

Bringing Your New Dog Home

Congratulations, you have made a wonderful decision to adopt a dog from the shelter. We hope that you and your new dog will bond and have a long lasting relationship. To insure that you get started on the right foot we have a few suggestions.

It's important to give your new dog structure and guidance in the first few weeks. Dogs feel better when they know their place in the family.

1. Dogs like routine and your new dog will adjust better if you have routine feeding times, play times, and exercise times.
2. Let your dog know which behaviors please you by offering praise and perhaps a treat for behaviors that you like.

Your new dog may have a few accidents in the house the first few days, even if he/she is housetrained. To help prevent this and retrain your new dog after time in a shelter, do the following:

1. Make sure your new dog is "empty" before you take him/her inside by going for a short walk in the neighborhood and then some time in the yard first.
2. Keep the dog on a leash when you first let him/her explore the house. This way you can interrupt any signs of elimination and quickly take him/her outside.
3. Accompany your new dog outside to eliminate. This will allow you to reward him/her with a food treat and plenty of praise for outdoor elimination.
4. Never punish a dog for eliminating inside if you did not catch him/her in the act. Simply clean the area well with an enzymatic odor neutralizer and pay more attention next time.
5. If you do catch your dog in the act of eliminating inside, interrupt the behavior by making a loud noise (clap your hands) and then urgently say "outside" and take the dog out. Don't forget to praise and give a treat for finishing outside.

Dogs that are adopted from a shelter often bond very rapidly, closely, and deeply with their new owners. This can cause a problem when you have to leave him/her alone. You must teach your new dog that you are not going to abandon him/her when you leave the house.

1. The very first day you should depart frequently. Just go in and out of the house numerous times for a few seconds and then a few minutes.
2. Do not make a big deal out of your departures and arrivals. Just come and go without saying anything to the dog.
3. Leave your dog with a food stuffed toy to keep him busy for a while after you leave.
4. Leave a radio on when you are gone to keep your dog company. This may calm him/her and will also provide background noise that will block all the noises outside.