



GREYHOUND PETS OF AMERICA SOUTHERN NEVADA INFO SHEET

Advice on Greyhound and Cats by Lynda Adame

Just because a dog tests cat-tolerant, or lives in a foster home with cats, does NOT mean it will automatically be tolerant of cats in the new home.

Greyhounds should never be encouraged to play with cats (no matter how cute it might seem).

Advise adopters to keep the animals separated when they are not home to monitor the situation.

Even a cat-tolerant Greyhound is likely to chase a cat when outdoors.

The best way to introduce a dog to your cat is:

Walk the dog into the house on lead, held with a strong grip, with a muzzle on the dog. If he lunges at the cat, give him a check (hard tug) with the lead while saying "NO!" in a stern tone. Use a squirt bottle, if needed, to help emphasize the "No Kitty" command. Give the indoor cats plenty of safe areas to get to....high spots, small openings, and a babygate slightly raised off the floor for a cat to scoot under. Keep a muzzle on the Greyhound until you are SURE that it understands the concept of "No Kitty".

Warn adopters that a dog will instinctively jump up and nip if a cat is held in the owner's arms, above the dog's head.

Lori Raborg:

"I'd like to share our cat-training experience, even though I've only had Jenny three weeks and I believe we got lucky with Jenny and our two cats. Our male cat, Dodger, is a 12-pound Manx with a hundred-pound attitude. The female is eight pounds and rather shy.

"To introduce them, we leashed and muzzled Jenny, and harnessed and leashed Dodger, just to make sure everybody was under control. The two animals were brought into an empty room, and slowly (over 30 minutes) brought closer together. This reduced the shock of a sudden meeting. Since the cat was restrained, he didn't run and activate Jen's prey/chase instinct. Jenny seemed confused, and barked once or twice to try to spook the cat. Every time she showed any aggression, she was given a firm 'NO.' Eventually she approached Dodger. Good thing she was muzzled - it saved her tender nose from some real damage! After a few more altercations, we crated Jen and called it a night.

"For the next few days, we kept the animals apart unless Jen was muzzled and supervised. Again, she got a 'NO' and/or a water squirt if she went toward the cat. There were a couple of times she

cornered him under a desk and got her muzzle smacked. When Dodger's confidence was up, and Jen was responding to the 'no,' we removed her muzzle. She's taken a few good whacks in the past ten days, but has given up on Dodger as prey/playtoy. The other cat stayed under furniture when Jen was free in the house, but last night she crept out from behind the couch to sniff a sleeping Jen's nose. Jen opened one eye, but just sighed and went back to sleep.

"I owe a lot to Jen, but I think we were also successful because we put the animals on an even footing from the start. Jen never got the chance to chase D, and he has no fear of her (in fact, he's alpha pet in the house). The little cat, KayCee, is benefiting from D's machismo. I've also made sure there are plenty of kitty escape routes under and behind things and I've kept the water bottle handy, just in case. I've also blocked the laundry room door with a baby gate so the cats' food, litter and snooze spot on the dryer are off limits to cold doggy noses."

Yvonne Dailey:

"My general rule is: Always give the cats the benefit of the doubt. In other words, when there's the slightest, teeniest, weensiest wisp of doubt in your mind as to whether the dog is cat safe, keep them apart when you're not there.

"My dogs have earned their privileges very gradually, over a period ranging from about three weeks for Lotus to a couple of days for Rosie. (It should be noted that the two I've adopted were obviously never a big problem with the cats.)

"I use the same procedure for foster dogs, too. First, they can only be in the same room with the cats when the dog is on lead (muzzled, too, if they're extra interested or I'm distracted). The lead stays on my wrist at all times. If they will reliably leave the cats alone this way, we progress to leaving them in the room with the cats when I'm in the same room, but leaving the lead attached to the collar to facilitate quick restraint if it's needed. After that, they get off-lead privileges, but I still make sure they're not unattended with the cats. From here we progress to run of the house, still while someone is home and keeping an ear out.

"My approach is a little different from some since I don't care if the dogs and cats are 'friends'. I'd rather have dog-cat apartheid in my house than take a chance on a dead cat. (My cats aren't interested anyhow, the snobs!) That means all I have to teach the dogs is to leave the cats alone, instead of having to train them to play or interact with cats."

Katie Traxel:

"I made a big mistake initially in not controlling the first meeting of Blue and Byrne. Blue (Greyhound) was off-leash, though muzzled, and rushed the cat. Byrne (cat) ran and Blue chased. From that point on he was fascinated by this creature that put in such rare appearances. On the advice of friends, I got squirt bottles. Every time Blue would look at Byrne with interest, (ears up, eyes fixated), he'd get a 'Blue, no kitty' and a squirt, until he averted his head. I

confess that initially I put a few drops of ammonia in the water to make it truly aversive, since plain water had no effect. Within a week he'd avert his head most of the time with just words. I used this consistently, even when he was crated at night. Byrne learned that if he was crated it was safe to come around and that helped training.

"About a month into this, I took Blue up to Ellen's and he caught her cat. That taught me that he still was unsafe with cats that didn't avoid him. Fortunately, no one was hurt, but I came very close to giving up and returning him at that point. Gradually Byrne started coming out more and Blue would look at her. If he fixated, (ears up, tense, eyes fixed) he got, 'no kitty' and was expected to avert his head. I backed this up with the spray bottle. When he'd avert, he'd get praised and hugged. Molly Hughs at one point suggested training him to associate the cat with something good, even to the point of setting up situations where someone carries the cat in and then the dog gets rewarded. I think that's a good idea and could work in a household with more than one person to wrangle the animals.

"Anyway, things gradually got better with consistent and persistent training. Byrne helped a lot, by learning to avoid the jangling of tags indicating that Blue was on the move, and coming around when it was quiet. I made sure that Byrne had numerous safe, warm hiding/escape spots so there was never any real danger of Blue cornering her. Amy Hanna was very helpful in reminding me to consistently reward the desired behavior and not just yell at him to get the desired result. Blue isn't really food motivated, but a hug or short petting session is a big reward to him. On a couple of occasions early on there were a few 'chase the kitty' sessions where Blue couldn't help himself and I wasn't in the immediate area. I responded with your 'big, in the face-talking to' reprimand and slapped his muzzle on him. Both of those got his attention I think and helped the process.

"To some extent, I think he had to see Byrne enough to take her somewhat for granted, which is the point we've almost reached now. He's lost his fascination for her, and that just takes repeated, safe exposure. Byrne's still cautious also, not relaxing her guard around him. Most of the time he just looks at her now, no fixation. She can walk with 2 feet of him, sniff at his bowl while he's eating, etc. Some of his restraint undoubtedly is due to my presence also, but he's learning. The big test came last week when I had him at my cousin's house with her two cats and he didn't try to chase them. He wanted to check them out, but he wasn't fixated. I guess, maybe he's learning. I'm not sure he's really what I would consider truly 'cat-safe' yet, and may never be as safe as Penguin, but he continues to improve, so there's hope. I guess I never gave up on him because there was always progress. BTW, I use the 'no kitty' outdoors consistently also. He's much more persistent there, but will eventually avert even with a squirrel in view.

"BTW, Blue was never cat-tested. I met him at the trainer's kennel, said I wanted him and didn't officially adopt him through GPA. If I had gone through the channels I'm sure he would have been listed as cat-unsafe and placed in a cat-free home.

"I was really unprepared for the intensity of an 'unsafe' dog. Penguin from day one looked at Byrne as a potential playmate and did the play bow to her. Blue was very different and very scary for a while there."