

## Animal Friends Presents

### Introducing Your New Dog to Your Dog

Adding a new dog to your current dog household can be a wonderful experience that brings extra companionship, exercise and joy. But, it takes time to build good relationships. Use the following tips to start off on the right paw.

- \* Remove prized objects that might cause rivalry. Before you bring your new dog home, buy him his own food dish, bed, crate and toys. Your resident dog might not take lightly to having to share prized possessions, so make sure each dog has his own. Pick up all toys, bones, food bowls and other tempting objects as well. Until you know whether your dogs are going to be able to share, bring out toys and bones only when you can supervise their interactions.
- \* Introduce your new dog to the resident dog in a neutral area outside of your home. Before you take your new dog into your home for the first time, take him and your resident dog for a walk or to a nearby park. This way, your dogs can do something enjoyable together while getting to know each other in neutral territory.
- \* Contain your new dog when you take him inside. Don't allow him to race through your home, laying claim to everything and practicing bad manners. Assume that your dog is going to be a little put out about having to share the house.
- \* Provide your new dog with his own crate or area. It is never a good idea to crate or confine two dogs together. Until you know whether your dogs are going to get along, do not leave them alone together unsupervised.
- \* Keep your new dog on a leash until he learns the rules. This prevents bad habits from starting, allows the new dog to learn the rules he is going to have to live by and prevents your resident dog from being overwhelmed by the new dog. People frequently introduce younger dogs into households with older dogs. While this can be a great thing, realize that some older dogs can tire easily of a younger dog's antics. Keeping the new dog leashed will give the resident dog a break.
- \* Feed your new dog separately from the resident dog. You cannot be too conservative when it comes to high-value resources such as food. Fights often start when one dog hovers over another's food.
- \* Expect dogs who live together to have an occasional spat. Didn't you and your siblings fight growing up? Of course, if your dogs cause injury, seek professional behavioral help. But an occasional fight, even with broken skin, is not the end of the world. An occasional growl or snarl can be appropriate, and if your new dog is overstepping his boundaries it is appropriate (and even desirable) for the resident dog to correct him. Just do not let the corrections get out of hand and do not tolerate any inappropriate aggression. A time-out is the best punishment for inappropriate aggression.
- \* Supervise the new dog around resting places. Many older dogs dislike younger dogs disturbing their sleep or quiet time.
- \* Keep things light and happy. Use a happy, praising tone when the dogs are having positive interactions. Use a lower-toned voice to interrupt any naughty behavior. Keep play sessions short and sweet as well. Do not let the dogs get overly tired or overly aroused as those are times when many dogs can become aggressive.
- \* Let your dogs figure out the new household hierarchy themselves. Do not assume the resident dog is going to be the higher-status dog. One day, feed one dog first; the next day, feed the other first. One day, let one dog outside first; the next day, let the other dog out first.
- \* Always be sure to spend individual time with each dog every day.
- \* Remember to be patient– do not expect a good, healthy relationship to be born overnight. The more vigilant you are about the interactions of your new dog and resident dog, the more likely their relationship will be a positive one.