

Bringing Your New Dog Home

Preparation and patience are key to building a happy relationship.

The key to helping your new dog make a successful adjustment to your home is being prepared and being patient. It can take anywhere from two days to two months for you and your pet to adjust to each other. The following tips from the *Humane Society of the United States* can help ensure a smooth transition.

Gather Supplies

Prepare the things your dog will need, in advance. You'll need a collar, leash, food and water bowls, and, of course, some toys. Don't forget, you'll need some dog food as well.

Establish House Rules

Work out your dog-care regimen in advance among the human members of your household. Who will walk the dog first thing in the morning? Who will feed the dog at night? Will the dog be allowed on the couch? Where will the dog sleep at night? Are there any rooms in the house that are off-limits? **Remember – NEVER strike, hit, or kick your new pet.** Your new dog may have never been taught manners, and he needs your guidance and patience.

Plan the Arrival

Try to arrange the arrival of your new dog for a weekend or when you can be home for a few days. Get to know each other and spend some quality time together. Don't forget about the "jealousy factor" – make sure you don't neglect other pets and people in your household.

Prepare for Housetraining

Assume your new dog is not housetrained and work from there. Over the housetraining information given to you at the time of adoption and check out housetraining tips for adult dogs. Be consistent and maintain a routine. A little extra effort on your part to come home directly from work each day will pay off in easier, faster housetraining.

Ensure All Pets are Healthy

Animal shelters take in animals with widely varying backgrounds, some of whom have not previously been vaccinated. Inevitably, despite the best efforts of shelter staff, viruses can be spread and may occasionally go home with adopted animals. If you already have dogs or cats at home, make sure they are up-to-date on their shots and in good health before introducing your new dog to other pets. If possible, keep your pets separate for 7-10 days before allowing slow and controlled introductions.



The First Days

Take your new dog to the veterinarian within one week of adoption. Your new dog may need flea and heartworm prevention, as well as additional vaccines or de-worming.

Use Caution During Introductions

- Allow your new pet to familiarize itself with its new home.
- Introduce your pets in controlled situations.
- Give them time – do not force them together or leave them unattended.
- Praise, praise, praise – and give lots of rewards for good behavior.
- When introducing a cat to a dog, DO NOT hold the cat in your arms.
- Give you pets separate food and water bowls, and feed in separate areas.
- Be mindful that conflicts may arise when toys, food, or other high-value items are present.
- Be especially careful when introducing dogs or cats to caged animals.
- Always supervise your pets until you are absolutely sure they get along. Until then, separate your pets by confining at least one of them to its own room. Only allow them to interact with each other with your supervision.

The First Weeks

Provide a Crate

A crate may look to you like the canine equivalent of a jail cell, but to your dog who instinctively likes to den, it's a safe space of their own. It makes housetraining and obedience training easier and saves your dog from the headaches of being yelled at unnecessarily for problem behavior.

If a crate is not an option, consider some sort of confinement to a dog-proofed part of your home. A portion of the kitchen or family room can serve the purpose very well when sectioned off with a dog or baby gate.

Use Training and Consistency to Create a Happy Home

Dogs need order. Let your pet know, from the start, what you expect. When you catch him doing something he shouldn't, do not lose your cool. Stay calm, and remember that he is learning. Reward him with praise when he does well, too! Sign up for a local dog obedience class, and you'll learn what a joy it is to have a well-trained dog.

Long-Term

Let the Games Begin

Dogs need an active life. That means you should plan plenty of exercise and game time for your pet. Enjoy jogging or Frisbee? You can bet, your dog will too. If running around the park is too energetic for your taste, try throwing a ball or a stick, or just going on a long walk together. When you take a drive in the country or visit family and friends, bring your dog and a leash along.

Patience is Key

Finally, remember to temper your expectations. Life with you is a different experience for your new companion, so give them time to adjust. You'll soon find out that you've made a friend for life. No one will ever greet you with as much enthusiasm or provide you with as much unqualified love and loyalty as your dog. Be patient, and you will be amply rewarded.

Important – If you decide the dog you adopted is not the right fit, he must be returned to the shelter within seven days of adoption.