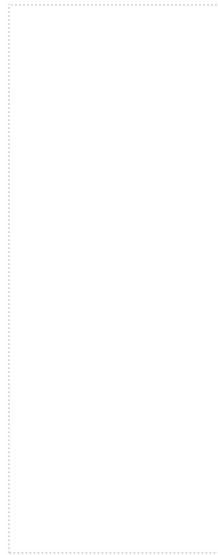
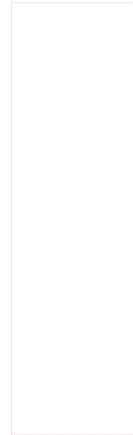


Mid-Atlantic Great Dane Rescue League

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Mid-Atlantic Great Dane Rescue League



INTRODUCING A GREAT DANE TO YOUR CAT

*A Guide for new
Great Dane owners*

See us online at: www.magdrl.org.

INTRODUCING A GREAT DANE TO YOUR CAT



Dogs and cats have been part of human family life for thousands of years. Both have played major roles in the development of civilization. Each species touches something in humans that is unreachable by the other.

That said, if you ask whether a Great Dane will get along with the family cat or cats, the answer is always the same — "it depends."

It depends on:

- The Dane
- The cat(s)
- The ability of the new owner to be consistent in their training
- The effort that the new owner is prepared to make to ensure success

Many MAGDRL Dane orphans come from homes with cats and will get along quickly. These dogs are marked on our web site with the symbol at left

Sometimes an adopted Dane has no history with cats. Those that we determine have low prey-drive will likely get along well with supervised introduction. In those cases, the dog is marked on our web site with the symbol at left.

If it is unlikely that a Dane can live successfully with a cat, it will be marked with the symbol at left.

The worst mistake a cat owner can make is to bring a Gentle Giant home and just let it loose in the house. Best to err on the side of caution.

With gradual and supervised introductions, your new Dane will soon see that your cat is a member of its new family.

Integrating a Dane and a cat

Bringing a new Dane home is both thrilling and stressful for all family members. The first step you must take is to acclimate the Dane to your cat through controlled exposure. That is best accomplished through a slow, supervised introduction.

The day you bring your new Dane home, your cat should be put in a separate room before the dog enters the house. The Dane should be allowed to enter and inspect, then it should be crated to settle down.

Once the Dane is crated, get plenty of dog treats, then let the cat out to explore. If the Dane barks at the cat from the crate, it should be verbally told "Quiet"! If it stops barking, praise and treat heavily. If they do not know the command, you can easily teach it by rewarding each silence with treats and praise. But if the dog will simply not stop barking, cover the crate with a bed sheet to let them settle down. Repeat this introduction every few hours until the Dane does not bark when the cat comes near.

With some Danes, you should expect the settling in process to take several weeks. The Dane should never be allowed to be out of the crate with the cat loose until it has gone one week without barking when the cat is around. *****That does not mean the Dane is locked in a crate for hours at a time.***** Give them free time in the house, but make sure the cat is put in a different room when the dog is out.

During this period when the Dane is crated is a great time to acclimate it to a muzzle. Wire basket muzzles are best because they are less restrictive to the dog and the dogs accept them more quickly than mesh muzzles. Using a wire box muzzle also allows treating for good behavior. Afterwards, being muzzled becomes second nature for the Dane.

When the day comes when it's time to allow the dog to be loose in the rooms with the cat, it is important to do this while the dog is in a muzzle. He should also be wearing a collar or halter with a leash, and you should have treats in hand to reward good behavior.

Always supervise cats and dogs until you know they will get along. For at least the next week, keep the Dane on-leash so it can be restrained if necessary.

And always praise and reward good behavior!



Living with a Dane and a cat

Remember that your cat is part of the equation.

Praise and treat your cat for approaching the Dane calmly. Also make sure it has an exit route if it needs one.

If your Dane has a high prey drive, make sure to leash or teach the command "leave it". It's best to prevent the pursuit from starting. Once the chase sequence starts, the dog will likely be deaf to instructions.

If you have more than one dog, do not allow them to gang up on the cat. Even if you have a dog that gets along with your cat, two dogs make a small pack. The cat may look like prey to one who may entice the other into a hunt. It's best to let the new dog acclimate separately to the cat and to the dog, then finally have leashed introductions with the cat and your current dog. That way each dog understands that the cat is part of the family, not an object of play or prey.

Make sure the dog does not have access to the cat's litter box. Sooner or later, unless you can check the box several times a day and clean it immediately, your Dane will eat the cat droppings. Good idea to place the litter box in a room accessible by a cat door.

Separate cats and dogs at mealtime. As complete carnivores, cats need a diet that includes the amino acid taurine; if the dog eats the cat's food and all the cat gets is leavings in the dog bowl, the cat might develop a dietary deficiency. In addition, a Dane that guards its food could attack the cat or may gulp his meals too quickly and develop digestive problems.

Don't leave thawing meat, cooling desserts, or any other food or scraps where a cat can get them.

Not only will the cat jump to the table or counter or spill the waste basket, but he will either drop things on the floor for the Dane or send the dog into a frenzy of frustrated whining and barking.

Pay attention to both pets as often as possible. You can teach your Dane to "down-stay" while you hold your cat in your lap. Often your attitude and attention is enough to prevent serious rivalries or hostilities from developing.