. Let the new animal out of their sequestered area in increments of time. Start with up to 15 minutes at a time. Let them interact with your resident animals. Even if they are doing well, put the new animal back into their sequestered area to give everyone a break. Keep them sequestered again for another 15 minutes.
2. If everyone did well interacting for the initial 15 minutes, you can increase their time together to 30 minutes. Then, give everyone a break once again for another 15 minutes.
3. Continue building the increment of interaction time at each interval, but don't increase exponentially. Increase it gradually. For example, in the third increment, they can spend an hour together, then a break. Always continue to break up the time together. This will reduce the intensity of adjusting to a new entity in the home.
4. Continue onwards until they are living fulltime with each other.

If you do notice any flare-ups of friction, take a step back in your introductions. Reduce the increment of time spent together, or if needed, separate them completely again, and resume the communal scent and positive association steps. Then, begin the introductions again anew.