

A Second Helping of Dog

Your current dog might not accept a new canine roommate without proper preparation.

By Chris Cox-Evick

Before adding a second dog, Tracy Tennison, owner of Citrus Hill Canine Center in Riverside, Calif., says you should carefully consider your rationale. "Many think a playmate will eliminate their current dog's undesirable behaviors, but usually the new dog follows the resident dog's lead. The real answers are owner attention, exercise, and training," she says.

For those prepared to provide the latter times two, a second dog promises twice the fun. Tennison offers the following tips to help avoid problems. Resolve your resident dog's issues before adopting another dog.

Opposite-sex dogs generally get along amicably.

Wait two years before getting a second dog so your resident dog is already trained.

Spay or neuter after growth plates close to prevent unwanted litters. Consult your veterinarian about the appropriate age to spay or neuter each dog.

Introduce dogs on neutral ground where neither lives.

Don't obviously favor either dog – dogs do become jealous.

Take daily on-leash walks with both dogs to promote canine pack behavior and help the dogs bond.