

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY: HOW TO BRING A NEW DOG INTO YOUR HOME

Congratulations on your new dog or puppy! Here are some tips to make the transition a little easier.

When you first bring your dog home, he's going to need a chance to 'decompress'. Don't expect him to come in and meet your family and their dogs and the neighbors cats and kids and... well, you get the idea. Let him calm down, become comfortable in his surroundings, and get to know you first. You can expect him to go through a 'honeymoon' phase, during which he's too unsure or excited to be himself- but in the next few weeks he will gradually reveal his likes and dislikes!

Among your first priorities should be **purchasing a tag and microchipping your new dog**. Should he escape (some dogs are very good at this!) He will not yet know his way home. Identification is his best chance at making it back to you! A martingale collar or a very well fitted collar that he cannot slip out of is a good way to prevent this from happening. Double check your gates and your fence, and make sure you won't have any unexpected runaways!

I recommend **starting your dog off with no 'privileges'**, and letting him earn them at his pace. For starters, confining him to a crate or dog-proof room would be wise in the beginning, and letting him earn his freedom as he proves to be well behaved. If you bring him home and leave him with freedom while you're away, you may find out he has a chewing problem the hard way. Confinement also gives you the opportunity to control his housetraining, and teach him where to go and where not to go. Teach him right away what you expect him to chew on, and where you would like him to sleep. It is much easier to prevent unwanted behavior than to fix it when it becomes a bad habit!

If you have other pets at home, err on the side of caution. **Give them time to adjust** before expecting them to co exist peacefully. If you have another dog at home, try taking them for a walk together before walking your new dog into the house. This will give both of them a chance to get to know each other. If you have a cat, you may want to keep them in separate rooms where they can smell and hear, but not frighten each other. Introduce them with your new dog on leash, and discourage any chasing. Don't expect your dogs to eat together, at least not at first- this is unnatural for most dogs to do. They should have separate bowls, in separate areas, or even in their crates. Be

aware that **it's natural for dogs to guard or 'protect' their toys and bones** from others, so closely supervise all interactions and separate your dogs as needed!

Even '**child friendly' dogs need respect**, so when it's time to introduce your dog to children, observe whether your dog is stressed or not. Signs of stress can be attempting to move or look away, yawning, or licking his lips. Watch for freezing, growling or lifting his lips- this could indicate that he might bite! Children **MUST** be taught to respect your dog as well, asking your dog to sit, playing fetch or giving him treats are good interactions, but pulling his ears or other body parts, crawling or laying on him, or running around him are not good ideas.

When it's time to start socializing your dog outside of his home, it would be wise to meet dogs that you know are friendly before considering dog parks or pet stores. These may easily overwhelm him and give you bad start to teaching social skills.

Training your dog to behave the way that you expect him to should be among the first things you plan to do after bringing him home. This is a fun and rewarding process! It's important not to have unrealistic expectations of your new dog- Your dog is an individual, he's not "your old dog." Remember, all behaviors can be changed-- If your dog isn't acting the way you expected, please contact a trainer for advice! Thank you for adopting!

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