



# Greyhound Rescue West of England

## CATS AND OTHER SMALL ANIMALS

All breeds of dogs are interested in chasing cats - Greyhounds are so much faster that they stand a far greater chance of catching them! Yet many Greyhounds settle with cats and poultry and it is one of the most important issues to deal with when you first adopt a dog. Always be aware that although your dog may be completely safe with his own family cat - or even rabbit - off territory he may view anything that runs as fair game - so be prepared!

Your Greyhound may be classed as 'cat-safe' when he first arrives with you, but it is imperative that sensible precautions are taken until you are confident of your dog's temperament. It is not advisable to leave your dog alone with your cat in the initial stages.

If you have a keen Greyhound, it can take some considerable time before you can trust him/her with a cat. Always keep a Greyhound muzzled and on a tight collar and lead when you make the introduction. Some cats will spend many months watching the dog from the highest and furthest place possible; others might be willing to give the newcomer a blow to show who's boss. It should not be forgotten that we have two temperaments to work with in this introduction.

If a cat is not used to dogs in its home, there is a risk that it might pack its bags and leave home. It is essential to ensure that the cat has a collar and identity disc to cover this possibility. When you think you are making progress, take away the muzzle, keep the tight collar and lead on, and feed your Greyhound and cat together. By doing this they are alongside each other but do not have their minds on each other.

When you are feeling more confident, replace the muzzle and take away the collar and lead. In time, the muzzle can also be removed. Your Greyhound will accept your rules, and accept your cat as a member of the family. Nevertheless, a warning should be sounded: Cats outside the home may well still be regarded as fair game for a chase and possible attack, all necessary precautions should be taken.

### **INTRODUCING YOUR NEW DOG TO YOUR CATS**

- 🕒 Use the muzzle provided, and have the dog on a lead.
- 🕒 Make sure the dog and cat meet from the start, preferably in a small room.
- 🕒 Ensure the cat can not run away during the introduction, as this will promote a chase instinct before they are both aware that they are members of the same family and need to get on.
- 🕒 Stroke the cat then the dog, you are passing the scent from one to the other.
- 🕒 Keep introducing the cat to the dog to gauge his interest, try to allow the cat to walk through his legs, and then raise the cat to eye level so as they can make eye contact. Ensure the safety of the dog's eyes if the cat is showing any signs of aggression.

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- 🕒 At this point if all the signs are right, e.g. the dog has acknowledged the cat, but is either frightened of it or gently wagging it's tail it is time to remove the muzzle, but keeping the dog on the lead and going through the previous steps again.
- 🕒 When you are happy with the reaction again, then reverse the process and have the muzzle on without the lead.
- 🕒 By this time the cat and dog should be getting the message, that they are going to need to get on as they are both or all part of the same family.

Remember cats will be fair game if they are out of their home environment. It is all about the dog recognising the cat as part of it's family. This bonding process has to still take place even for a dog that has lived with cats in a previous home. Do not shut the cat away as this promotes great interest.

The cats reaction is also important and can make or break the situation. We have even had dogs back because they are being terrorised by the cats. Do not let the dog and cat go out in the garden together at first, this should only happen when you are fully happy with their reaction to each other. If a cat comes hurtling over a fence the dog may not recognise it as the family cat , and a chase situation could occur.

As the other key fact is the dog recognising the cat as part of it's new family, it must be remembered that the dog is not going to get on with other people's cats unless they are introduced in the correct way.

If you are worried about neighbour's cats, check the garden before letting the dog out, and make a noise which the cats will learn to associate with the dog being around, i.e. lightly banging an object, or ring a small bell. The cats will soon avoid the garden when they know of the dogs presence. If your street is full of cats use the muzzle provided, especially at first when you need to gauge the interest of the dog on walks. Muzzles are widely used in all breeds and people are now aware that people are responsible in using them and that it does not mean the dog is aggressive.

Remember most dogs do not get on with all cats, if you went to a pound kennel there would be all breeds and many dogs would not be suitable to live with cats.

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