

DOGS, CATS AND OTHER SMALL FURRIES

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Introduction

Many dogs live happily alongside cats and other animals. However some breeds of dog (especially terriers) have generations of ancestry telling them to grab and kill small furry things.

A cat's instincts are to hiss and either fight or run. Either of these behaviours is likely to wind up a dog even more.

Play between puppies and cats may *look* innocent, but it's possible that it's not actually innocent play at all, but practice for hunting and fighting. Some dogs are hard-wired to find hunting, fighting and killing **very** enjoyable activities. Once a dog is no longer a little puppy, the balance may change, the cats don't like playing any more so they run, which in turn winds the dog up further so he chases and wants to grab them.

Management The best way to teach a dog to be fine around other animals is to prevent access to them so he can't go wrong. Have dog free areas and cat free areas in the house. Just acclimatise the dog to the cat being there and that they are boring. Always prevent chasing because the more fun a dog has chasing, the more difficult it will be for him to choose an alternative behaviour.

The answer really is to separate them. Even playing with cats often ends in tears and vets bills, even if your dog isn't a working terrier. Make sure the dog can't get to the cats. Make sure the cats can get away from the dog easily. Use baby gates for instance.

Don't formally introduce them or expect them to get along happily, but you can teach them all to be okay about living under the same roof.

Using 'click the trigger' to teach an alternative behaviour

Set up a situation where you are with the dog in one room and someone else is in charge of the cat in another room with a baby gate in the doorway between the rooms. Then you can use 'click the trigger'.

Sit with the dog on a lead and have your clicker and pot of yummy treats ready. Have someone else get the cat to walk past the doorway that has the baby gate across it, using a toy or smoked salmon lure, for instance. As soon as **the dog** sees the cat appear in the doorway you click and give him a treat. If he is too obsessed with the cat to take the food then you either need a yummier treat or you have to find somewhere where you can have a bigger distance between the two to start with. The treats stop as soon as **the dog** can no longer see the cat. Continue over several sessions until the dog sees the cat and looks at you for a treat. The sessions should be short and end before everyone gets bored. Just a few minutes at a time. The end result will be a dog that likes the

cat (sort of) because the cat predicts Good Things, so the dog should have no desire to chase the cat away. The dog will also have an alternative behaviour of looking at you and asking for a treat. Once the behaviour is learned, the clicker will no longer be needed, and the reward could change to a toy or lower value treats. Treats can be part of the dog's daily food allowance.

If you don't want to use a clicker, you can use a marker word such as 'yes' or 'good'.

Give your dog an appropriate outlet for his instincts

If your dog doesn't have an outlet for his sharp mind and his need to hunt and rag/shake his prey, he is likely to chase the cat more. Chasing and fighting with cats is a self-rewarding behaviour, no matter how badly he gets hurt, as he gets an adrenalin rush from it. It is therefore rewarding for him.

- Buy or make toys such as flirt poles where your dog can chase and rag the toy on the end of the line

<http://eileenanddogs.com/2013/04/24/dog-play-flirt-poles/>

http://www.positiveanimalsolutions.com/Flirt_Pole_p/flirtpole.htm

- Set up scent trails for him to track, or things for him to sniff out and find

http://www.talkingdogsscentwork.co.uk/Talking_Dogs_Scentwork/Welcome.html

- Feed from food dispensing toys rather than a bowl

<http://www.traininglines.co.uk/treat-dispensing-toys/>

No punishment

Do not punish your dog (even by shouting) for approaching or even chasing cats. If you do, he's likely to associate punishment with the cats rather than with his behaviour. Also he's going to associate you with unpleasant things, which will reduce his desire to listen to you, work for you, etc. By preventing a situation where you may be tempted to yell at your dog, it all gets a lot easier!

Conclusion

- Prevent the access to the cats by use of baby gates
- Teach an alternative behaviour using 'click the trigger'
- Fill up his day with walks, clicker training, puzzle solving, eating from food dispensing toys and games that involve chasing/ragging/scenting/digging
- No punishment