



DOG-DOG MEET & GREETINGS

Helping your dog get it right.

Meeting on leash can be stressful for many dogs. Leashes restrict natural greeting movements, and also prevent dogs from moving farther away when they're feeling uncomfortable. And many dogs are undersocialized— if they didn't get enough practice at this when they were puppies, they may struggle to master this social skill. To help your dog get his meet and greets right, follow these steps and rules.

What to do.

1. Decide if it's a good time for a meet & greet or whether it might be better to pass by. Look at your dog— does she look interested? Comfortable? Relaxed? Excited but not frantic? These are good signs. Look at the other dog for the same signs. If either dog seems to be shying away or trying to avoid contact, or appear intensely fixated on the other, take a pass. Look at the owner, too— do they seem comfortable? If they appear tense or nervous, there may be a reason and it might be better to pass.
2. If you decide you'd like to try to say hello, ask the owner of the other dog if they are willing.
3. Approach the other dog with a loose leash and calm, cheerful demeanor. Use happy talk to encourage your dog through the greeting.
4. After three seconds, cheerfully tell your dog "Let's go!," turn around, and walk your dog away.

Meet & Greet rules.

- Never allow your dog to say hello to another dog unless both dogs seem interested and comfortable and you have the other owner's permission.
- Keep the leash loose to allow your dog to move naturally, and to avoid adding tension to the situation.
- Keep meetings short. Follow the three second rule. Proximity and duration can be powder kegs in dog-dog relations, and here we have forced proximity by way of leashes, so it's best to keep duration short.

If you'd rather pass.

- Use happy talk to keep your dog focused on you as you pass by other dogs. A food lure can help, too, particularly if your dog seems uncomfortable or tends to react to other dogs by barking, lunging, growling, etc.
- Distance helps—if your dog needs extra help passing his fellow canines, keep an active scan on the environment and give other dogs a wider berth.

Training Tip: If you have a social butterfly, you can slowly allow your dog to enjoy longer meet & greets. But make sure the other dog is having a good time and seems relaxed, too.

