



About

Decompression is the single most important step to successfully integrating dogs into new homes.

Shelter dogs, in particular, are coming from an environment where the elements needed for stability (enrichment, training, stress management and physical exercise) have likely not been met. This can make for the transition into a new home very challenging if not managed properly. These steps are meant to be a guideline and do not guarantee successful integration. They can however help prevent risks associated with the addition of a new pet and increase the potential for success.

Decompress For Success

**HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY
INTEGRATE A NEW DOG
INTO YOUR HOME**



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Decompress For Success

Prepare For New Pet

- Set up living area for pet. This should include a crate with comfy bedding, food and water bowls, etc. This should be an "off limits" area for the other animals in home and be a safe, quiet secure place.
- Put together your "tool kit" for new pet. Your "tool kit" should include.
 - Harness Lead or other control harness for walking dog.
 - Collar and ID tags
 - High value treats for training
 - Device to play classical music
 - Calming oils or spray
 - Interactive toys such as Kongs
 - High quality food and dedicated food and water bowl

Step 1: Chill Out! (Minimum 1 Week)

- No interaction with other pets during this period. This is THE most critical step to a successful integration
- Before bringing them into your home, take them for a 30-40 minute walk. Walk them through home while leashed and take them through door they will use to potty. Bring them back in and put into crate.
- Establish daily routine including walking, play, potty and rest time. Provide stimulating toys such as kongs and interactive toys as part of your new pets routine.
- Play classical music 24/7 which has been proven to de-stress.
- New dog does not see or touch resident dogs during this time.
- Hand-feeding your new dog during this time can help build trust.



Step 2 Smell Before See (Estimated 1 Week)

- Allow new dog into areas of your home to explore with his nose.
- No visual or physical contact with other dogs in household should occur during this time.
- After a a short time sniffing, send new dog back into their "safe place" with treat. The treat will help to develop a positive association with the scents of the other pets in household.
- Repeat "smell" phase until body language indicates readiness for "see" phase.
- Provide plenty of one-on-one exercise.

Step 3: See Before Touch (Estimated 1 Week)

- While outside, allow visuals through the safety of a see-through fence, etc. This is always done in a controlled manner with the use of a leash. Maintain distance to ensure safety.
- Be sure to redirect negative body language such as extended staring (no more than 5 seconds), etc

- Reward positive body language for all dogs during this period.
- Provide plenty of one-on-one exercise.

Step 4: The Greeting (Estimated 1 Week)

- Go for a parallel walk with the new dog and a resident dog. Walk dog-person-person-dog.
- Redirect dogs if experiencing any negative body language. Break a stare between 3-5 seconds (before seeing negative body language).
- Reward short positive interactions with treats.
- Repeat, repeat, repeat the short, positive interactions. Always reward these positive experiences.
- Continue this phase until you see relaxed and positive body language when interacting.
- Move onto controlled play, Keep leashes attached during these sessions to allow for control if needed.

Integrating with Cats

- Allow new dog into same room with cat but with dog securely leashed.
- Maintain this introductory period until dog and cat are both calm and using the space normally.
- Continue indefinitely until both dog and cat seem calm and relaxed around each other.
- Supervise time together for at least a month, until you feel confident no harm will occur.