



Six Steps to Smooth Sailing

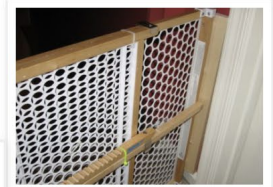
"Our mantra for the introduction was **"we can't go too slow,"** even though at times, it was hard not to rush things. However, since making this work was really important to both of us, we just kept reminding ourselves and each other that it takes longer to undo something done wrong than to do it right the first time.

Frida was on the NILIF program from the moment she walked in the door. (NILF = **Nothing in Life is Free**) We wanted to make sure she understood that we were in control of her life now so she would look to us for leadership in any dicey situations. I really believe that this was a big key to our success.

First Step:

We started out with Frida crated in our home office away from our dog Nick, baby gate in the door. (NOTE: It's important to make sure neither dog is willing/able to scale the baby gate and do a non-kosher intro.)

The office is right off the kitchen/family room and in eyesight of the family room sofa so we could talk to her and praise Nick when he would look into the room calmly. It also gave Frida the opportunity to see that Nick was a valued part of the pack. We walked them together every morning but kept distance between them at all times to avoid any face-to-face issues. We would rotate who walked in front and also walked them side by side (but with one of us between them). Lots of praise for being calm and friendly. Anytime the dogs looked at each other with low slow tail wags, they got effusive praise.



Step 2:

Frida in the office, out of the crate, but with the baby gate up. We monitored this VERY carefully and spent a lot of time at the doorway petting both dogs and telling them how good they were. We also treated each dog at the doorway (after putting them both in sits) and told them how good they were. During this time we ONLY gave treats when both dogs were present and being good. This is the step we spent the most time on. It was the easiest to control and the easiest to reward for correct behavior. The one snark we had at the gate was quelled quickly and loudly - both dogs were reprimanded and sent to time-outs behind closed doors alone. Everything else we did really built on the positive associations the dogs got during this time. We waited until we had reliable, consistent happy tail wags at the gate and no snarks before we moved on. We continued with the walks, allowing them to be closer, but still avoiding direct contact.

Step 3:

Frida on a tie-down but enclosed by an Xpen. This part actually went quite quickly for us due to the solid work done before. (Note: Frida learned to accept crate and tie-down confinement as part of her



Ambassador training at Oakland Animal Services). Lots of praise and treats for good behavior and continued walks.

Step 4:

We moved on to Frida in the Xpen, but no tie-down. We took our time with this step since the next one would have them out together with no barrier and we wanted to make sure we had a solid base. We kept a very close eye on body language and quashed any posturing by either dog and praised appropriate behavior. Continued with the walks and allowed some contact (butt sniffing, but no face-to-face).