



WE ADOPTED A DOG!

Now what?

First Day:

- We know moving is stressful — and your new dog feels the same way! Give him time to acclimate to your home and family before introducing him to strangers. Make sure children know how to approach the dog without overwhelming him.
- Replicate that schedule for at least the first few days to avoid gastric distress. If you wish to switch to a different brand, do so over a period of about a week by adding one part new food to three parts of the old for several days; then switch to half new food, half old, and then one part old to three parts new.
- Once home, take him to his toileting area immediately and spend a good amount of time with him so he will get used to the area and relieve himself. Even if your dog does relieve himself during this time, be prepared for accidents. Coming into a new home with new people, new smells and new sounds will throw even the most housebroken dog off-track, so be ready just in case.
- If you plan on crate training your dog, leave the crate open so that he can go in whenever he feels like it in case he gets overwhelmed.
- From there, start your schedule of feeding, toileting and play/exercise. From Day One, your dog will need family time and brief periods of solitary confinement. Don't give in and comfort him if he whines when left alone. Instead, give him attention for good behavior, such as chewing on a toy or resting quietly
- For the first few days, remain calm and quiet around your dog, limiting too much excitement (such as the dog park or neighborhood children). Not only will this allow your dog to settle in easier, it will give you more one-on-one time to get to know him and his likes/dislikes.

Following Weeks:

- People often say they don't see their dog's true personality until several weeks after adoption. Your dog will be a bit uneasy at first as he gets to know you. Be patient and understanding while also keeping to the schedule you intend to maintain for feeding, walks, etc. This schedule will show your dog what is expected of him as well as what he can expect from you.
- To have a long and happy life together with your dog, stick to the original schedule you created, ensuring your dog always has the food, potty time and attention he needs. You'll be bonded in no time!

Congratulations! If you follow these tips, you'll be on your way to having a well-adjusted canine family member.

House Breaking Tips

The key to training your dog to eliminate outside is to prevent accidents, and to reward success. Adult dogs have better bladder and bowel control, and can “hold it” for a longer period of time than puppies. The rule of thumb with puppies is to take their age in months, add one, and that’s the number of hours the puppy can “hold it” during the day (i.e. A 4 month old puppy can be expected to be clean for up to 5 hours during the day).

- Feed your dog on a schedule (he’ll eliminate on a schedule, too).
- Keep his diet simple and consistent (avoid table scraps and canned foods; a high quality dry kibble produces the least waste).
- Choose an area, about ten square feet, outside, where you wish your dog to potty.
- Take your dog on leash to the area, pace back and forth (movement promotes movement) and chant an encouraging phrase (“do your business, do your business”).
- Do this for maximum 3 minutes:
 - if he eliminates, huge praise and play.
 - if he doesn’t eliminate, keep him on leash, go back indoors, keep dog on leash with you or confined in a crate.
- Try again in an hour; eventually your dog will eliminate appropriately and
 - You can give huge praise and play.
 - After each success, allow 15 minutes of freedom in house, before placing dog back on lead or back into crate.
 - After each 3 consecutive days of success, increase freedom by 15 minutes.
 - If there is an accident; decrease freedom by 15 minutes for 3 days.

REMEMBER! DO NOT PUNISH ACCIDENTS! IGNORE THEM, AND REWARD SUCCESS!

Crate Training

Crate Expectations

Dog crates come in all sizes, many colors, and different styles. The most common are molded-plastic airline shipping crates and the open-wire types that usually come with a metal tray on the bottom. For owners who plan to do a lot of air travel with their dogs or for those whose dogs prefer dark, cozy places, the molded-plastic variety is best. Wire crates are preferred in most other instances.

The size of the crate is based on the size of your dog. There should be enough room for him to stand up, turn around in a small circle, and lie down comfortably. The crate serves as a place where the dog can rest and chew on safe, appropriate toys. It is not an exercise pen.

If you plan to use the crate as a housebreaking aid, size is of paramount importance. If there is room for Rex to soil and then lie high and dry away from the mess, the crate cannot serve its purpose. Those buying crates for puppies should keep the adult dog’s size in mind; but until the pup grows up, excess room should be cordoned off in some manner. Masonite, Plexiglas, or even old wire refrigerator shelves can serve as barriers.

Dog-Den Afternoons

How long can a dog be crated in one session? The rule of thumb for crating is no longer than one hour per each month of age, up to nine to ten hours maximum (the average work day). Each session should be preceded and succeeded by an hour of aerobic exercise. If this is too long for your dog, hire a dog walker to exercise him midday.

Before you can leave your dog for the long stretch, make sure you have accustomed him to the crate. A dog who panics when left alone in a crate could do damage to the crate and, more seriously, to himself. And never, never crate your dog while he is wearing any sort of correction collar—it could easily get caught on something in the crate and choke the animal.

The Pup Runneth Over

Young puppies need lots of human stimulus and feedback, so avoid relying too heavily on the crate in the early months. Most puppies three and a half to four months old can be crated overnight for about six hours, even though they probably cannot yet display that kind of bladder control during the daytime. Younger dogs crated at bedtime will need to be brought to their papers or outdoors at least once in the middle of the night.

A crate can provide peace of mind for both you and your dog. Think of it as a leash with walls. After all, both pieces of equipment serve to protect your dog from his own base instincts and errors in judgment. By crating your dog during the workday, you ensure him a royal welcome on your arrival home.

Leaving Your Dog Alone & Avoiding Separation Anxiety

Initially, your new dog may experience **separation anxiety** when you leave. Using a **crate can reduce** accidents and other problems rooted in insecurity by providing a safe and welcome haven. Most dogs like cozy places, which is why you often see dogs resting under tables. Teach your dog from the start that "all good things happen in the crate." Place nice bedding in the crate, along with dog toys that you can rotate for variety. Feed your dog in the crate. Give him praise and treats for venturing into the crate, and for resting there calmly.

You can also confine your dog in the kitchen or hallway using **baby gates**. Jumping dogs may require you to piggyback two gates atop each other.

Anxiety outlet: Try a Kong™ (a rubber chew toy that lasts a long time, even with dedicated chewers). Smear the inside with peanut butter and your dog will spend hours trying to lick it out. Add dry kibble for more fun.

When you get ready to leave, quietly say "good dog!" and provide a small treat. Don't say good-bye; just leave. When you return, quietly praise the dog for being good and take her out immediately.

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 ready 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 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. Don't make a fuss saying good-bye.

This doesn't guarantee she'll stay quiet for very long periods. In fact, it's counter-productive to crate more than 5 to 6 hours after the transition period. But used properly, the crate is an excellent tool for you and comfort zone for your dog.

Obedience Training & Owner Education

How important is obedience training and owner education? Essential! In fact, training is the biggest factor in whether an adoption succeeds or fails.

When we talk about training, we don't mean just having a trainer teach sit-stay-heel. We mean: YOU as the owner learning about dog behavior and training, and then YOU teaching and guiding your dog with patience and consistency so that he learns how to behave in a world of humans.

Dogs are pack animals who need leadership and rules to survive. Training will make your dog a trustworthy, **socialized** family member and forge a bond with your dog. Group classes teach you how to communicate with your dog despite distractions, and your dog will benefit from this socialization opportunity. The more socialized your dog, the more places you can go together. All family members should participate in training and agree on the rules, so they can teach the dog with consistency.

Think positive: Get recommendations for a class taught by a professional and based on **positive reinforcement**. Talk with the trainer and observe a class first to ensure the trainer uses humane techniques. The facility should be clean inside and outside.

Reward and repeat: If a dog does something that results in reward, he will do it 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 edible treats work well; always accompany them with verbal praise and positive body language. This is reward-based training.

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 noise. 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; often dropping behaviors that don't pay off - while looking for ways to gain attention.

This is a big reason why young dogs run off with shoes. (The other reasons being that they like things that carry their people's 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, firmly put 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.

And 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, recommends trainer Eric Lundquist. 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.

Learn everything you can - it's worth every penny and every minute because your whole family will benefit. Each dog is different, so it may take more than one approach to solve a problem.

Remember: obedience class 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 who's secure in his place in the family pack is happy to let his human be the leader.

Who's Leading Who? Becoming the Leader

Your dog nips when you try to take a toy from him...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.

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 expected 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. And that voice expresses commands as a directive, not a question. ("Come...? Come on, come...?") 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.

For dogs, it's natural to try to control their world with their jaws. Natural, but unacceptable. We need to regain control by using our minds.

How to reverse roles and become leader of the pack:

Step one: no more freebies. From now on, your dog must behave in order to earn the good things in life - petting, treats, meals, walks around the block. These are rewards you can use as you reinforce the new rules of behavior.

Use petting, feeding and playing as rewards. Before setting down the food bowl, instruct your dog to "sit." Say it only once. He receives his food - and enthusiastic praise ("Good boy!") only when he sits calmly. Pogo-ing from a seated position does not count. No "sit," no reward. Put the bowl out of his reach and walk away. Try again later. In addition, if your mealtimes coincide with your dog's, prepare his food first, but place it out of reach. Then eat your meal first before setting down his bowl. The leader in a dog pack eats first.

Subordinate dogs lick and bow to dominant dogs as a gesture of respect. So when you're working to modify the behavior of a dominant, unruly dog, reserve petting to use as positive reinforcement. To receive attention, he must obey a command such as "sit." Praise and pet as soon as he complies. If he prods you for more attention, ignore him. The idea is to convey to him that you decide when to begin and stop petting. The same should apply to playing, feeding and going for walks.

Lead the way, literally and figuratively. Starting today, don't let the dog bolt ahead of you out the door or drag you on walks. Keep your dog on leash, instruct him to sit, cross the threshold first and don't let him out until he complies. If he tends to push through the dog as you open it, slam it shut each time his nose approaches the opening. After 5 or 6 repetitions, he'll start getting the idea, but you cannot lapse and let him barrel out in front of you or he will resume the bolting behavior. On walks, strive to keep him at a heel.

Stay on a higher level than your dominant dog. During the retraining period, don't sit down to pet or play on the floor with your dog. Pet and praise from a level above the dog's head. In addition, at least until the dog learns his place in the pack, keep him off your bed and other furniture. He should stay at floor-level. On a related note, when you and your dog eye each other, as a leader you should hold the stare longer until he averts his eyes.

Stop the jumping. For dogs are challenging their people, it is important to discourage jumping up, as it is a dominating behavior. Ignore the dog, or command "Off" or "No." When greeting, give attention and petting to the dog only when he sits. If you later want to teach your dog to jump up (or get on the couch with you), you can, but the behavior should be on your terms.

No more playing favorites. If the dog ignores or intimidates another member of the household, let that person be the one to feed and dispense treats to the dog for now. It's essential that everyone in your family practices the same techniques while retraining the dog. Like a child, if a dog finds someone he can dominate, he'll do it.

Control the games. Tell family and friends not to taunt, wrestle or play tug-of-war - these games encourage dogs to dominate physically and to use their teeth. The outcome of games determines who's dominant in a pack. Instead, play hide and seek with a prized toy or fetch. As leader, you must be the one who decides when to start and end the game. Stop playing before the dog loses interest.

Use a crate. The crate serves several important functions. It gives the dog a secure den to call his own - a place to retreat when he wants to relax. Keep the crate door open when you're home so that he can enter if he'd like. The crate also helps you establish a new routine during retraining. Work on training him to go into the crate willingly, on command. Don't take "no" for an answer. To make the crate a welcoming place, start by giving him treats for going in the crate and feeding him in this area. Before training sessions, keep him in the crate an hour so that when you let him out, it will be easier to focus all of his attention on you. This practice also conveys that you, the leader, decides when he goes in and exits the crate. If your dog barks in the crate, ignore him. Do not release him until he's quiet and somewhat relaxed.

Health Care

When to go to the veterinarian:

Begin a relationship with a vet now, before you need one in a panic. Bring your medical records. While your rescue dog should be current on shots, altered, and heartworm-tested, you still need to buy heartworm preventative, and you may want your vet to thoroughly examine your new dog. See your vet when a problem arises or if your dog continues to have housetraining accidents.

Medical checklist:

- Keep up on all shots.
- Give heartworm preventative year-round in this area. Heartworm disease is deadly.
- Regularly check between toes for debris.
- Check and clean ears once a week.
- Red eyes can mean conjunctivitis or allergies.
- If a dog pays excessive attention to his anal area, he may have parasites. See your vet.
- Ask your vet for flea prevention recommendations. Some brands contain tick control too.
- Get a dog tooth brush and toothpaste and brush at least 4 times a week.

Heartworm disease & prevention:

Heartworms are deadly parasites transmitted by mosquitoes. The larvae lodge, grow and reproduce in the heart, eventually causing lung, liver and kidney failure and death. By the time symptoms such as lethargy and shortness of breath emerge, the dog has probably suffered organ damage. This disease has become much more common in recent years and can be contracted year-round. Treatment is very hard on the dog. Heartworm disease is easily prevented with monthly pills available from your vet. Keep dogs on preventative year-round. The dog must have a blood test to make sure he is not already infected.

Cleaning your dog's ears:

If dirt, wax and excess moisture are not routinely removed, ear problems can result. Here's how to clean your dog's ears at least once a week to keep them healthy:

- Make a solution of 1/2 white vinegar and 1/2 lukewarm water.
- Pour the solution into the ear.
- Gently massage the base of the ear to distribute the solution.
- Put a cotton ball over your fingertip and wipe the outer ear clean.
- Let your dog shake out the excess solution.
- Clean the ear again with a clean, dry cotton ball. Repeat as needed.

When to visit the vet: Objects stuck in the ear...redness or swelling...excessive tenderness, scratching, head-shaking... debris, discharge or foul odor.

Flea/tick control products:

Products include topical liquids applied every 30-90 days and monthly oral tablets. Some kills adult fleas and ticks, some keep flea eggs from hatching, some combine heartworm preventative. As your vet for recommendations.