

Bringing Home Your Adopted Dog



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A Time of Transition – For Everyone!

There are few things more satisfying than adopting a dog from a shelter or rescue organization. For an adult dog, the first few weeks in a new home are a critical transition period. It's important that you know what to expect and how to work with your new best friend. How well you manage the dog's behavior during this time will determine whether he develops into a well-behaved, loving pet – or not.

Adoptive owners view a dog's new life in their home as a wonderful change from a shelter pen – which it is! – but the transition presents some problems for the dog. The transition brings a change in the dog's daily routine and caretakers. In the new home, the dog suddenly faces a new set of social companions in a new environment filled with unfamiliar smells, sights and sounds. He will be confused, stimulated and a little frightened. He faces a big adjustment as he learns his way around and develops relationships with his new family. Some undesirable behavior may accompany this transition. Don't worry! By modifying or redirecting his actions, you can help the dog become a solid citizen in a few weeks.

What to Expect

Below are some behaviors you can expect from your newly adopted dog. Work with trainers at The Local Bark and read this guide to help you address these behaviors. Most of all, don't panic! Your dog can and will sense this, and most likely he'll result to (undesirable) coping strategies out of confusion or his desire to please.

- Jumping up
- Exploratory behavior, including sniffing, mouthing and chewing new things
- Stealing food
- Accidents in the house. Whether your dog came from a shelter or a foster home, the new surroundings (and rules) are different. Don't assume your dog isn't housetrained because he has accidents in the beginning of life in his new environment. *rescue,*
- Wild running and play in the house. Frequently this behavior is encouraged by children (and some adults); the new dog cannot yet distinguish between indoor and outdoor behavior.
- Door bolting - Shelter dogs often have door-bolting instincts. They've been penned-in and a doorway, especially one to the outdoors, represents an opportunity to explore (or escape...remember, your new dog doesn't intuitively know how much you love him. He's operating on instinct).

The first few days following an adoption are a critical time for learning rules and breaking bad habits. Dogs are particularly impressionable in a new environment, especially the first time they try a behavior. Therefore, plan to invest time during this period to socialize, teach and get acquainted with your new dog.



Plan and prepare for your new dog in advance. Read further in this guide about readying your home and schedule, and equipment you'll need before your dog comes home. Mentally prepare yourself and your family— all things will not go smoothly at first.

Embrace the idea of leadership and start practicing the moment you take over the other end of your new dog's leash!

Keep in Mind: A few things about your adopted dog

- Remind yourself and your family of the commitment you've made in getting a dog - daily care and exercise, medical visits and obedience.
- No single training approach is right for every dog.
- During the transition period, a dog needs time to adjust to the rules and schedule of your household. And he needs your leadership! A dog is a pack animal looking for guidance, and it is up to you to teach him good, acceptable behaviors. If the human does not take charge, the dog will try to as a coping mechanism.
- A dog cannot do damage unless you let that happen. When you can't supervise, keep her in a pen, a dog run or other small secure area, or in a crate with chew treats or toys.
- Don't give your dog free reign in your house. This can be overwhelming to a new dog and he can and will find troublesome ways to cope.
- When outdoors in an unfenced area keep your dog on-leash (you can use a 30 ft. long line) and supervise him. You'll be able to observe his drives and tendencies (e.g. he likes to chase squirrels, he's afraid of kids on bikes or skateboards, etc.) and you'll be able to maintain absolute control.
- Supervise your dog even when he's in a fenced yard. If there's a way to escape, most dogs will find it.
- Don't kiss your dog or place your face at the dog's eye level before you've begun training and established yourself and other humans in the home as higher up in the hierarchy. Dogs often perceive a face placed at their eye-level as a threat.
- Don't issue a command unless you are in a position to enforce it. Telling a dog to do something, then not guiding him to obey if he chooses not to, teaches him to ignore you.
- Beware of sending mixed signals that bad behavior is cute or entertaining. This is especially important with small dogs because they don't present the physical challenges of a large dog. It's easy to overlook or excuse bad behavior in small dogs but remember, your dog's brain is still that of a dog, no matter how small.
- Do not keep dogs in dark, damp basements, garages, or non-family areas; this thwarts your efforts to raise a socialized, well-behaved, housetrained animal.



LEADERSHIP

'Alpha' is an Attitude. Be your Dog's Leader.

Dogs are not little humans; they are pack animals that follow a leader. Your dog begins assessing his new pack *the second* you take over at the other end of the leash. Your state of mind and your energy – are you calm, excited or nervous? - is detectable by your dog. He reads your body language, although he may interpret it differently than a human might. Don't believe it? Just look at the jobs we've given today's service dogs. Although scientists haven't figured out exactly how they do it, these amazing dogs help with things such as psychiatric disabilities, seizure disorders, fibromyalgia, and diabetes. Whether they read body language or their sense of smell detects something's off in their owner's body, the bottom line is they *can*.

Just assume your dog can tell if you're not in "leadership" mode and read on to learn how to show your dog that you understand *your* job as leader – to protect and lead your pack.

The honeymoon

In many cases, dogs from shelters or dogs that are re-homed from a foster or rescue organization have a "honeymoon period" where they appear calm, submissive and totally dependent on you. This "honeymoon period" can last anywhere from 5 days to 2 months. It is usually during this period that new owners believe they've adopted the perfect dog and forego everything they've heard or read about being their dog's "leader". Don't be fooled! During this "submissive" period, your dog has been assessing his new "pack"; determining who's in charge, trying to figure out the rules. If you back off on the boundaries, your new dog will spot this as "weakness" and either old tendencies will surface, or your dog will develop new habits that almost certainly you won't like.

Sure signs the honeymoon is over

Your dog nips when you try to take a toy from him...rushes ahead of you out the front door...ignores your request to exit the couch...or yanks ahead on walks. If you feel like your dog is challenging authority, then he probably thinks he is the "alpha" of the home. He needs to be taught a new, well-defined pecking order - and a new, lower place in the family hierarchy - for everyone's welfare. He needs YOU to become his leader. Otherwise, he'll rebel, growl and possibly bite when faced with a challenge. Least case, he's sure to drive you crazy.

Dogs aren't looking for a democracy - they're looking for leaders. Dogs want to know their place in the family pack and what their people expect of them, otherwise they're stressed. Most often, an "aggression" problem is really a "stress and confusion" problem. If your dog tries to dominate you or someone else in your household, it's probably because he sees role-confusion and responds by taking charge.

"Alpha" is an attitude. It is not achieved by force or punishment. Rather, it is earned through confident, authoritative, consistent behavior on the part of the owner, who we prefer to call the leader. Dogs can sense who's in charge immediately; they are continuously reading your body language and are aware each time their people don't enforce commands. Notice how



most dogs watch a good obedience instructor - and how they seem to wait to be given direction. They express respect and interest, not fear.

Then notice how a good obedience instructor behaves. He or she will walk with confidence, stand up straight, use a firm tone of voice; a voice that expresses commands as a directive, not a question. The dog realizes this person makes the decisions.

Are you rewarding bad behavior? Anticipate and remove opportunities for undesirable behavior. Don't let your dog dash out the door, for the accompanying feelings of joy and freedom are self-rewarding. Don't leave food on the counter, because if the dog grabs a tasty sandwich, counter-surfing has just been reinforced.

Peeing and pooping indoors? Aggressive behavior? Hyperactivity? These can be symptoms of common health problems. For example, a dog with worms may potty indoors, and may eat a lot but not appear to put on weight. And a dog suffering from impacted anal glands or a leg injury might be in pain - and bite - when someone tries to touch him. See a veterinarian to rule out a medical basis for behavioral problems.

Ways to Show Leadership to your Dog

True dog leadership is a lifestyle. You can communicate leadership with your dog every day, all the time, by focusing on the following 4 areas: food (yours and the dog's), leash walks, personal space (yours), and attention, affection & play.

Food

Food should be extremely valuable to a dog. They are predatory pack animals, not grazing herd animals, and it is natural for them to expect that their leader provides and controls food.

Free feeding vs scheduled feeding

New owners of adopted dogs, especially too-thin dogs, often think they're doing the right thing by providing their new dog with an unlimited amount of food, forgetting that dogs are naturally wired to "earn" their food. Free-feeding (always available) food removes the opportunity to assert your leadership and lessens the value of this resource.

Rules

- Assert your leadership by requiring that your dog be calm and out of the way while you prepare his food.
- Don't allow your dog to just dive in! Require that he sit and wait until you "okay" him to the bowl.
- If your dog walks away from his bowl, pick it up and try again at the next feeding time. Pick up your dog's bowl when he's finished eating (this helps prevent food-guarding issues).



- Use a little hot water on your dog's kibble and mix it up with your hands. This "scents" the food with your scent and reminds the dog it comes from you. Remember, he doesn't know all the work you do to select, buy, haul, and prepare the food.

Your food

Leaders do not allow their dogs to beg, or to take ownership of the area under the kitchen table. Nor do they allow their dogs to "participate" in the kitchen. Your dog shouldn't be underfoot and in the way when you're preparing your own food. Nor should they be fed directly off your plate from the kitchen table. They should be calm and settled away from the high-value area of the family kitchen. It's okay if they can see you, but they shouldn't participate.

The Walk

Leash walking your dog is as much a leadership exercise as it is a physical (and potty) exercise for your dog. All dogs require leash walking to be balanced; it is an instinctive need, and thinking that access to your back yard will suffice is incorrect. Depending on your dog's exercise requirement, leash walks can be as short as 20 minutes or as long as an hour.

Some dogs (we'd argue most dogs) require more than one walk per day. An under-exercised dog will exhibit problematic and annoying behaviors, like jumping up, chewing, digging, and excessive barking. Talk to a Local Bark trainer about supplementing your dog's walks with a treadmill if your dog doesn't seem properly exercised after leash walking.

The walk is a relationship building and training exercise – and gives your dog a job! Use a doggy backpack weighted down with water bottles or sand-filled weights to get more out of a leash walk.

The walk is all business – the leader owns the walk, and the walk's purpose is for the dog to walk next to you on a relaxed leash, stop when you stop, and turn when you turn. Alternate "all business" intervals with periods where you "okay" the dog to sniff around or send pee-mail. You, not the dog, are in charge of these intervals.

In a dog's mind, whoever is in front during a walk is in charge of the walk. This is a key bit of information, especially when encountering other people and dogs. Don't put your dog in the position where he feels he needs to be in charge. Most likely you won't like how he behaves.

Vary where you go on your walks. If a dog thinks he already knows where you're going (and especially if he's excited about it), he's more likely to pull. Don't hesitate to promptly change direction – over and over again – until your dog figures out he needs to pay attention to you in order to keep moving forward.



Work with a professional trainer to teach your dog how to properly walk on a leash. The walk is the perfect opportunity for your dog to perform a job for which he can be rewarded (with breakfast or an off-leash romp).

Personal Space – Yours

Teaching your dog to respect your personal space is one of the most common areas well-meaning owners get off track. A dog that repeatedly crowds you, leans on you, sits on your feet, jumps on the couch next to you, or is front-and-center at the front door when guests arrive, doesn't respect your personal space. This respect is *essential* for a well-balanced, well-behaved dog.

Demonstrating this leadership skill is especially important in the high-value areas of the home, such as the front door, the kitchen, the family room, the car, sleeping areas, and any doorway, especially doorways that lead in and out of the house.

Shelter dogs often have door-bolting instincts. They've been penned-in and a doorway, especially one to the outdoors, represents an opportunity to explore. You must teach your dog that *you* are in charge of access to the outdoors, and reward your dog with the opportunity to visit the outdoors when he's calm and waiting for your "okay".

Dogs expect to give their leaders as much or little personal space as requested. A leader requires their dog not get underfoot or invade their personal space uninvited. Expand your personal space requirement; have your dog go to his 'place' while you're in the kitchen, on the couch, etc. Once he is calm, you can invite him to join you (or not).

Use your body as your tool ("body blocking") to indicate to your dog to back up and wait – another opportunity for your dog to do a "job" for which he can be rewarded.

A properly exercised dog can and should spend a large amount of time in one of their designated "places" when in the house with you. Keep a mat or bed in each of the high-value areas of the house where you and your family congregate and expect your dog to be able to observe from a distance. This is true pack behavior. Dogs don't need to be and shouldn't be on top of you or following you around all the time.

Attention, Affection & Play

Attention, affection and play are also areas where owners can easily get off track. The good news is that it is *easy* to get on track, especially with a dog you've just brought home. One of the things we love to give and get from our dogs is affection. Affection is wonderful if given and received at the right time – when the dog is calm and not begging for it. It's easy to give too much affection to a newly adopted dog, because we make the mistake of thinking that affection means the same thing to dogs as it does to people. People might need affection to feel secure. Your dog needs leadership to feel secure. Too much attention, or attention given at the wrong time, screams weakness.



Eye contact is a powerful tool and a form of attention: give it, and your dog reads “invitation!” Withhold it, and your dog reads “respect”. Don’t fall into the trap of thinking your dog gets “sad” when you ignore him. Remember, dogs are not people. Their language is different. Your silence and lack of eye contact speaks VOLUMES to your dog. It says “I am the leader and I’ll let you know if and when I need you”. Like your personal space, your attention is something *you*, not your dog, should control.

Leaders give attention and affection when warranted or deserved – don’t mistakenly reinforce bad behavior with attention; even negative attention can be rewarding to a dog. When you come into the room, withhold all attention (including eye contact!) until your dog is calm. Give the humans in your pack attention before you give it to your dog. Dogs expect this when the roles of the pack are established and enforced. If your dog tries to butt in, use your body to block him and ignore him, or send him to his “place” to wait. This is especially important if you have children in your household.

An excited voice will bring out the excitement in your dog. There’s a time and a place for excitement, but it needs to be on your terms. Excitedly greeting your dog as soon as you walk in the door sends mixed signals to the dog about who’s in charge, not to mention encourages jumping up.

Leaders say when play begins and when it ends – if your dog brings you a toy (“You will play with me NOW!”), ignore him until he’s taken his attention from you then call him to you to play. Don’t rough-house or play tug-o-war with your newly adopted dog. This type of play can rouse dominant instincts in a dog and you’re not likely to appreciate the results.

Attention, affection and play are rewards and should be used as such.

Keep in Mind: Leadership

- Dogs are not little humans; they are pack animals who follow a leader.
- Dogs coming from a shelter *especially* need strong leadership to feel secure. Don’t make the mistake of giving your dog free reign in your house (thinking he needs it after his stint in the shelter pen).
- Don’t assume a fearful or insecure dog doesn’t need strong leadership. A fearful dog is extremely relieved when his human is in control. A more dominant dog needs strong leadership in order to learn his place in your pack.
- If a newly adopted dog growls or snaps, realize this is normal, but start working with a trainer immediately. You need to assert leadership (not punishment) to convey to the dog that you won’t tolerate this behavior. If you back down, or become frightened, your dog gains power over you. Remember, this dog doesn’t know you and is likely overwhelmed by his new environment. Being a dog, he doesn’t know all the trouble you went through to adopt him, and how you can’t wait to love him.
- Beware of letting your dog on your bed or furniture if you haven’t established all human family members as the leaders (“alpha”). Dominance-related problems often arise



- when a dog is on a higher physical level. Dogs don't seek equality; they seek and need leadership.
- Seek out an obedience program that focuses on teaching you how to provide leadership, relationship building and problem-solving.
 - Dogs don't do things out of spite; this is a human concept. Dogs exhibiting undesirable behaviors are usually just looking for ways to cope.
 - Start day one by teaching your dog appropriate behavior through consistent, positive reinforcement and calm, strong leadership.

Obedience Training & Owner Education

How important is obedience training and owner education? Essential! In fact, training is the biggest factor in whether you have a successful, healthy relationship with your dog. More than 90% of dogs in shelters are there because of common behavioral problems that can be addressed.

You've got options when it comes to dog training. You can take a group class, which means you'll spend training sessions in a group with a trainer and then do most of the work at home between classes. You can have a trainer come into your home and work with you and your dog in private sessions. Or you can enroll your dog in a board-and-train program where a trainer teaches the dog over a multi-week period and then instructs you how to maintain what your dog has learned. Whatever option you choose, at the end of the day it's all about *you*. The kindest and most responsible thing you can do for your dog is to learn about dog behavior and continually guide your dog with patience and consistency so he learns how to behave in a world of humans. Training will make your dog a trustworthy, socialized family member and forge a bond with your dog.

Reward and repeat: If a dog does something which results in reward, he will most likely do it again. If you work with your dog each day and reward desired behavior, he will learn what is expected of him. If a dog doesn't learn, it means the owner didn't take enough time to teach and guide him. That is why so many dogs given up as "impossible" turn out to be model canine citizens when lucky enough to be adopted by someone else.

Be patient, firm and consistent: Reward good behavior. Small soft treats work well; always accompany them with verbal praise and positive body language. This is reward-based training.

Put down that newspaper! Punishment teaches a dog to avoid the lesson and distrust the teacher. For example, if you hit a dog who just urinated indoors, he'll learn not to potty when you're looking. Instead, reward good behavior, set up opportunities for the dog to learn and display good behavior - and disrupt or ignore bad behavior.

Timing is essential: Correct immediately when an unacceptable behavior occurs, not afterwards, then praise enthusiastically when your canine modifies her behavior.



By correct, we mean a quick yank of the leash, immediately letting it go slack. Some people find spraying water, shaking a can of pennies or tossing a small sack of rattling items (such as beans) effective in disrupting a behavior. However, these aversive techniques should be used to interrupt the dog's action, not as punishment - **and they work best when you successfully conceal the fact you are causing the interruption.** It's better if the dog thinks his own action caused the surprise noise, spray or the landing of the rattle-sack. Never toss the sack at your dog, just in the vicinity of his misbehavior. And it's meaningless to throw it after the misbehavior occurs. Again, timing is key.

Ignoring can be the best medicine: Many modern-method trainers advise to ignore misbehavior such as jumping or grabbing at a sleeve. Instead, turn away - then praise and reward as soon as your dog calms down. Take that opportunity to instruct the dog to engage in a positive action such as "sit." Dogs thrive on attention (even negative attention is better than none at all), and often drop behaviors that don't pay off - while looking for ways to gain attention.

WooooHooo!! A chasing game! This is a big reason why a young dog runs off with shoes. (Another reason being that they like things that carry their peoples' smells.) He knows that you'll come looking for the shoe, and give him attention. Most dogs, similar to children, prefer negative attention to no attention at all. So try to remove the opportunity by putting away shoes and your other personal items.

Anticipate and avoid opportunities for misbehavior. For example, don't let the dog dash out the door. Take the time to teach him to sit-stay away from the door when people are coming and going. Before you have taught him to be trustworthy, keep him in another room or crate.

Give a verbal command only once - if the dog doesn't respond immediately, food lure her in the position of the command (i.e. "sit"). Repeating commands ("sit, sit, come on, sit, sit, SIT...") means the dog has not learned "sit" means sit.

Don't issue a command unless you are in a position to enforce it. For example, don't say "come" unless you have a long-line attached to guide him to you if your dog is not yet reliably complying. If you don't enforce a command, you are teaching the dog that listening is optional.

Another common pitfall is combining commands. "Sit" "down" and "come" are distinct and important commands. "Sit-down" and "come on sit" aren't. Be clear.

Once you have your dog reliably responding to a command, start practicing the command in situations with distractions. When you and your dog have accomplished that level of difficulty, it's time to generalize the response to other locations and people. For example, your dog may be great at sit-stays in your home. Now take him outside with several neighbors present.

Always praise a dog for coming to you. Never correct, scold or punish a dog when he comes to you, even if the response is delayed or it was preceded by something naughty. And



don't call your dog to you for things like administering medication or nail trimming. Always keep coming to you a positive experience.

Remember: obedience training is more for you than the dog. It teaches you to train your dog. It teaches you how to be alpha, how to gain your dog's respect and obedience, and how to help your dog to live in the human world.

All family members who are old enough to interact with the dog should participate in training. Obedience commands need to be practiced and incorporated into your daily life. Certain commands, like "down-stay," can be invaluable in the house and a life-saver when out in public.

Practicing obedience also gives dogs a terrific outlet for their physical and mental energy. A well-trained dog can go more places with you. And a dog that's secure in his place in the family pack is happy to let his human be the leader.

Start teaching your dog simple commands like sit and stay. Keep your training periods short and fun, using lots of praise and treats. Work on one command at a time and end the session when the pup has successfully completed a command.

Adopted Dogs & Separation Anxiety

Dog separation anxiety is one of the most common behavioral problems to affect shelter and rescued dogs (and their owners). Adopting a shelter dog is a wonderful way to gain a new, loyal family member and change the life of a special animal. However, many shelter dogs suffer from separation anxiety either simply because of their personality or because of abandonment issues, and will need extra loving care and plenty of patience.

Dogs are social creatures, close-knit pack animals that rely on that pack for guidance, companionship, food, and shelter. Being alone is not a natural state for dogs, which do not differentiate between canine and human pack members. This is why separation anxiety so often affects our furry friends, particularly those who have been abandoned or left alone in a shelter.

The signs of separation anxiety in shelter dogs include:

- Destructive behavior such as digging, chewing, scratching, urinating or defecating in the house (despite being house trained).
- Destructive behavior when left alone, regardless of the length of time.
- The dog follows you from room to room, never letting you out of his sight.
- The dog displays frantic, exuberant behavior upon your return home.
- The dog reacts with depression or signs of anxiety when you prepare to leave.
- The dog dislikes being outside alone.



- The best way to make the transition from a shelter to your home as easy as possible on your new best friend is to have patience. Dogs are considerably more relaxed, and responsive to learning and following commands when they are in a secure, non-threatening environment.

The following tips will help to ease the transition and eliminate dog separation anxiety.

Practice departures and arrivals: Keep all of your departures and arrivals as low-key as possible. Although it may be rather difficult at first, it's important to completely ignore your dog for the first few minutes after arriving at home. Once a few minutes have passed, calmly and nonchalantly pet your dog keeping your voice low at all times.

Offer comfort: When leaving the house, leave your pooch with an article of your clothing that you've worn recently. Your scent will offer comfort and a sense of familiarity.

Establish a routine: All dogs, not just those who have lived in a shelter, are happier and more well-adjusted if their owners have established a daily routine.

Establish safety cues: In a calm voice, say the exact same thing to your dog every time you leave the house, just a short sentence that you'll use every time you leave, such as telling them to guard the house, or that you'll be right back.

Practice makes perfect: It's important to practice departures and arrivals, gradually building up the amount of time you are gone. Begin by gathering your things as if you were leaving; keys, coat, purse, or whatever it is you normally do before leaving, and then sit back down. Repeat this practice until your pooch no longer shows signs of distress.

Teach your dog the sit/stay or down/stay command: Practice this command, gradually having your dog sit and stay farther and farther away from the door with each session.

Never, ever muzzle, tether, or crate your shelter dog (unless you've established he's crate trained) to deal with separation anxiety: While crating the pup may keep him from destroying your house, or howling while you're away, unless he is already crate-trained, doing so will only make the problem considerably worse by making them more anxious and afraid.

Make your schedule as consistent as possible. Remember: it is not fair to get upset if a dog has an accident after being left alone a long time. One popular solution: hire a mid-day dog walker.

When you first bring your dog home, should you spend the whole day with her? No - this is one of the biggest mistakes dog adopters make. Instead, have her bed, safe chew toys and water in the confined area in which she'll stay when you're gone - whether it's a crate or in a gated-off kitchen area. Take her to that area, tell her to lie down, give her a chew toy and a treat and praise, using her name.



Next, step away. If she remains quiet, good; don't talk to her, because that will distract her from this desired behavior. Before she begins to grow restless, take her back outside again to play or walk.

Return her to the crate, then go into another room for longer periods. Next, leave the house and come back in right away. Gradually make those trips longer and longer; vary the duration you're out. Your dog will be less anxious as she learns that when you leave, you eventually come back.

Give her a treat while she's in the crate, and talk to her while she is in the crate, so she'll come to accept the crate. By being reliable, you'll gain her trust - and teach her that you decide what to do.

A tired dog is a good (and happy) dog. Before you leave your dog for extended periods, exercise her vigorously. Then, for 20 minutes before leaving the house, go about your business calmly - then just leave. Other than your standard departure sentence ("guard the house" or "be back soon") don't make a fuss saying good-bye.

COMING HOME

The First Day

Dogs thrive on routine, so orient your new companion to your schedule. As long as you are consistent and provide leadership, the dog will adjust.

Manage the environment – dogs will explore everything, so dog-proof your house and possessions.

Getting acclimated/houstraining helpers

When you bring your new dog home, walk him outside on-leash so that he can take in the smells of the turf and relieve himself. Pick a special place and encourage him to potty there. Be patient; it may take 10 or 15 minutes. Always praise warmly when he relieves himself in an approved spot.

Next, enter the house and show him around. Keep him on leash. If he lifts his leg to mark, give him a quick leash correction (quick, short sideways yank on the leash and release) and tell him "No" to disrupt the action, then take him outside immediately. Offer him a training treat for going in the right place.

Remember, your dog will be excited and anxious about his new home. Don't be surprised at panting and pacing, whining, excessive yawning, houstraining accidents, excessive drinking or chewing, or gastric upset. Any dog, especially a male who was not neutered early, is likely to mark new territory - especially if other pets have lived there. Tell every member of your family to resist the temptation to overwhelm a new dog. Give him some time and space to get settled.



Next, take him to his crate or confinement area. Encourage him to sniff around; reward him with small treats for entering and staying in the crate. Keep soft bedding and safe toys in the crate; rotate the toys for variety.

After the house tour, take him outside to potty again. Be sure to take him to the same spot.

If your dog is not housebroken, begin houstraining now. See the end of this guide for resources that will help you learn how. Stay tuned in and responsive to your dog's signals of when he needs to go. The more vigilant you are now, the more reliably houstrained he'll be later.

Unless you plan on having your dog regularly potty indoors on paper or a potty pad (e.g. you live in a high-rise apartment), try and restrict the use of papers and pads (except with puppies in a pen).

Having a few accidents the first week does not mean a dog is not housebroken. Excitement can lead to accidents. In addition, males tend to mark in the house the first day or two. Once he begins to settle in, and you begin educating him in acceptable behavior, he will relax and behave.

Introducing Your New Dog to your Other Dogs

Before bringing a new dog home, be sure all animals are healthy, have current vaccinations and test negative for parasites. Realize that even if the dogs met successfully on neutral turf, things are different when you bring a new dog home. Make sure there's another person at the homecoming so the dogs can meet on-leash outside.

Prior to the introduction, leash-walk the new dog outside. Then bring out the other dog (one at a time if you have multiple) on leash, preferably with choke/slip collars to provide full control. **GO FOR A WALK BEFORE YOU ALLOW THE DOGS TO SNIFF EACH OTHER.**

Make sure you are relaxed, so you don't telegraph anxiety through the leash. Avoid keeping the collar pulled tight, since "restraint frustration" elevates tension and the risk of aggression. The dogs will be more relaxed knowing they have some room to maneuver. Watch carefully so you can make a leash correction if necessary (like if the dogs start to eyeball each other).

Make the meeting fun with verbal praise (calm) and treats (timed to reward good, relaxed behavior). Introduce gradually, making sure the animals are calm. Pet the resident dog, assuring that everything's OK. If it's not OK, suspend introductions and resume the walk. Be careful to reward only good behavior.

Keep the dogs within sight of each other. If the animals are receptive to each other, praise each one and reward them with treats and petting to show that good things happen when they are together. If there is a negative reaction, move back to the distance at which neither reacted. Watch for warning signs such as fur raised on the back, staring or stiffening up.



If one dog reacts aggressively, don't punish the aggressor; instead, take him in a neutral or less valued area to settle down and ignore him. If both dogs act aggressively, remove each to different, neutral areas. Try re-introducing later in the day.

When correcting unacceptable behavior, timing is critical. Do not wait for the lunge; at the first hint of aggression, such as a stare, correct with a firm "No" and a quick (but not punishing) leash correction, and redirect the dog's attention to you. You must keep control at all times and show the dogs YOU are the alpha. Don't be alarmed if they don't warm up to each other immediately. Either dog may engage in aggressive posturing, barking, marking, housetraining accidents and possessiveness over toys and people. (If this persists beyond a week or so, consult a trainer.)

When the dogs come inside, a fight could break out, so leave the leashes on for quick control if needed. Keep all toys and treats out of sight until everyone is comfortable. An added advantage to having two people present when introducing dogs is that one can focus on praising each one. However, if you're alone, you can tie one dog's leash to a doorknob or sofa leg at a length that allows the animals to sniff each other at a safe range.

The more socialized both dogs are, the less time it will take for them to become friendly. Try not to be nervous or your dogs may sense the tension and even defend you from the other dog. To avoid injuries, keep new pets separate from others when you aren't able to supervise. (Some owners find it's best to continue to keep dogs separated at mealtime, and to keep toys off the floor, to prevent fights.) You might crate the newcomer in a family area. Avoid keeping him in a highly coveted area, such as near the other pets' food bowls.

Acclimation can take days or weeks. Be sure to give each pet 10 or 15 minutes of quality time alone with you each day - play, brush, massage, practice rewardable skills. Once the animals react well to each other, remove the leashes. Keep watch, and keep a spray bottle or whistle on hand to interrupt the pets if they begin to stare or otherwise misbehave. Continue rewarding good behavior with praise and training treats. Always let your dogs know what you expect of them, and they'll be responsive instead of confused.

Socialization is critical - and is more than just exposing the dog to new experiences. The owner must act as leader in all situations, as the dog will be gauging the owner's reactions. Remain confident and relaxed, which also allows you to be sensitive to cues from the dog. If a dog does not sense his person can handle a situation, he may try to take charge or react in the only way he knows how - which might be barking, growling, lunging or trying to bite in an attempt to control the environment.

Introducing Your New Dog to People

A new dog feels bewildered and stressed by all of the changes, so surrounding her with too many people might cause her to cower or nip. So delay introductions to friends and neighbors until the dog has had a chance to settle in. (However, you should start obedience training right away.)



Make introductions one at a time, on leash for control. Exercise and calm the dog before meetings, and have training treats handy to shape and reward good behavior. You may want to have the dog on leash so that you can correct immediately as needed. Make sure the visitor is relaxed, and that you convey confidence.

Instruct visitors to ignore the dog at first meeting (this includes eye contact). Allow the dog to sniff the visitor first, before any petting. Beware: if the guest is tense, the dog may sense this as a direct challenge. So set the tone with your actions and attitude – keep business-as-usual with guests. Read cues from your dog: how comfortable does she appear? Many dogs love new people, while others feel overwhelmed.

Expect your new dog to engage in behaviors you'll need to correct, such as growling or jumping on people. Allowing a dog – even the little ones! – to jump on people is a common mistake, but to avoid exasperation down the line, teach your dog "off" from the start. In addition, don't let anyone engage your dog in aggressive play such as wrestling, tug of war, or play biting.

Dogs & Children

Never leave children alone with your dog. Teach your own and visiting children:

- The proper way to approach a dog (avoiding direct eye contact, from the side, and hand extended with palm down).
- Not to rush up to, scream at, or pester a dog.
- Never harass or mistreat a dog. Don't jump on or rough-house with dogs.
- A dog can't whine or cry, so he tells you he's afraid by growling and nipping.

Bedtime

Your dog can, especially at first and if he is fearful or insecure, sleep in a room with the pack - you and your family. The dog should have her own bed to sleep on. For some dogs, sleeping on the human's bed can aggravate dominant behaviors, so exercise caution. If your dog begins to growl or show other signs of aggression to any one in the household, work on obedience training immediately to reestablish who is in charge.

The first few nights, you may want to confine your new dog in a crate in the bedroom, but start teaching your dog house manners so that you can provide increased freedom. It is not unusual for your new dog to bark or whine if confined to a crate. Dogs want to be with their pack members. (This is why dogs kept outside often are nuisance barkers or destructive. They are stressed being kept apart.)

Place the crate or bed where she can see you. If she barks at bedtime, correct her with a firm "No Bark!" Praise softly when she quiets down.

Safe chew toys will give your dog something to do until she falls asleep.

If you think you'll eventually want to wean your dog from her crate, pick a night after you've tired her out and keep the crate door open. You can transition to just a dog bed from there.



Shopping List

When picking up your dog

1. **Buckle collar:** leather or non-stretch material. Make sure it is "2-fingers" snug and can't come off.
2. **ID tag:** attached securely to collar.
3. **Training (slip) collar, harness or head collar:** Measure the neck and add 3 in. for the proper length - just long enough to fit over the head. Learn how to put it on properly. Good alternatives include neck/body harnesses and head halters, which are fitted. (*Martingale*)
4. **Leash:** strong clasp and thick leather or double-ply woven for your comfort.

Supplies to have ready at home

1. **Crate:** an invaluable tool, especially at the beginning.
2. **Baby gates:** a good confinement alternative. Make sure dog can't get head/paws caught in gate, can't chew through or knock down the gate or jump the gate.
3. **Bedding:** easy to clean, thick enough for comfort.
4. **Exercise pen:** helpful when you want a dog confined but not crated.
5. **Water and food bowls:** use stainless steel or ceramic. Plastic can absorb bacteria and smell.
6. **Flea comb:** check for fleas, and comb to aid the skin. Good "shedding" control, too.
7. **Brush:** brush daily; good for skin and can be better than bathing.
8. **Grooming supplies:** get the right tools for your dog if you're going to bathe, clip claws and cut fur yourself. Different coats require different brushes.
9. **Pet-specific cleaners:** such as Simple Solution or Nature's Miracle, available from pet supply stores. They remove pet stains and odors.
10. **20-foot leash (a 'long line'):** good for training the "come" command (recall).

Feeding, nutrition & toys

1. **Food:** if you want to change the food your dog has been eating, gradually change over to the food of your choice. Use a good grade of dog food. Premium dog food can lead to lower vet bills. Dry food is good for teeth and digestion, but it's OK to add a little warm water to dry food to enhance the aroma. Get in the habit of 'scenting' the food (mixing it with your hands) so it carries your scent and reinforces you as the leader.
2. **Soft training treats:** use pea-sized treats for medium-to-large-sized dogs, and even smaller for little dogs. It's more rewarding for a dog to get multiple treats in a row than one big treat.
3. **White rice and low-fat cottage cheese:** good for calming the intestines of a dog that has been ill or has nervous diarrhea.
4. **Rescue Remedy (available in health food stores):** calms when traveling, nervous or injured.
5. **Toys:** use safe chew toys, such as bully sticks. Soft toys are good for some dogs, but others will pull them apart, so remove if this happens.



The Local Bark
STAY PLAY LEARN

Bringing Home
Your Adopted Dog

Pet Safety Essentials

Get your dog licensed

Contact animal control in your area to license your dog. You must have a rabies certificate. In some jurisdictions, proof of spay/neuter reduces the license fee. Licensing helps reunite you with your dog in the event he gets lost and is picked up by animal control.

Microchips and tattoos

All pets should wear a collar with an ID tag at all times, but in case they come off, microchips and tattoos offer added security. Microchipping involves a safe, permanent miniature implant injected over the shoulder beneath the skin using a hypodermic needle; the chips can be read by scanners found increasingly at animal shelters and veterinarian offices. Tattoos are easy to spot.

For details, contact:

- Home Again Companion Animal Retrieval Microchip System, 800-252-7894
- AVID Microchip, 800-336-2843
- National Dog Registry/Tattoos, 800-NDR-DOGS
- Tatoo-A-Pet, 800-TATTOOS
- If your pet gets lost, contact the Missing Pet Network at www.missingpet.net

Basic Safety Tips

- Don't leave your dog unattended in a car - especially in hot weather. Even with the windows open, a car can heat up like an oven in minutes. Hundreds of animals die in cars each year.
- Make sure your dog always has free access to water - inside the house and out.
- Before you let your dog in a yard, make sure the fence is secure. And keep watch!
- Unattended dogs can eventually dig under or climb/jump over fences, and can get injured or disturb neighbors.
- Keep your pets off the grass if you've just applied weed killer. They may lick their paws and get ill.
- Avoid heatstroke: don't leave your dog outside for long periods on a hot day. Some breeds are particularly sensitive to heat. When outside, a dog must always have a shady shelter and access to water.
- Use sunscreen on dogs with extremely short hair (this is especially true for all-white dogs where you can see the pink skin underneath)
- Don't chain dogs up. Chains and ropes cause injuries, and a chained dog cannot protect himself from stray animals. Chaining creates frustration that leads to aggression and other behavioral problems.



- **Antifreeze kills** - and unfortunately its taste appeals to pets. Tightly close and store all containers away from pets, and watch for puddles when you're walking your dog.
- **Do not transport your dog un-tethered in the back of a pickup truck.** Hundreds of dogs die each year from falling out of trucks. Also, dogs get head and eye injuries from sticking heads out car windows.
- **Shield electrical wires and plug outlets in your home.**
- **Store cleaning products high or behind latched doors.** Equip cabinet doors with child-proof latches.
- **Don't let pets drink from a toilet that has freshener in the tank or bowl.** The chemicals are toxic.
- **Even a small amount of chocolate can poison and kill your dog, and dogs can detect its scent through wrappings and paper.** Keep it away from your dog.
- **Unless prescribed by your vet, don't give human medications like aspirin to your dog.**
- **Identify and move toxic plants out of reach.**

Dog-Proofing

- **Fences.** Check carefully for gaps, loose boards or bent bottom edges. Fix problems immediately. Move any woodpiles away from the fence so your dog can't use them as a ladder. Can your dog jump, climb, or dig under the fence? Or break through the pickets? If there's a way to escape, a dog will find it - either to chase other animals, go after passers-by, or to look for company. So don't leave your dog in the yard unattended.
- **Electric/invisible fences.** Convenient - but risky. The shocks can be unhealthy. When the power fails, your dog may run off - subjecting the dog to injury, and subjecting you to a liability claim. Also, many dogs would rather be shocked than miss the chance to chase a squirrel (and they soon learn the shock stops after passing the barrier). Electric fences do not keep animal or human intruders out. Consult with a trainer who is knowledgeable about perimeter training if you decide to use an electric/invisible fence.
- **Gate latches.** Can someone enter your yard or release your dog? Can your dog open the latch?
- **Screen doors.** A dog can easily kick open or tear through screen doors.
- **Doggie doors.** Block the door when you are not at home or cannot supervise your dog. Remember that other critters, such as raccoons, can use a doggie door to get into food or trash.
- **Stairs.** Block open stairs/railings using baby or puppy gates.



Books, Web Sites & Other Resources

- *Choosing and Caring for a Shelter Dog: A Complete Guide* - by Bob Christiansen
- *Don't Shoot the Dog* and *Clicker Training for Dogs* - both by Karen Pryor
- *Aggression in Dogs* - by Brenda Aloff
- *The Dog Who Loved Too Much* and *Dogs Behaving Badly* - both by Dr. Nicholas Dodman
- *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Getting and Owning a Dog* - by Sheila Webster Boneham

For young people

- *A Kid's Best Friend* - by Maya Ajmera and Alex Fisher
- *Dog Training for Kids* - by Carol Lea Benjamin (Ages 9-12)
- *SuperPuppy: How to Raise the Best Dog You'll Ever Have!* - by Peter J. Vollmer (Ages 9-12)
- <http://www.kidsanddogs.bravepages.com> - A Kid's Guide to Dog Care
- <http://www.avma.org/careforanimals/kidscorner/default.asp> - Great info and activities for kids
- <http://www.healthypet.com/Library/index.html> - American Animal Hospital Association page
- <http://www.dog-play.com> - Agility, therapy and other fun activities for you and your dog
- <http://www.rescuecritters.com/cpr.html> - Pet CRP
- www.dogfriendly.com - Travel tips and places to go with your dog

Phone Hotlines

- ASPCA Ani-Med, 888-721-9100
- ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center, 888-426-4435
- National Animal Poison Control Center, 800-548-2423



The Local Bark
STAY PLAY LEARN

Bringing Home
Your Adopted Dog

NOTES:



El Dorado County German Shepherd Rescue
Helping Quality Dogs Find Caring Homes

Check list for your new dog:

Check your fencing to provide a secure enclosure.

Shade/shelter is necessary for your dog if it is outside during the day.

A kennel box or dog run can be helpful, to provide a safe holding spot when you are not with your pet. Some dogs prefer sleeping in their box. Dogs should sleep inside at night with their family. Make sure there is water in the dog run.

Automatic drinkers work well. You can find those at feed stores, Petco, and Petsmart, but dogs need fresh water daily.

Canidae dog food which we feed is a very good choice from Lees' Feed in Shingle Springs. Some other good brands are: Innova, Pinnacle, Nutro, California Natural, Wysong, Back to Basics, and Blue Diamond.

Your dog must be on monthly heartworm prevention which comes from the vet.

Fish oil helps with joints and coat. Costco has the gel caps. (1000mg/20lbs of dog.)

Glucosamine and MSM should be part of your dog's diet, around 2000mg/day or more for dogs 75lbs. and above showing signs of joint pain/arthritis. This should be given in 3-4 doses during the day. As with the fish oil, it's better to give more of this than less.

Exercise is very important. Amount depends on age and personality of dog.

Dogs need nails trimmed monthly if they aren't worn down by exercise and grooming at least weekly is a must. We shave our dogs down in the summer to prevent foxtail injuries. If you live in a high foxtail area dogs should be checked daily.

Flea and tick medications are necessary if you live in an area with either, and Frontline, Frontline plus and Advantage are some of the more popular choices.

Yearly vaccinations and checkups from the vet are necessary and we recommend yearly blood work for those dogs over 6 years of age.

Veterinarians: Dr. Kennedy/Smith Flat Animal Hospital : 530-626-8180
Dr. Randy Robinson/Missouri Flat: 530-622-8295
Slate Creek: 530-622-9195
Veterinary Referral Service: 916-362-3111
U.C. Davis: 530-752-1393

Online medications/toys: Allivet.com, Petedge.com, Drs. Foster and Smith.com
Grooming/Training/Boarding: El Dorado Pet Club(Kerri Mc Bride,530-676-4442)

www.edcgsr.com

cindy@edcgsr.com

5820 Marybelle Lane
Shingle Springs, CA 95682
530-677-6444

Reading List

1. **The Culture Clash-Jean Donaldson**
2. **Dogs Are From Neptune-Donaldson**
3. **Monks of New Skete "How to Be Your Dogs Best Friend"**
4. **Art of Raising a Puppy-Monks**
5. **Excel-erated Learning-Reid**
6. **How to Teach A New Dog Old Tricks-Dunbar**
7. **Clicker Training**
8. **The Other End of the Leash-McConnell**
9. **Don't Shoot the Dog-Karen Pryor**
10. **The Dog Who Loved Too Much-Nicholas Dodd**
11. **Kinship With All Life**
12. **Getting in T Touch With Your Dog-Linda Tellington-Jones**
13. **On Talking Terms with Dogs**
14. **Power of Positive Dog Training-Miller**
15. **Dog Language**
16. **Dog Whisperer-Paul Owens**
17. **So You Want to Be A Dog Trainer**
18. **How to Speak Dog-Stanley Coren**
19. **Dogs Deserve Dialogue-Judy Moore**
20. **How to be Leader of the Pack-Cesar Milan**