

Welcoming Your Second Dog (and Keeping Your First Dog Happy)

Beth Bradley

So you decided to add another dog to your home as a companion to your first well trained dog. This might go well from day one. However, there is the possibility that your first dog will look at you as if you have lost your mind. He may react poorly to what he sees as your temporary insanity. Fortunately, there are ways to minimize the chances that your first dog will become jealous, anxious, or just mad about the new addition.

Pack Walks

The best way to integrate a new dog is a “pack walk.” Walk with one dog on each side in proper heel position for a long, energy-burning walk. Walking together in this way communicates to the dogs that your little group functions as a unit with you as the leader. It also gives the dogs a chance to become accustomed to one another’s presence without either dog getting in the other’s face. (If the dogs are able to walk calmly next to each other in the traditional heel position you can walk them on the same side.) I recommend walking your dog(s) every day so you might as well get them used to walking together from the beginning. A daily walk fulfills each dog’s instinctive need to “travel.” In addition, if your new dog is a puppy, the walk will tire him out so Fido the First can have some quiet time when the puppy falls asleep.

It’s Biting Me!

Yes, puppies bite. And their little teeth are needle-sharp. If your new addition is a puppy, chances are he will frequently turn his little teeth on your first dog. Usually, an older dog will show a young puppy when enough is enough and the pup will learn to be gentle with his mouth. Some pups, however, don’t get the message. That’s when you need to step in. Allowing the puppy to bite, nip, or chew constantly on your first dog is unfair and unsafe. Either your first dog will be subjected to relentless biting or he will increase his efforts to make it stop, which can escalate into aggression. If your puppy uses all his free time to torment Fido the First with his teeth, take steps to ensure that your first dog gets the quiet time he needs.

- Keep a leash on the pup around the house so you can appropriately remove him from your first dog when necessary.
- Contain your pup in an exercise pen, safely gated area, or crate for portions of time.

Crates

I’ve said it before and I will say it again: the crate is your salvation. Crating your new puppy or dog gives him a secure place of his own to rest and relax in his new home. It also gives you and your first dog the ability to rest and relax for periods of time. Crating

also ensures that your new puppy or dog is safe when you are not able to supervise him. There are several possible crating scenarios in a two-dog home.

- Your first dog may still be sleeping or resting in his crate. Even if your first dog no longer needs to be confined, if he is still using his crate you must get a second crate for the new dog. Taking the crate away from your first dog at this point is basically taking away his safe place at a time when he is already adjusting to many changes. I've seen some adult dogs actually sulk if their crate is given to a new dog or puppy.
- Your first dog may not be using his crate at all anymore. If the crate has been out of sight and out of mind, and Fido the First's "personal space" is a bed or rug he can call his own, then you can bring the crate out of storage for the new dog.
- Some crated puppies and dogs are most comfortable and happy when they can see the other dog. If so, put the crate in a place where the crated dog can easily see your first dog, but not so close to your first dog's bed that he feels his space is being invaded.
- Some dogs become anxious or agitated when they are restrained or confined in the presence of a dog that is not contained. If seeing your first dog loose creates anxious or agitated behavior in your crated puppy or dog, place the crate in a separate room where the crated dog can feel secluded and safe.

DO Share Attention

Fido the First is now going to have to share you and your attention with a puppy or new dog. It's important that both dogs realize that they are sharing you. With that said, if you are petting one dog, the other should not be permitted to interrupt or try to hog your attention. Dogs can, and should, learn to "share."

- If each dog is trying to nose the other away from you, put both in a sit/stay or a down/stay before you give attention.
- If you are throwing a ball, make sure each dog gets a turn. Use two balls and throw the second as the first dog is returning. If necessary, hold the faster dog on alternating throws to give the slower dog a chance to retrieve.
- Play games that give each dog a chance to "win." For example, a puppy may be faster at retrieving, but an older dog may be more skilled at catching the ball in the air or finding a toy you hide.
- When walking, you may need to "heel" one dog on either side. One dog on each side allows each dog to give you full focus.

If you are petting, grooming, or playing with your new dog, do not allow your first dog to "guilt" you into turning your attention to him. However, do make sure that you give your first dog some individual attention as well. For example, when the puppy has had his exercise and elimination needs met, you can take your first dog for a solitary walk—just the two of you, like the "old days."

DON'T Share Meals

Do not expect your dogs to be "fair" to one another at meal times. You must supervise meals to ensure that a fast eater does not help himself to the slower eater's food. Each

dog should learn that he may not approach the other when eating. It's up to you to ensure that your dogs know food stealing is unacceptable behavior. You may have to feed one or both dogs in their crates or use a leash to control the faster eater until he learns his manners.

Teaching acceptable mealtime behavior is not just about fairness. For many dogs food is not just nutrition, it's power. If you allow one dog to steal the other's food, you are setting the stage for problems. In a worst-case scenario, one dog will physically harm the other in a conflict over food. Even in a best-case scenario, in which neither dog is food aggressive, the dog that gets away with stealing food will feel dominant and will soon be trying to get away with much more than an extra bite of kibble.

Toys and Bones

When there are two (or more) dogs in a house, toys and bones must be managed. Bones, like meals, should be monitored to make sure neither dog steals from the other. If one dog tries stealing from the other, leash and correct the culprit until he learns it is unacceptable behavior

Similarly, neither dog should be allowed to hoard toys. If the dogs are alternating possession of a toy during play and neither dog is bullying the other, you don't need to intervene. If, however, one dog consistently takes toys from the other, guards a pile of toys, or shows aggressive behavior in order to gain possession of a toy, you will need to step in.

Treats

When you give your dogs treats, both dogs must sit. Because a puppy is young and has less-developed self-control, you might have to reward him first. However, do not allow a pup to jump at your hand for the treat or to try to grab the second treat when you are rewarding an older dog. Teach your dogs that calm behavior gets the treat; wait both of them out and make sure they realize neither is getting a treat if the other doesn't sit still.

No Bullying

If you set and follow the rules as outlined above, your dogs will have few chances to bully each other. However, if one dog is finding opportunities to excessively dominate the other, you will need to correct the bully. Especially if your new dog is a puppy, being pushed around, bitten, and intimidated by your adult dog will teach your puppy to behave that way himself. Conversely, if your new dog or puppy is allowed to constantly take advantage of your original dog, you may find that Fido the First develops new and unacceptable ways to cope with the situation. There is a time to let dogs work it out, but if one dog is always losing it is time for you to get involved and put an end to the bullying.

Conclusion

Bringing a new puppy or dog into your house means change. Initially, your first dog may have his nose out of joint as he adjusts to these changes and to the new presence in the house. However, dogs instinctively prefer being part of a group. If you continue your strong leadership, Fido the First will soon realize that the new puppy or dog is part of his pack—a pack that is now bigger and better!

About Beth Bradley

As one of the top professional trainers and competitors in the United States, Beth is committed to improving the lives of dogs and people through training. She teaches group classes and private lessons in basic and advanced obedience, competition dog training, puppy training, Schutzhund training, personal protection, Canine Good Citizenship, and therapy dog training.

Beth also trains and places service dogs for children with autism and custom trains “cross-trained” companion/protection dogs for families and individuals. She consults for shelters in the tri-state area and for New Jersey law enforcement on cases involving canine behavior and temperament.

Beth began studying animal behavior and dog training at age twelve. She has worked and studied under many renowned animal behaviorists and trainers. After graduating from Rutgers University with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Criminal Justice, Beth worked as a New Jersey State Animal Control Officer. In 1989, she founded her own company and has made dog training and consulting her full-time career since 1995. Competing with her dogs, Beth has earned national and international titles, championships, and honors in both Schutzhund and AKC Obedience. In 2003 and 2009, she represented the United States in the FCI World Trials.

Beth is the author of *Real World Dog Training*, and has produced a number of training DVDs and videos. In addition, Beth trains and handles dogs for movies and television, with recent credits including *Board Walk Empire*, the *Batman* franchise, *Damages*, *Blue Bloods*, *The Good Wife*, and *The Blacklist*.

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