



The WoofGang Wag Rag



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Free

Keeping the Peace – Life in a Multi-Animal Household

Dyed-in-the-wool animal lovers seem to have a great deal of trouble limiting the nest to just a single animal. I know I do, with a dog and three cats sharing my life. If it weren't for my very resolute husband and a smallish apartment, I have no doubt there'd be at least another dog in the mix.

When deciding whether to open your heart and your home to another pet, make sure to consider your current furry family member's perspective. While many will thrive having the company of another, especially if they're left alone for long hours at a time, others prefer being the only pet, either because they're not particularly good players with other animals or because they don't want to share your attention. If this is the case, then your current animal should have the deciding vote; after all, he'll be the one living day in and day out with the newbie. Imagine if someone were to thrust a new housemate on you against your will!

A MULTI-DOG HOUSEHOLD

If your pup seems a good candidate for a canine sibling, the next step is to find a love match for him. Consider the types of dogs that your dog gravitates toward in the dog run.



Does he prefer playful partners or more laid back types? Males or females? While a younger dog can sometimes bring out the inner pup in your older dog, she can also prove to be a constant annoyance.

Also consider size. A large disparity is undesirable. How frustrating for a little terrier to be consistently manhandled by a pit bull playmate, even if both dogs have a similar play style. It's like a feather-weight sparring with a super-heavyweight! An equally serious concern inherent in size disparities is that of predatory drift, in which a smaller dog (or cat) moves in a prey-like way that triggers a sudden predatory response from a larger dog or a group of dogs. And this is a recipe for potentially deadly disaster
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About the Trainer

Dog trainer **Laura Garber**, CPDT, is a professional member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) and is certified by the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT), the first national certification for dog trainers.

Laura has authored articles about dogs and dog behavior in dog-centric magazines and on-line resources.

Laura believes strongly in strengthening the bond between human and companion animal. For this reason, she regards training as an exercise in building relationship rather than obedience. Such an approach promises greater understanding and symbiosis within our family packs.

Log on to www.myWoofGang.com.



\$25 Intro Training Offer

Get a 30-minute introductory basic training session for \$25 or apply it towards a 4-session package and get the 30-minute session FREE! (Offer details based on location.) Call **WoofGang** at 646.345.5116 to make an appointment.

Territorial Behavior

Allowing your dog to peer out the window at passers-by can develop into a more dangerous behavior called *territorial aggression*. Your dog will start to think that it's his barking that's keeping the passing people and dogs away and, over time, this can potentially put your guests at risk.

Call **WoofGang** at 646.345.5116 for help with your territorial pooch.

Training Sessions

Training sessions are best in small increments. Work for 10 minutes, then take a break. It's better to do several short sessions than one long one. Leave your pup wanting more!

Relationship-Building

Is your pup rude and pushy? Does she jump when greeting people? Does she counter-surf? Well, apologize no more. **WoofGang** can help you teach your dog to be polite, attentive and well-mannered, while developing and deepening your relationship.

Call **646.345.5116** today!

Keeping the Peace (cont.)

that does not go away with time; even after years of living together peace-fully, a tragic incident can still occur.

“Howdy Do!”

Initial introductions are so important in starting the relationship out right. Having several short interactions is a good way of acquainting the dogs. Always do these on neutral territory. Walk the dogs past one another or take them on parallel walks to see if they look playful and interested in one another. Allow a polite head-to-tail sniff between them, fostering greater familiarity while still avoiding any direct eye contact. Given all this goes swimmingly, allow for some playful interaction, keeping leashes on but *slack*. Any tension in the leashes can thwart natural movement and thus increase the likelihood of defensive behavior. Still, the leash will allow you to easily separate the two dogs should things go south.

When entering your home, take the newcomer in first to avoid territorial behavior from the resident dog. Keep leashes on but dragging for these early moments.

Avoid fights at all costs, as a fight early on can diminish the likelihood of success. Be aware that aroused play, when allowed to continue for too long, can spiral into a fight. Dogs will often take short breaks from play, giving themselves a chance for a breather. If they are not doing it voluntarily, you must step in and impose a short break every few minutes. Call each dog away or go get him; then ask for a “sit” or “down” for 30 seconds before releasing them back to play.

Life Together

As successful an arranged marriage as it may be, make sure that some of their day includes private time away from each other, especially at the start. Introducing the new dog to a crate can help achieve this. Also

make sure that each dog gets time alone with you, time in which you can work on some training as well as share affection.

Training is the best way to assert yourself as leader. So, as important as training is with a single dog, it is absolutely critical in a multi-dog household.

Inter-dog status is not important to all dogs, so establishing hierarchy between dogs is often not necessary. In fact, supporting status can sometimes do more harm than good, as it can result in bullying behavior. It is better to impress upon each dog the importance of polite behavior to gain his life rewards (treats, toys, walks, attention, etc). And since doorways and narrow passages can provoke friction, having well-trained dogs can help establish orderliness in these situations.

Pay attention to the dogs’ behavior around resources such as toys and food. Be aware if one of the dogs stiffens, shows his eye whites, or lifts a lip when the other dog gets near him with the prized possession. Until each dog has had some training so that you can assert some obedience control, separate them for feeding and remove any resources that might cause fights. Possessions such as rawhides may prove too valuable; either the dogs will have to live without them or they should only have them when they’re apart.

For this article in its entirety, log on to www.myWoofGang.com.



Ask Woofie...

Woofie, sorry to bug you again, new issue with Cisco. He's marking his territory in our friends' shore house! I think he thinks it's his (we're there more than they are). He has peed on their bedroom rug before while we were out, but this last time as soon as we arrived he marched right into their room and peed on the side of the bed! Ozzy (their dog) was not there at the time! Any suggestions, this needs to stop or we'll get kicked out LOL!!! Thanks so much! Lisa B.

Hiya, Lisa! *Keep him on leash or at least restrict his movements so he's not given the opportunity to go into the rooms where he tends to mark. It will take very careful, strict supervision on your part to make sure that he doesn't continue to practice this behavior. Hopefully, it will break him of the habit in the long run. Hope that helps! Woofie*

Woofie, our Cav Rosie is quite attached to me but getting better about staying with my husband if I'm in another room. However, if I'm in the bathroom showering or anything, she is right at the door and even scratches at the door which isn't good for the door, me or her. Do you have any ideas about that? Lisa A.

Hiya, Lisa! *Firstly, I'd suggest that your husband should continue building greater relationship with Rosie. Have him feed her, give her special treats, do training with her, etc. As for her separation concerns, work on separation and crate training exercises – check out the hand-outs on www.MyWoofGang.com. The best times to leave Rosie are when she's tired from exercise. Then give her things to occupy her time in your absence, like tasty stuffed puzzle toys. Hope that helps! Woofie*

For more training tips, log on to www.myWoofGang.com.