



PROFESSIONAL
DOG TRAINING & BOARDING

Tips for new rescue owners and fosters

Congratulations on your new dog. This is an exciting time both for you and certainly for your dog. We have put together a couple of recommendations for your first couple of days and weeks together. We hope you will find it helpful.

Before you get your dog:

- **Prepare your house for a dog:** Use baby gates and a crate to limit the dog's access to places you don't want him in. It will take him some time to learn the rules of the house.
- **Pick up or put away** anything that you don't want accessible to your dog. This can be house plants, shoes, kid's toys etc....
- **Prepare your yard (if you have one)** - Make sure gates are latched, fences are mended and flower beds are gated.

Ride Home and Arrival:

- **Confine your dog in the car:** It is best to either use a crate or a harness that hooks up to the seat belt buckle. If none is available, use a leash and anchor it by closing the car door and leaving a couple of inches of leash outside. Make sure your dog can lay down but can not access the front seats.
- **Leash:** Please, Please, Please use a leash. When arriving home make sure to have the leash in hand BEFORE you open the door. Your dog does not know that this is their new home. We do not want you chasing your dog around on your first day together.
- **Meeting your pack:** If you have other dogs at home and if they are good with new dogs, it will be best for your dog to meet them gradually and outside. It does not have to happen on their first day at the new home. If possible, give your new pup a couple of days to settle in. At the same time, if your current dog can be a positive influence (for example, if they are calm and friendly) meeting them might help your new dog to relax and feel at home.
- If you do have other dogs, make sure to **pick up all the food and toys**. These are known flash points and we would like the dogs to get along first before having to share toys or food.
- **Feed separately:** Feed your dogs in different rooms with the door shut. That's good advice for the rest of your dogs' life.
- **If you have cats:** Please make sure the cats have a place to be where the new dog cannot reach them. Let them introduce themselves at their own pace. Keep the cat food and litter box outside the dog's reach.



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At Home:

- **Get a crate:** It makes everything much easier. Make sure the crate is cozy and comfortable for the dog. Place chew toys in it and feed your dog in his crate. This will help them like the crate.
- **You might want to keep the dog in the crate for the first few nights:** The experience of being in a new home can be overwhelming and scary for a dog. Don't make him sleep in the laundry room or other rooms that are far away from people. Instead, put the crate next to your bed so you can reassure them and be a calming presence.
- **Everybody needs their own place:** After a couple of days you should decide where to put the dog crate. Where you decide to keep the crate will depend on what's most convenient for you, as well as the dog's response. Many dogs don't like to be isolated in one part of the house while their family is in another part, but some dogs won't settle down in their crates if there's too much activity going on around them. You might have to experiment with different locations until you learn what works best for both you and your dog. Same logic will apply to your dog's bed (or in many cases - beds).
- **Supervise, supervise, supervise:** If you cannot watch the new dog, they need to be in his crate or in a confined area.
- **Practice separation:** As tempting as it is, don't let Sparky be glued to your side all day. Letting your new dog have time to himself - in his crate or a room - will help them cope with times when you are away.
- **Baby gates are your friend:** Use them to keep the dog out of places you don't want them to be. In time, they will learn the boundaries and rules of the house.
- **Feeding:** Your dog may appreciate some space when he is eating and may walk away from the food if disturbed. If that is the case, give them all the time and room they need. Other dogs will need you to stay around or they won't eat. These behaviors are a sign of a dog adjusting to his new environment. Give them all the support you can.
- **Switching food:** If you are planning on switching your dog's food, we recommend that you wait a little. Keep the dog on the same food they came with for the first week and then start switching gradually by mixing the old food with the new one.

On walks:

Walks are a great way to spend time with your dog, get some energy out and familiarize them with their new environment.

- Make sure to take treats for your walks. It will help keep your dog's attention on you and can help mitigate things they may find scary (loud cars, barking dogs).
- Choose your route wisely. Keep it simple and free of known disturbances (like that big dog behind a fence that always lunges and barks).
- Make sure your dog's collar fits well and can't slide off.
- Make sure you have a good leash that you can grip if your dog reacts to a dog or a person outside.
- If your dog is friendly with people and dogs you can use these walks to introduce them to friendly dogs and people. Do not force interaction as you need to let them decide when they are comfortable meeting others.

Training:

- **Dogs can learn at any age:** Reward based training is an excellent way to spend quality time with your dog as well as teach him obedience and learn about his personality. Contact a trainer and start training him as soon as possible.
- **Make sure everyone is on the same page:** Discuss the house rules and training goals with your whole family. Figure out who will do what, when. Pick one set of training cues and stick with them.
- **Don't encourage behavior that you'll regret when he gets big:** Jumping up can be cute when the dog is small and young. It won't be cute when he's 60 pounds. Reward good behavior, don't wait for bad behavior.

Socialization:

- **Meeting new people:** Some dogs will need an adjustment phase while others can meet new people the very next day. In any case, it is important that your dog meets plenty of friendly people in a positive environment.
- **Introduce your pup to all kinds of novel things:** People in funny hats. Car rides, Kids playing etc.
- **Socialize, don't traumatize:** Introduce new experiences slowly and never let your dog get overwhelmed.
- **Be cautious about dog parks:** Most dogs at the dog park are quite rude by canine standards. A couple bad experiences could ruin your puppy/dog's opinion of her own species.
- **Hellos and Goodbyes should be no big deal:** Don't make a fuss over your pup when you leave or come home.
- **Visit the vet:** Take your pup for a visit when she doesn't have an appointment. Bring some treats and ask the office staff to give her some. Make the vet's office a fun place! (call ahead first to make sure this is OK)
- Leave the TV or radio on when you leave your puppy home alone.

Common behaviors that you may need to work on with your new dog. Your dog may show all of them or none.

- **House Breaking:** Even though you may have adopted an older dog, housebreaking incidents are to be expected in the first couple of weeks and even longer. Your house is a total new environment for your new dog. He does not know the rules. They also might not know how to "tell" you that he needs to go. Developing a steady and predictable routine will be a great help for your dog.
- **Pick a potty spot:** If you don't want Sparky pooping all over the yard as an adult, pick one area and take them directly there when it's potty time.
- **Set a daily routine:** Housetraining proceeds more smoothly if your dog knows what to expect from her day.
- **Watch your dog poops.** Disgusting? Yes. But it could save your dog's life. If you notice anything like diarrhea or blood, you should contact your vet.
- **Poop eating (Coprophagia):** is more common in dogs than we would like to think. Keep a close eye on your dog when he is outside and clean up after him. Once they pick up that habit it can be hard to unlearn.