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**How To Introduce Two Dogs**

Meeting a new dog can be exciting, but it can also be a little stressful. If you follow these simple steps, the meeting will be easier and safer for everyone. Whether you’re bringing home a new dog or your dog is meeting another dog for a playdate, making a good first impression is important. A good meeting can help dogs become friends in the future.

**Start On Neutral Ground**

It’s best to introduce the dogs in a place that doesn’t belong to either dog, like a park or a quiet street. This helps because neither dog will feel the need to protect their own space, like they might if they were at home.

**Use A Leash, But Keep It Loose**

Both dogs should be on leashes, but don’t keep the leash too tight. A tight leash can make the dogs feel nervous. If you can, use a longer leash so the dogs can move around a bit, but you can still control them if needed.

**Walk Side By Side**

Start by walking both dogs side by side, but keep a distance between them (about 10–15 feet apart). This way, they can see each other without feeling too much pressure to interact right away. Walking together can help them get used to each other’s presence.

**Gradually Get Closer**

As both dogs start to relax, you can slowly move them closer together while walking. Pay attention to how they act—if their bodies seem loose, they’re sniffing the ground, or wagging their tails, it’s a good sign. But if either dog seems tense, growls, or looks stressed, increase the distance again and keep walking.

**Let Them Meet Face to Face**

When the dogs seem comfortable, let them approach each other calmly. Dogs usually greet by sniffing each other’s sides or behinds. Keep this first meeting short—just a few seconds—and then take a break by walking them again. As they stay relaxed, you can slowly let them interact more.

**Signs That Things Are Going Well**

Here are some signs that the dogs are getting along:

* Wagging tails
* Playful behavior like a "play bow" (where the dog stretches its front legs out and keeps its back up)
* Gentle sniffing
* Relaxed posture

If one of the dogs gets stiff, growls, or shows aggression, separate them calmly and go back to walking them side by side.

**Keep Early Meetings Short**

For the first few times, keep the playtime short. Good, short experiences will help build trust between the dogs, and over time, they can play together longer without supervision.

**Watch Them in Your Home**

If you’re bringing a new dog home, keep an eye on how they interact for the first few days. Even if the first meeting went well, they might need time to adjust to living together.

**Extra Tips for Success:**

* Give the dogs treats when they are calm, but don’t give treats while they are playing together, as this might make them fight over food.
* Stay calm. Dogs can sense your emotions, so if you’re relaxed, they will be more relaxed too.
* Be patient. Every dog is different, and some might take longer to feel comfortable than others.

**Why You Shouldn’t Punish New Dogs for Not Playing Together**

It’s important not to punish dogs if they don’t play together right away. Just like people, dogs need time to get used to each other, and forcing them to play or punishing them for not getting along can make things worse. Punishment might make the dogs scared or more aggressive. Instead, give them time, use positive reinforcement, and let them interact at their own pace.

**How Spaying and Neutering Can Help**

Spaying (for females) and neutering (for males) can make it easier for dogs to get along. Dogs that haven’t been spayed or neutered might be more aggressive, territorial, or competitive, especially around other dogs. Once a dog is spayed or neutered, they tend to be calmer and less likely to fight. This can increase the chances of two dogs getting along and playing together.

By following these steps, you’re helping the dogs build a healthy and positive relationship!