

Homeward Bound Golden Retriever Rescue

Golden Rule Dog Training

Dogs Chasing Cats!

Dogs and Cats are both predatory beings and both are genetically hard-wired to track and chase smaller animals. For dogs, the breed has a big impact on prey drive as some breeds have more of an innate drive to chase moving objects. Prey such as birds, rodents, rabbits, smaller dogs and cats are the most common. Because of the predatory nature of both species they can be territorial and the current resident of the home may feel vulnerable by a new animal coming into the home and become defensive. Cats may growl and hiss to send the message that "this is my house," and then dogs may also act out with a bark and growl at a new cat. Other behaviors you may see are urinating or defecating in the house to mark the territory. Typically, a resident cat is often more likely to display territorial and defensive behaviors towards a new dog. A resident dog is more likely to see a new cat as prey and chase them!

Some of the exercises below use a clicker to help with modifying the behavior; if you have not used a clicker before, please see the end of the document for instructions.



The Introduction - the Most Important Step!

Adapted from: www.paw-rescue.org

It is important to ease them both into the new living situation. Don't just throw the new pet into the mix and hope for the best. Before you know it, the fur will be flying and someone could get seriously hurt. Instead, start slow and make sure to directly supervise both pets. There should be NO unsupervised direct contact until you are sure they get along. Remember to be safe while supervising your pets; an agitated cat or dog might mistakenly redirect aggression towards you, and scratches or bites are the last things you want!

The introduction should be done in stages, and introductions should be done when all pets are as calm and relaxed as possible; after the dog has exercised or had a meal might be a good time for this. There is no exact formula, you can move onto the next stage when you feel the time is right. Just make sure you remain in control. If you are in doubt, it's okay to back up a step. Be patient, this process can take days, weeks or even months.

Note: There should be no face-to-face interactions between the new cat and resident dog for the first week.

Step 1: Separate the animals

- For a few days, rotate which animal has freedom and which is confined to allow each animal plenty of time to investigate the other one's scent.
- Sometimes the dog should be confined to a crate or another room (or taken to another location if he can't be left alone) to allow the cat time to roam free and investigate the smell of the dog.
- If the dog obsessively digs at the separation barrier or barks at the cat for more than a day or two, the interaction likely won't work without proper training. You may need the help of a professional.
- When no one is home, the dog or cat must always be securely confined so unsupervised interactions are not possible.
- Once the dog is calm (or at least not obsessed with the cat) and the cat is calm, eating and using the litter box normally, you can proceed to the next step.

Step 2: Make leashed introductions

- Allow both animals to be in the same room at the same time, but keep the dog securely leashed.
- Continue with this type of introduction until the dog is calm and ignores the cat, and the cat is calm, eating and using the litter box normally.
- If there is any fear or aggression displayed on either animal's part, stay at step 2 longer.
- Continue indefinitely until both the dog and cat seem happy and relaxed around each other.
- When no one is home, the dog or cat should be securely confined to separate areas so unsupervised interactions are not possible.

Step 3: Allow unsupervised interactions

- Unsupervised time together can occur after the cat and dog have been supervised around each other for a significant period of time (a month or so) and you are positive they will not hurt each other.

Tips for Cats and Dogs

For the Resident Cat:

For the cat's safety, make sure the cat has escape routes to get away from the dog. Create a safe place for your cat, for example:

- A cat door leading to another room in the house and ledges on which he can easily jump. Always provide places where each animal can retreat for safety and privacy, a spot that is his or hers alone. A cat can use the top of the refrigerator; a dog can use a crate.
- Use a baby gate so they can get to know each other without coming into full contact. Or confine the new pet to a room and allow the animals to sniff each other under the door. Things typically improve once the cat learns he has an escape hatch.
- Other escape hatches include floor-to-ceiling climbers and installing extra-long hooks and eyes in doors to prop a door open just wide enough for a cat.
- Praise a cat when he's gentle around the dog. Keep the cat claws clipped short so if they do connect with the dog, the damage will be minimized.

For the New Dog:

- Keep the dog on leash during introductions. Use a harness if needed and try to keep the leash loose.
- Confining a puppy or dog is necessary at times. It gives the cat time to roam about the house, surveying his territory. If you keep the dog separated with a gate or in an exercise pen, your cat can safely investigate the newcomer.
- Food can be a powerful motivator. You can use food treats to reward a dog for choosing to look at and listen to you in the presence of the cat, instead of chasing the cat.
- Keep dog toys nearby. Direct the dog to a toy and away from the cat when the dog gets rambunctious. Make sure cats have access to their own toys too, so they're less likely to target a dog's tail as a plaything.
- Make sure to give the dog plenty of exercise so that he has less energy to channel into chasing and otherwise bothering the cat. Praise the dog when she doesn't bark or want to chase resident cats. Reward the dog for any calm behavior around the cat. Do this consistently, not just once in awhile.
- Prevent the dog from having access to the kitty litter box. Keep the box in a room that's physically off-limits to the dog. Dogs like to eat cat droppings, which are very unhealthy for them.
- To keep a dog from chasing or stalking cats when you are home but otherwise occupied, use a crate or tether the dog to a heavy piece of furniture, or use a long leash that's tied at your waist.

Dogs and Cats Living Together

When you leave the house, separate the animals in physically, securely separated areas. Give each access to water, a bed or other suitable resting place, and some toys. Be sure the cat has access to a litter box. Make sure everyone in your family and any caretakers understand the need to separate the animals.

Teach the dog the "leave it" command, and use this command when you want the dog to leave the cat alone. Also teach the dog the "down" and "stay" commands so that you can place her in a down-stay in the presence of the cat.

Observe your pets so that you can catch them in the act of being good. Give them ample opportunities to earn praise so that they learn acceptable behavior. Reinforcing good behavior is the key to encouraging animals to repeat that behavior instead of engaging in undesired behavior.

- Let animals sniff each other to get acquainted but watch carefully.
- Avoid overreacting to the cat hissing, the dog barking or growling. These are common ways for animals to communicate. However, be ready to intervene if it escalates.
- Do not expect the pets to become buddies right away. Let the animals establish the relationship at their own pace. Realize that some dogs and cats will not become buddies, but can live together.
- A puppy's innocent behavior can trigger a serious scratching from a wary cat, so as always, it's important to keep watch. However, a scratch on the nose may help the puppy learn to keep his distance!
- Keep in mind that predatory behavior comes naturally to both dogs and cats. They like to chase moving objects, including other animals.
- If you have more than one dog, do not let them gang up on a cat.
- Be sure to pay attention to the resident pets. Take care not to give all your attention to the newcomer.
- During mealtimes, each animal needs to feel safe and relaxed while eating. An animal who feels the need to defend his food is under much stress (this will also affect digestion). At least initially, feed in separate areas and give the animals their own food bowls. It helps to give the cat an

elevated place to eat that cannot be reached by the dog. The height gives the cat a sense of security.

- Introduce new pets when things are going well at home. Do not bring a new pet home during a stressful time in the household.

Training Tip:

If the dog stares at the cat or the door separating the cat, try to distract him and get him to look away with treats, a happy voice or by gently guiding the dog away on a leash. Once the dog is away from the cat, try offering a treat. If he takes it, repeat this process until he is no longer focused on the cat or door.

Warning Signs:

- If the dog remains overly focused and does not take his eyes off the cat or the door and completely ignores you or lunges suddenly as soon as the cat moves, this is probably a dangerous match. If you are looking for a dog for your resident cat, try another dog. If this is your dog, you should probably not get him a cat.
- If at any time the dog lunges toward, growls, snaps at or shows aggression, this match will probably not work out. The same holds true if a cat attacks a calm, quiet dog. If you are committed to make the relationship work, you will probably need a professional at this point.
- If it is your cat who is growling, hissing or swatting, give the cat a break and try again on another day. You might also need to try a different dog. A cat who continually hisses and growls at all types of dogs will likely not want to live with dogs. Your cat may tolerate a dog, but she probably won't be happy — which is an unfair situation for her.
- If the cat stops eating, drinking, using the litter box or visiting with family members, she is not happy. You might want to consider finding a better match or contacting a professional animal behaviorist for advice.

Use Time-Outs

Using Time Out for Undesired Behavior

Dogs are social animals, and most enjoy the attention of humans. Some dogs will perform what we consider a “bad” behavior, one that is not acceptable in our world. This is where training comes in to teach our dogs what is and is not appreciated.

Dogs generally repeat behaviors that are rewarding; conversely, the behaviors that are not being rewarded will diminish. One type of reward is human attention (can be both good and bad attention, for some it's still getting your attention), if dogs are rewarded with attention when demonstrating a good behavior they will repeat it. The opposite is also true, if you remove all attention and ignore a bad behavior, it will dissipate. For this we can use a ‘time-out.’

Note: The benefit to a 'time-out' is it will not create another behavior issue in a well-balanced dog; however, if your dog seems upset or frightened by the time-out (shaking, hugging the ground, etc.), then DO NOT use the time-out, it is too harsh for these dogs! Contact a trainer right away for other ideas.

Key to successful time-outs

- Do Not be angry when handling your dog, **ALWAYS remain calm!**

- **Dogs need to be corrected immediately**, as they are doing something inappropriate. If you try and give a time-out after 3 seconds, the dog will not link the activity with the correction. You must catch them in the act, if not then you have to wait until you do!
- **Do not put your dog in a kennel/crate when he is in an excited state**; it's too hard for the dog to calm himself. The dog should be calm before he goes into the kennel/crate. The kennel or crate needs to remain a quiet and safe place for your dog.

For example, if a dog barks uncontrollably at a squirrel and then is put in his kennel by an irritated owner, the dog will be in a high state of arousal and will continue to pant, whine and frantically look for that squirrel from his crate. However, if the dog is barking at the squirrel and the owner first re-directs the dog's attention, lets him calm down, rewards him for being calm, and then puts him in the crate for some quiet time, the dog will be okay and be calm during a short break.

- Use treats when he is in the kennel/crate to reinforce his calm behavior and that the kennel is not linked to punishment. It is used to calm down and relax.

When should I use a time-out?

Your objective is to use a time-out is to help your dog understand what he was doing is not appropriate; such as, excessive barking, digging, jumping up on people, humping, using aggressive play with another dog or child, counter surfing, etc.

You can also use this when your dog is running around fetching a ball and you think he needs a break, you can teach them to take a break so he learns to calm himself. Some dogs become aroused very easily, and become really wound up! A time-out can be a down-stay for a few minutes while he gets treats and attention for being calm. Then he can release him to "Go play" again.

Most people use a time-out for unwanted behaviors; you have to be consistent or the process will not work. Do not use this for all unwanted behaviors, pick one and work on it until it diminishes. Too many time-outs can cause a dog to run from you if every time you approach him, it's to give a time-out, so use it sparingly.

Where to give the time-out?

Time-out can be done using a crate or a kennel (see directions above), or a down-stay outside or inside the house. You could also tether your dog to an area where he can't get in trouble. A bathroom or laundry room will work too. It has to be a boring area for the dog, a place where he can't get into mischief and think this time-out is fun!

Tips to an effective time-out:

1. **Be CALM!** Do not walk towards your dog when angry or frustrated, the dog can sense it!
2. Catch the behavior within the 3 seconds and give the time-out.
3. Don't look your dog directly in the eye when walking towards him (the dog can view this as dominant). Instead, calmly walk over and hold the dog's collar and walk him gently, but firmly to his time-out place. Do not say anything!
4. **You must be consistent!** Your family members need to follow the time-out rules! Every time this behavior happens there has to be the same consequence!

5. **Time-outs should only last between 30-seconds and no longer than 2-minutes.** This is a long time to your dog and you want to make that connection with the unwanted behavior.
6. After the 30 seconds to 2 minutes have passed, go and check on your dog: If he is calm, release him, but if he is not calm, walk away for another few seconds before releasing.
7. **No words! No Attention!** (DO NOT say, "Bad dog", or give a mean glare, no heavy sighs either!)
8. Use a time-out area where he can't get into more trouble.
9. When releasing your dog from the time-out, use your release word or say, "Go play!"
10. If he goes right back to the unwanted behavior, start your time-out over again.
11. It could take 8 to 10 repetitions before the dog understands the time-out process.

More Tips

Cats and Dogs

(Adapted from How to Keep your Dog from Chasing Cats by Jolanta Benal, CPDT-KA, CBCC-KA)

1. Once they have been properly introduced (see section above), leave the leash on the dog and stay close by.
2. Click and treat for any second of good behavior; you can feed the cat too with the click.
3. After five or ten minutes of this put the cat back in his safe place and let the dog roam.
4. For the next few days tether the dog to heavy furniture in the living room, and have a clicker and treats ready, then let the cat out.
 - a. Click and treat for all clam behavior/appropriate interactions such as, your dog looking away from the cat, even if just briefly, and for being in a "sit" position.
 - b. He would also get a click and treat for all relaxing behavior, lying down, and for lying down and watching you.
5. Stay calm, close by and ready with a clicker and treats if there is any sign of a chase starting. Click and treat only for the behavior you want, and then say, "Good Boy!"
6. These social sessions need to be continued daily, the dog and cat will see it is an opportunity to be clicked and treated, and not a time to chase!

Tip: If you see the dog starting to get aroused, then end the session before anything happens. Stay in control of the social session.

Continue to reward your dog for desired behavior. Reinforcing appropriate behavior teaches your dog what you want him to do, such as behaving around your cat. Have a supply of yummy treats, the size of a pea. As soon as your dog looks away from the cat, praise him ("Good Boy") in an animated voice and give him a treat. Repeat this process every time your dog ignores the cat. Your dog will learn that whenever he sees your cat, rewards are coming! You are training your dog to perform a certain behavior upon seeing the cue (the cat). Just make sure the treats you are giving are more desirable than a fun game of chasing the cat!

When you see success, you can allow the dog more freedom around the cat, a little at a time, and carefully watch the cat's reaction; you may need to help your cat change her relationship with your dog by

feeding her tasty kitty treats while she's near the dog.

If the chasing continues, it could be your dog is bored or needs to expend more energy, meaning he needs more exercise. Make sure he gets plenty of physical exercise, like running off-leash, playing with another dog friend, playing a game of fetch, or swimming; he needs aerobic exercise; a daily walk may not be enough. A tired dog is a good dog, and tired dogs do much less chasing.

In addition, give him various chew toys to keep him busy. Kongs filled with kibble, peanut butter, plain yogurt, mashed sweet potato or pumpkin works well. Try freezing the Kong so it lasts longer.

For mental stimulation, teach your dog basic obedience cues or tricks. A reward-based training program will teach your dog to listen to you, focus, and will be better behaved.

If your dog doesn't respond to your cue, show him a great food treat and lure him away from the object of interest. Give the food even if you had to put the food beside his nose and use it to lure him toward you and away from the cat.

When your dog does respond to your cue, give him a Jackpot (10 treats in a row, one at a time) to make the point – this is what you want! Make sure you praise as you feed him.

If he does not respond to the treat lure, do not give him the treat!

Continue this at least 3 times a day.

Be patient! This is going to take time; how much time depends on your dog, you and how much he has chased something he shouldn't in the past. If he's been doing this for years it's going to take a lot more time.

Try to prevent the problem from occurring; be consistent in obedience training and always reward appropriate behavior. Make sure your dog's social, physical and mental needs are being met. Finally, never leave your dog alone with the cat unsupervised, since behavior can never be guaranteed.

How to use a Clicker

We start with teaching the dog what this means by "priming" the clicker.

Remember, we are simply marking the behavior we want with a click and a treat!

The following steps PRIME the clicker before you start training:

1. Begin with your dog in a quiet area.
2. Have a handful of your dog's favorite treats ready (make sure your dog is hungry).
3. Press the clicker and immediately give your dog a treat, repeat 5-10 times.
4. At the exact moment your dog performs the desired action, press the clicker and immediately follow with a treat and "good boy!"

Accuracy is important and this may take some practice. If you have treats in a pouch or in your hand and a clicker ready you should be able to mark the behavior at the exact time your dog “sits”, for an example.

For some of the stationary behaviors, you can put your dog on a leash and stand on the end of the leash so you have two free hands.

Sources:

Why Cats and Dogs Often Clash www.paw-rescue.org

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