

# Adoption Packet

## Congratulations on your new adoption!

Adopting your new best friend is exciting but can be overwhelming at the same time. This welcoming adoption packet is here to be your guide.

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# Getting Ready... The Supply List

As soon as you have decided on which dog you will be adopting, then you need to go shopping **BEFORE** you bring him home.

Do **NOT** bring your dog to the pet store on the way home. The dog is going to be stressed enough as it is, he needs time to decompress and not have to worry about meeting new people or dogs.

We highly recommend purchasing a dog crate and set it up in a quiet place, such as your bedroom. A crate will give your new dog a safe place to decompress.

Keep to the basic shopping list at first, then you can add more items as you get to know your dog and what he will really need.

Essentials	Optional but recommended
<input type="checkbox"/> Leash, Collar, and ID Tag	<input type="checkbox"/> Baby Gate
<input type="checkbox"/> Food and Water Bowls	<input type="checkbox"/> Dog Shampoo
<input type="checkbox"/> Dog Food and Treats	<input type="checkbox"/> Brush
<input type="checkbox"/> Crate and/or Puppy Play Pen	<input type="checkbox"/> Nail Clippers
<input type="checkbox"/> Chew Toys	<input type="checkbox"/> Dog Toothbrush and Toothpaste
<input type="checkbox"/> Dog Bed or Mat	<input type="checkbox"/> Enzyme Cleaners
<input type="checkbox"/> Pooper Scooper and/or Poop Bags	<input type="checkbox"/> Mini Carpet Cleaner

# Puppy/Dog Proofing Your Home

Just like if you were bringing home a new baby, your house needs to be safe for your new puppy. Even if you are adopting an adult dog, your house needs to be safe.

Oh yeah, puppies are cute and cuddly, but they are packed full of trouble. It doesn't matter if you are in a house or apartment; these puppy proofing tips are essential to keep your puppy safe!

We highly recommend baby gates to block off areas of the home you can supervise your new puppy. We place a baby gate at the stairway so our foster puppy can't sneak off and have a potty accident.

Start by laying down and/or crawling on your hands and knees on your floor, what do you see? Search for anything small, wires from TV, phone and chargers, TV remote, shoes, kids toys, pens, gum....

The list can go on forever, so here is a puppy proofing your house checklist:

## **Electrical Cords and Phone Chargers**

As much as we have gone wireless, you will always have some electrical items to plug into the wall. Check to make sure no cords can be reached by your playful puppy. You can purchase electrical covers or make your own out of PVC piping.

## **Garbage**

If your trashcan is not under a cabinet, make sure it has a secure lid. This includes trashcans in the kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, anywhere in the house. The trash may smell terrible to us, but your puppy is going to want to investigate and will find something to chew and eat, possibly poisoning him or choking on it.

For some reason, we've had several dogs that like to steal tissues from the bathroom trash. While the tissues may not be harmful, many other items tossed in the trashcan that can be toxic or a choking hazard to your puppy.

## **House Plants**

You would be surprised at how many plants can be harmful to your puppy. Check to see if you have any of the toxic plants in your home, if you do, consider placing them on a high table or giving them to a friend without a dog.

## **People Food**

Many human foods are great for your dog, but many can be toxic.

It's important to know that many of our sugar-free foods contain **Xylitol**, which is toxic to dogs. You can find Xylitol in chewing gum, peanut butter, even toothpaste! Read the labels of your food and keep them far away from your puppy.

## **Toilet Bowls**

It is NOT okay for your dog to drink toilet water. Not only is it unsanitary and but toilet bowl cleaner or tablets are toxic if your dog drinks it. So keep the bathroom door closed or make sure to keep the toilet lid down. Our dogs don't drink from the toilet, but we never use toilet cleaner tabs just in case.

## **Medicine Bottles**

Just because a medicine bottle is child-proof doesn't mean it's puppy proof. Your puppy will chew the lid off in minutes and before you can realize it, he's eaten a bottle of pills and you are running to the emergency vet. Keep all over-the-counter and prescription medication in a high cabinet far away from puppies and kids!

## **A Clean House is a Safe House**

We all like a clean house, but many of the chemicals we use can be toxic for your puppy. Keep soaps, bleach cleaners, drain cleaners secure under a cabinet. Install cabinet locks if you have a puppy that knows how to open doors.

## **Dangerous Hiding Places**

Do you have a recliner chair? Be super careful putting down the recliner!!! I've heard horror stories of puppies and small dogs getting caught under the recliner and getting severally hurt.

Look for shelves, TV, or any furniture that could be knocked over by a rambunctious playful dog.

### **Balcony or High Deck?**

Puppies and small dogs can fit through small railings. Check for all small openings and think about reinforcing these areas with something to keep your puppy from falling.

### **Get Outside and Play**

Check your backyard for any hazardous plants or chemicals. Inspect your fence for any small areas a puppy can squeeze through. It's best to never leave your puppy alone outside even if you do have a fence. Keep a close eye on him as he explores his yard.

Also, consider the grass, do you have your lawn serviced for weeds or put fertilizer down to get a lush green lawn? Even though companies advertise that their chemicals are pet and child safe, they are still chemicals and can be hazardous to your dog.

## **Puppy Proofing Tips All Wrapped Up**

Being aware of all the dangers for your puppy doesn't stop with one quick run through of the checklist. Make sure your home is safe every day for your puppy. Puppies are naturally curious and will want to put everything in their mouth. As soon as you get lazy and leave something out on the floor, your puppy is bound to find it!

# Bringing Home Your New Dog

These steps work and will make your life easier and your dogs transition into your home so much smoother.

## 1. Outside Before Inside

When you first get home, introduce your new dog to the outside of your house before bringing him inside. Let him take in all the new smells, and take him for a walk around the block to burn off any extra energy. Show him where he will go potty and make sure to be consistent.

## 2. Bringing a New Dog Home to Another Dog

If you have another dog at home, introduce them outside before bringing him inside. Even if they've already met at the shelter or foster home. Take them for a walk together or put the resident dog in the backyard, bring the new dog to the outside of the fence to let them smell each other. It is important not to let the new dog "invade" your resident dog's territory. Take this step very slowly.

## 3. Introduction to Inside Your House

When ready, enter and introduce your dog to your house slowly. Restrict his access to one area of the home. He is going to be stressed for the first few days, so the smaller the new area is, the more comfortable he will be. Keep him on a leash for at least the first day, preferably the first 3 days. You don't always have to hold on to the leash, he can drag the leash around with him, but this gives you quick access to him if needed.

## 4. Low-Key

Keep the first few days low-key. Don't overwhelm him with visitors coming to see how cute he is, wait until he has a chance to get to know you and his new home first. Give him plenty of quiet time to settle in. Crate train your dog, giving him a safe area to decompress will help him feel more comfortable.

## **5. Routine**

Creating a routine will also help your dog feel more comfortable. Schedule his feeding, walks, sleep and play time. The sooner you establish a routine, the better you both will feel. A feeding schedule will help if your dog is not potty trained yet.

## **6. Training**

Research dog training classes. Training is just as much for you the owner, as it is for the dog. Training your dog is so important, please don't skip this part of being a responsible dog owner. We have a lot of training resources on our website, take advantage of them. Be proactive, don't wait until you see the bad behavior.

## **7. Kids and Dogs**

Don't leave kids along with your new dog. For the first few weeks, your dog is going to be stressed just from the fact he has moved to a new place he is not familiar with... add a child that just wants to hug and kiss the dog, and it's a recipe for disaster (i.e. dog bite). Even the nicest dog can bite out of fear and protection.

# The 3 Days, 3 Weeks, 3 Month Rule

The first thing most people want to do is show off their new puppy. Just take it slow, we know you are excited but keep in mind how your dog is feeling. He has been through a lot, he may have lost his family, abandoned in a shelter... it's all very stressful. He needs time, so give it to him.

The common milestones your new dog or puppy will go through will be the first 3 days after bringing your dog home from the shelter, then 3 weeks, then 3 months. If you've ever started a new job or moved to a new school, you should know this feeling. The feeling of being in an unfamiliar place, new surroundings, new people, new rules.

The first few days are spent trying to figure it all out. Then a few weeks later, you are getting more comfortable, meeting new friends, learning the schedule, and rules. After a few months, you've got it all figured out and are settled in your new job or school.

## **In the first 3 days,**

your new dog will be overwhelmed with his new surroundings. He will not be comfortable enough to be himself. Don't be alarmed if he doesn't want to eat for the first couple of days, many dogs don't eat when they are stressed. He may shut down and want to curl up in his crate or under the table. He may be scared and unsure what is going on. Or he may be the opposite and test you to see what he can get away with, kind of like a teenager.

## **After 3 weeks,**

he's starting to settle in, feeling more comfortable, and realizing this really may be his forever home. He has figured out his environment and getting into the routine that you have set. He lets his guard down and may start showing his true personality. Behavior issues may start showing, this is your time to be strong and teach him what the rules of the house are. Not in a mean or cruel way, but as a parent teaching their child the golden rules of life.

## **After 3 months,**

your dog is now completely comfortable in his home. You have built trust and a true bond with your dog, which gives him a complete sense of security with you. He is set in his routine and will come to expect his dinner at his usual time.



# The 3 Days, 3 Weeks, 3 Month Rule of Adopting a Rescue Dog

The 3-3-3 rule is a general guideline, every dog is unique and will adjust differently. Give your dog space and allow him to go at his own pace.

## 3D



### In the first 3 days,

- Feeling overwhelmed
- May be scared and unsure of what is going on
- Not comfortable enough to be "himself"
- May not want to eat or drink
- Shut down and want to curl up in his crate or hide under a table
- Testing the boundaries

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## 3W



### After 3 weeks,

- Starting to settle in
- Feeling more comfortable
- Realizing this could possibly be his forever home
- Figured out his environment
- Getting into a routine
- Lets his guard down and may start showing his true personality
- Behavior issues may start showing up

## 3M



### After 3 months,

- Finally completely comfortable in his home.
- Building trust and a true bond
- Gained a complete sense of security with his new family
- Set in a routine

# Renaming Your Rescue Dog

Teaching a dog his name is as simple as teaching any basic command. In reality your dogs name is a command... a command to look at me and come to my side.

Whether you have a puppy or an adult dog, the steps are the same.

1. Start by sitting on the floor with your dog on a short leash.
2. Allow your dog to sniff, play, wonder around.
3. As soon as he isn't focused on you, call his name... as soon as he turns toward you, praise with lots of excitement.
4. Offer a yummy treat or a favorite toy.
5. Repeat 3-5 times per session, 2-3 sessions a day.

Do not offer the treat as a bribe, meaning treat before he comes to you. You want the reward to be YOU first, then the treat. This will help in future training.

A leash is important because you don't him to wander too far away. Use the leash as a helping tool to keep him close and coax him to come toward you if he doesn't on his own.

Try not to use his name in other circumstances that you have no control of him responding. You want his name to always mean "come to me" the first time you call his name... not the tenth time.

# Adding to Your Pack, Adopting a Second Dog

Do you have a vision that both dogs will be best friends, play and run around the backyard together, then snuggle on the dog bed together at the end of the day?

But wait, how do you know they'll be best friends?

Don't expect your dog to love every dog just because you do. And don't be disappointed if your current and a newly adopted dog don't hit it off right away. It's okay for them to just coexist, they don't need to snuggle and be best buds just because you want them to.

Follow these steps to help create a smooth transition when adopting a second dog:

## Prepare to Adopt a Second Dog

### Step 1: Start off by selecting the right dog to be his companion

Think about your current dog's personality. Try to find a new dog to adopt that will compliment or match your current dog's energy and personality traits.

Is your dog fearful or lack confidence? A perfect companion may be a confident dog to help teach him to become more confident in himself.

Is he a senior or low-energy dog? Then bringing in a puppy or high-energy dog may just annoy him. Puppies like to play, bite, and crawl over and will not leave your adult dog alone. Consider adopting a 3-5-year-old dog or even another senior dog.

If your dog has any behavior issues, please ask yourself, ***"should I get another dog?"*** Those bad behaviors are only going to **get worse when getting a second dog.**

Also, consider gender and size.

Opposite sex may get along better than same sex. In general, we recommend adopting opposite sexed dogs. When that is not possible, the second best option is to have two males. Two females are the most likely to have issues.

#### Checklist:

- Compliment your current dog's energy and personality
- Opposite sexed dogs: first option should be male/female, then male/male. female/female should be avoided if possible
- Ensure your current dog is trained and well behaved before adopting a new dog

## Bringing Home Another Dog: Day 1

### Step 2: Keep the dogs separate

There are certain steps to take when introducing a new dog to your pack. These steps are very important to keep the balance in your house.

Keep the dogs separate for a minimum of 24 hours. It works, as hard as it may seem, these steps help create a calm and balanced transition.

Even the easiest, happy dogs can get stressed when another dog enters his home. It's only 24 hours... one day of separation that can change the relationship of your dogs forever.

#### Checklist:

- Keep dogs separate for a minimum of 24 hours
- Use crates and baby gates
- When you first bring the new dog home, take her for a long walk alone.

### Step 3: Bringing the new dog inside the house.

Do not allow the new dog to run loose in the house yet. Keep her on a leash, in fact, we recommend keeping her on a leash for several days until you get to know her behavior inside the house.

Use a bedroom or a baby gate to separate an area in your home for the new dog to relax and adjust to his new surroundings.

Keep this separation for 24-48 hours, depending on the dogs. If they seem to be calm and both dogs are easy going, then 24 hours is more than enough.

Remember, your newly adopted dog is undergoing a lot of new things and can be easily stressed out. If your resident dog won't give her space, then consider a bigger separation. Remember the 3-3-3 Rule in Module 5.

- Place current resident dog in a bedroom or backyard while introducing new dog to the house
- Create a separate area in the house for the new dog to relax and decompress

## Day 2 or 3 with Your Dogs

### Step 4: The first meeting

After the 24-48 hour separation period and both dogs are calm you can start the introduction stage. You need someone to help you with this step.

- Never introduce your new dog inside your house.**
- If you have more than two dogs, introduce one dog at a time. Starting with the calmest and easy-going dog first.
- Take both dogs for a long walk. The resident dog in front with you, the newly adopted dog behind with your helper (in a single file, not side-by-side yet).
- Walk parallel to each other about 10 feet away, slowly working your way closer together.
- After a good long walk, and both dogs seem calm, allow them to sniff each other's rears (it's a dog thing).
- Watch the dog's body language, showing of teeth, growling, stiff erect tail, stiff body stance, ears back, or raised hackles. If any of these occur, give a firm NO, and continue walking. Do not allow this to escalate, as soon as you see ANY of those signs, separate the dogs and start to walk again.
- Keep these first interactions short and sweet.** Don't overwhelm either dog with too much sniffing. Once they have a minute to check each other out, start walking again. Repeat several times until everyone is calm.

Once this meeting is successful you may go on to the next step of bringing the dogs inside the house. The resident dog should be allowed to enter the home first, then allow him to welcome the new dog inside.

## Step 5: Giving the new dog more space

- You can take down the baby gate now and give your new dog a little more freedom. I still recommend restricting one area or floor of your home, in fact, I recommend this for up to a week or more.
- If you have a fenced backyard, then allow the dogs to run around free outside together. Keep these sessions short, again not to overwhelm either dog. Allow both dogs to come inside and investigate each other.
- Never leave the two dogs alone.** If you cannot closely supervise, then put them in their crates or separate rooms.

## Step 6: Resource Guarding

If your dog has never had another dog in the house, you may not know if he has resource guarding issues.

Resource guarding can be guarding of people, food, toys, dog bed or any object the dog feels it needs to claim. You need to be super-aware of the signs, and if you've never witnessed it before it may catch you off guard at first.

Watch for a showing of teeth, growling, stiff erect tail, stiff body stance, ears back, whale eyes or raised hackles. This is a time you really need to learn your dogs body language.

If you have a resource guarder, then you will need to be super vigilant on feeding time, bones, toys, dog beds, or whatever he likes to guard. Even if you don't think either dog is going to resource guard, I still suggest having separate feeding areas.

### Checklist:

- Learn and watch dogs body language
- Feed dogs in separate areas
- Put away high-valued toys and bones

## **Day 4 and Beyond with Two Dogs in Your Pack**

### **Step 7: Continue taking it slow**

Take a lot of long walks together as a pack. Keep both dogs tired by giving them more than enough exercise. A bored dog equals trouble. Continue being super aware for several weeks or even months, depending on the dogs personality and temperament.

Watch for any signs of stress in either dog. If either dog gets overwhelmed, reduce the time they have together and slow it down even more.

### **Why is it so important to slowly introduce the dogs?**

A newly adopted dog is under a tremendous amount of stress. The resident dog is wondering who the heck this new dog is, and why she is in his territory.

Mix these feelings together and you will get a dogfight. Not because either dog is aggressive, but because it takes time to unwind and to help both dogs understand the situation.

### **Is it better to have two dogs?**

Having two dogs is better for our family, but may not be for yours. Consider everything that goes into owning multiple dogs: including picking up more dog poop, more dog hair, more training, and more expensive vet bills. Is your current dog really wanting a companion or is all about you?