



## **Bringing Home Your Adopted Dog: What to Expect during the First Few Weeks**

Your adopted dog can fulfill your expectations, but as with all things, not without some effort on your part. It is unrealistic to expect your newly adopted dog to transition seamlessly into your family and become the dog of your dreams overnight. Here is a quick overview of what to expect!

### **Before You Bring Your Dog Home:**

- Determine where your dog will be spending most of his time. (Ex. crate, meal times, “safe” place, etc.) Be aware that your new dog will be under a lot of stress with the change of environment. He may forget his potty training (if he’s learned any), or need a break from the children or other pets in the house.
- Dog-proof your home. Examples: taping loose electrical cords to baseboards; storing household chemicals out of reach; removing poisonous plants, valuable possessions and breakables; setting up the crate, and installing baby gates.
- Have your supplies ready. (ex. crate, treats, toys, collar, leash). Get an identification tag for the dog's collar, or use one from a former dog that has your current contact information on it until you get one for this dog. Dogs new to their homes are at higher risk of getting lost, so a tag is important right from the start!

### **The Adjustment Period**

Moving to a new home can be stressful for dogs. It's an unfamiliar place with unfamiliar people. Some dogs experience stomach upset and diarrhea. Housetrained dogs may regress and have accidents. Some will shy away from you for a while until you earn their trust. Be patient with your baby. It may take a while for him to adore you as much as you adore him. How long it takes is different for every dog. It could take anywhere from 3 days to 3 months for your new guy to settle in. Just be patient with him and show him in all of your actions that he is safe with you. If you are having any problems or have any questions during the adjustment period about a dog you adopted from BAHS, please do not hesitate to call us. We will do everything we can to help ease the adjustment period for both of you.

If you're adopting a puppy rather than an adult dog, expect an adjustment period for yourself, too! Adopting a puppy is like having a baby. There will be lots of potty breaks because their bladder isn't yet fully developed. Expect to get up a couple of times during the night for potty breaks. If you work, plan to come home everyday at lunch to let your puppy outside to potty. If you can't come home, consider hiring a pet sitter. Or, use an X-pen instead of a crate and set up a potty

area on one side. Just know that a puppy HAS TO potty several times a day and plan accordingly. Puppies will also chew on everything available, so don't make anything available that he shouldn't chew on.

### **Meeting the Family**

It is best to have your children and/or other dogs meet your new dog before bringing him home. This allows you to see how everyone reacts to one another, but it can also be unreliable. Rescue dogs may act differently in a home environment and your original dog may be distracted or upset about visiting the shelter environment. 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.

### Children Rules:

- When the new dog comes home, keep him on a leash and have your children sit down to say hello.
- Always supervise children with dogs, for everyone's safety.
- Don't let children take the dog's toys or food, and don't let the dog take the children's toys or food.
- Teach children not to pinch, pull, or squeeze the dog.
- Give the dog some breathing room, give him a break from all the activity and set him up in his "safe" place (crate, extra bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, or an out-of-the-way corner) that is off limits to children.

### Pet Rules:

- Re-introduce all pets with the new guy in a crate or on a leash for safety. Watch for signs of stress and separate if necessary. Don't push them to be friends too fast - **slow introduction** is better for everyone!
- Don't change the resident pet's routine.
- Crate the new guy periodically to give the resident pet a break.
- Spend time individually with each pet.
- Supervise playing with toys and meal times and provide extra toys to prevent spats.
- Enforce the rules right away.

### **Establishing the Rules**

You should establish rules for the dog and rules and boundaries for your family to follow right away. This is especially important if you have children of any age living in the home. Dogs come to new homes ready to learn new rules; they feel more secure to know exactly what is expected of them and exactly what happens if they don't follow the rules. If you have other pets who already know the rules, they can get quite stressed out by an unruly newcomer.

Dogs are also famous opportunists. Even if he's never sat on a sofa before, he'll probably try just to see if you'll let him. The same goes for begging for food, or sleeping on the bed. Don't punish him for trying. Give him a firm "no" or "off" and

lead him to the floor so you can establish that such places are "no dogs allowed" zones right at the start.

### Good Rules To Establish:

- Don't leave the dog unsupervised unless crated until he learns the rules. This prevents bad habits and helps with housetraining.
- Don't pester the dog while he's eating or sleeping. Not because he's food protective (although he might be), but because everybody deserves to eat and sleep in peace.
- Make a feeding schedule, dogs thrive on routine and find it reassuring.
- Designate somebody to clean up after the dog.
- Everybody takes part in the dog's training. This way your dog will come to obey everybody as equally as possible.
- Your dog needs a "safe" place. It can be his crate if he has one, a bedroom, or even a corner in an out-of-the-way place where he can escape to. A dog with nowhere to run is an unhappy dog!

### **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.
- You may wish to take your dog to group training classes or the dog park. Pay close attention to your dog's body language to be sure he's having a good time and is not fearful or a dog park bully.
- 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 together in no time!
- If you encounter behavior issues you are unfamiliar with, think about signing up for dog training classes.

### **Obedience Classes for Your Newly Adopted Dog:**

Attending obedience classes is a great opportunity to create a bond with your new family member! Look for classes that encourage positive reinforcement training. These sorts of classes will focus on using treats, fun games, and praise that encourages good behavior. Avoid any classes that involve any sort of intimidation, inflicting pain (i.e. jerking leashes, kneeling if the dog jumps up, yelling/scolding), punishment, or that want you to be "pack leader". Unwanted behavior can be easily discouraged by taking away the rewards and ignoring what you do not like. Your new dog will soon learn that jumping up will not earn her a treat and sitting when people approach her will get her that reward!

### **Changing Your New Dogs Name:**

Sometimes adopting a dog means adopting a dog with a name you don't particularly like. Actually, it's easy for your newly adopted dog to learn a new name. Don't feel that a dog cannot learn a new name. A dog or puppy of any age can learn a brand new name within a few days. Here's how:

- Decide on any new name you wish for your newly adopted pet, keep it simple, 1-2 syllables.
- For the first few weeks, carry a pocketful of treats and every once in a while, and also specifically when you do want your dog's attention, call out his new name and then immediately smile, praise heartily, and feed a treat.
- Slowly stop feeding the treats so that the dogs don't expect a treat all the time.

You can read the free E-book *Adopting a Rescue Dog: The First Seven Days* for more information: [www.dogfencediy.com/rescue-dog](http://www.dogfencediy.com/rescue-dog) .