



Can Cairns and Cats Live Together Peacefully?

Introductions: The general consensus is that the Cairn needs to be under complete control when introductions are first made between the Cairn and cat. This can be done by crating the Cairn when first introducing the cat or by having the Cairn firmly on a short leash. If the dog shows any signs of aggression, there should be a correction such as "No!", "Be nice!", or something along those lines. Reinforcing calm behavior with petting and treats is also helpful. It is strongly suggested that the Cairn not be turned loose with the cat until they both seem comfortable together in a controlled situation. This means the dog should lie quietly while the cat enters and leaves the room. No lunging, barking, or crying should be happening. At first when they are loose together, there should always be an escape for the cat. Either a high place the dog can't reach or a gate that the cat can easily climb while the dog cannot. Many people advocate never leaving the dog and cat together unsupervised.

Cat Toys: There is no such thing as a Cairn-safe cat toy. Let the cat play with the dog's toys or only give the cat his/her own toys when you can pick them up immediately after the cat is done playing with them.

Kitty Crunchies: Kitty crunchies seem to be a favorite of most dogs. The following are suggestions to keep the dog away from the litterbox:

1. A hooded litterbox turned to face the wall so the cat can enter but the dog cannot.
2. Put the litterbox in the bathtub.
3. Put the litterbox in a room that is gated so the cat can enter but the dog cannot.
4. Use the panels from ex-pens to keep the dog out of the litterbox.
5. The automatic litterboxes have been used successfully.
6. Also, remember to clean the box often. Removing temptation is a great help!

Feeding: The following are known to work:

1. Feed them separately and pick up the dishes of all parties when they are finished.
2. Put the cat food in a high place where the dog can't reach.
3. Like the litterbox, put the cat food in a different room to which only the cat has access.
4. Treats should be given to all parties. Any acts of thievery by the dog should be corrected.

It is best to use the leash again if you think the dog might try to steal a treat being given at the same time to both parties.

Trust: Every dog and every cat is an individual animal, thus their reactions to each other will always differ. There are no absolutes. Many rescue dogs come from households with cats; many have never been exposed to a cat other than in a natural prey situation, such as on walks or chasing cats off of walls. Your supervision is important and you must be diligent during the introductory period, which should last about 30-60 days. It is important to crate your dog during this period if you are gone and cannot supervise, or place your cat in a room with the door closed.

In some cases, the prey drive of the Cairn is too strong to ever have a safe Cairn-Cat relationship. In these

instances it is wise to accept that fact and not place the dog where there are cats.

The above is a compilation from the [CairnRescueMentoring](#) e-mail list. The people who wrote responses to our question of the week have dealt firsthand with Cairns and cats. We would like to thank them for their contributions.

Web Sites

Dogs and Cats Can Live Together www.veterinarypartner.com

Cats and Dogs Can Live Together www.vetstreet.com

Dogs and Cats in Perfect Harmony www.sciencedaily.com