

Adopting? PLAN SMART!



Congratulations on adopting your new dog! This is a life-changing event and we hope you will be very happy with your new companion. Having a plan during this time can help keep everyone safe and happy; below you will find useful information to make the transition smooth for all involved. We want your new relationship to be successful so if at any time you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us.

Welcoming Home Your New Dog

Prepare for your dog's arrival by having these necessary items ready:

- Crate/Baby Gates
- Blankets/Bed
- Food and Food/Water Bowls
- 4-6 ft. Non-Retractable Leash
- Body Harness
- Flat Adjustable Collar
- Identification tags
- Car Restraint
- Toys (chew, puzzles, etc)
- Training Treats

Limit access to things that may be dangerous, overwhelming or that you want off limits, whether temporarily or permanently, such as certain areas of your home, other pets and new people. Baby gates and crates should already be in place before your new pet arrives so existing pets can be kept at a distance as needed and your new pet has a safe, quiet place of his own to retreat. Your dog has experienced a lot of change recently so take it slow and be patient. Let them get familiar to you and the home before introducing them to strangers and make sure children understand how to approach and interact with a new dog without overwhelming them.

Aadjust as necessary. It may be difficult to anticipate your new pet's needs at first since neither of you know each other very well yet and their needs will likely change in the first few months. Be prepared for unexpected things to present challenges and adjust accordingly. Know the "Rule of 3's":

- **First 3 days:** dog is confused, possibly scared, and very unfamiliar with everything. Will most likely be quiet, reserved and need extra rest.
- **First 3 weeks:** dog begins to acclimate to people, sounds and smells in the home and starts to understand their routine. You will begin to see their personality emerge.
- **First 3 months:** by the end of the first 3 months, they are settling into the new life and their true personality is shining through!



Normalize things with a routine. Creating routines and boundaries will help a dog understand what to expect and when (feedings, potty breaks, etc.). Change is stressful for all animals so the more consistent you can keep their daily routine, the easier it will be for your pet to acclimate to his new life.

Supervise everything - time in the yard, interactions with children or other pets, and all of the pet's activity in the house when they are free to roam. It only takes a moment for your new pet to sneak off and have an accident or jump the fence and run off - so don't turn your back, even for an instant, until your new pet has proven trustworthy.

Manage your pet proactively rather than waiting for a problem. This may mean having your pet crated when visitors enter the home so that he doesn't dash out the door, jump on the guests, or try to deter them from coming in. Leashes, crates and baby gates are very helpful here!

Accclimate your new pet to your extended family and friends gradually, starting with just one or two new people at first. Watch for signs that your new pet is stressed or afraid and remove him from situations where he is uncomfortable before he gets too upset. You want his experiences with new people, places or things to be good ones!

Recognize signs of stress early. Dogs communicate through body language so recognizing common signals will help you understand how your dog might be feeling. Generally, a loose and relaxed posture indicates your dog is comfortable. Stiff or frozen posture indicates they may be feeling uncomfortable or threatened and don't want to interact. Most dogs give tons of warning that they are uncomfortable long before they growl, snarl or bite - so be sure you are paying attention to what your new friend is saying!

Trainning can help your pet gain confidence and learn how to navigate his new world. For a tired, happy, dog, aim for a total of 45-60 minutes of activity per day including walks, obedience training and games such as fetch. Incorporating physical *and* mental stimulation into your dog's routine can eliminate unwanted behaviors, open up the lines of communication and will be fun for both of you. If you are interested in setting up a consultation with our training behaviorist, please let us know! You can also search for professional trainers in your area through www.ccpdt.org or www.apdt.com or ask your local veterinarian for a reference.

Thank you for adopting from the Delaware Humane Association and making a friend for life!

