

Bringing Home a New Dog

A new dog may be scared and confused while making the transition into a new home. Setting up a clear structure and rules will help your new dog understand what is expected of them. The tips below are general guidelines that work with most dogs. Each dog is different; if you encounter a situation you are unfamiliar with consult a veterinarian or trainer.



Before bringing home a new dog: You will have some decisions to make...



Where will the new dog be spending the majority of their time while learning the rules? This should be a confined area with a floor that is easy to clean. Because your new dog may be under a lot of stress during this time, even a housetrained dog may have some accidents. This area will also need to be dog proofed. Pick up any items that you do not want your dog chewing up or eating. Tape down all electrical cords; remove plants, rugs, and breakables.

Do you plan on crate training your dog? Have a crate set up and ready to go before bringing the dog home. You also may want to **educate yourself on crate training** beforehand.



Agree as a family on the vocabulary you will use in training the dog. Training your new dogs begins the moment it arrives at your home. Using a consistent vocabulary prevents confusion enabling your dog to learn commands more quickly. Not sure what words to use? You may be interested in more information on **how to talk to your dog**.

Know ahead of time how you will be transporting your dog to the home. Car trips are stressful to some dogs. For your first trip home together, plan on securing your dog or providing a crate.



Pick up an ID tag with your phone number. I have seen new dogs escape before even making it home on their first day. Protect your dog by securely placing an ID tag to the collar before the first ride home. If your new dog is already micro-chipped, don't forget to update their information.

Do you have other pets in the home? Before bring home a new dog, please consider how the other pets in your home may respond. They were there first. Research **introducing a new dog** to your other pets before bringing it home.



Day one: This will be the most stressful day for both you and your dog, make sure you bring your new dog home on a day that you will have time to spend introducing the dog to the home and family.



This is a day for introducing the dog to your home and family. Make sure your children understand how to approach the dog without overwhelming it. **Training your children** is important as training your dog. Introductions to strangers and people outside the family should not happen on this day. Save those introductions for after your dog feels secure and gets to know its new home and family.

Know your dog's current eating schedule and food. Do not change your dog's food or eating schedule for the first few days, this can cause gastric distress. If you would like to change the dogs food, do so 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.



Even if your dog was previously housetrained, it may not understand what is expected at the new home until shown. Start out by taking the dog to the area you expect it to relieve itself so that it may get comfortable. Praise and give your dog a treat should they relieve themselves in that area. Be patient, it may take a few tries before your dog understands. For more tips, please educate yourself on **housetraining a dog**.

Provide the dog with a safe place to hide in the home should it feel uncomfortable. If you are crate training, leave the crate door open. Do not try to pull a hiding dog out of an area or corner it. The dog is scared and may react adversely. Given time in the home, the dog will start to feel more comfortable.



Create a schedule your dog can rely on. Schedule times for feeding, potty breaks, and play/exercise. You will also need to provide family time along with brief period of alone time. Do not comfort or give attention to a whining dog during alone time, this will only reward the behavior. Instead, give attention for behaviors such as resting quietly or chewing on appropriate toys.

If you have brought home a dog that had a previous home, remember that it will already have its own idea about what different words and items may mean. This dog may be the product of a never-ending series of scrambled communications and unreal expectations that will require patience on your part.

The first week: As your dog becomes more comfortable with the home and family you will start to see its true personality begin to blossom. This can be a wonderful time of creating a new bond and trust.



It is important to continue the schedule you started on day one for your dog. This creates predictability and allows your dog to become more comfortable.

Body language is the best way for you to understand how your dog is feeling in a situation. Learn about **reading the body language of your dog** through research. You are responsible for protecting your dog. Take the time to understand how your dog is feeling so that you may be its voice.



Meet with your veterinarian to make sure your new dog is protected and up to date on necessary vaccines. This will also allow you to ask questions on how to properly care for your dog's health.