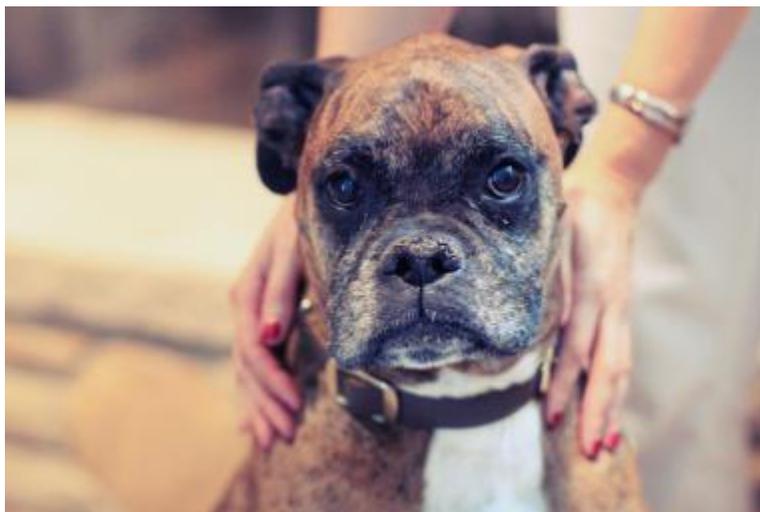


What to Expect After Adopting A New Dog



If you have decided to adopt a dog from a shelter or rescue group, you should know that you are doing a wonderful thing to help homeless pets everywhere! Once you have chosen the right dog for your household, you can begin to prepare yourself and your home for the arrival of your new canine companion.

Bringing home an adult dog or older puppy from a shelter or rescue differs in many ways from bringing home a very young puppy.

Each has its pros and cons. It's only fair that you should know what to expect for the first few weeks after your newly adopted dog arrives in your home. After all, the more prepared you are, the more smoothly the transition will go. Here's how to get started:

- 1) Make sure you have your new dog's personal area(s) all set up and dog-proofed before she comes home. She should have access to her new bed, bowls and toys. If you plan to crate train, be sure the crate is ready as well. If your new dog has a special item (such as a toy, bed or blanket) from her foster home or the shelter, find out if you can take it home with her. This can help make her new home feel familiar.
- 2) Have a collar and ID tag with your phone number made in advance, and bring it with you when you pick up your new dog. Worst case scenario, if she runs off or wanders away, she is unlikely to find her way back to your home. Remember, she is in an unfamiliar place and might be stressed or afraid. Be extra careful to keep her on a leash or in a securely fenced area when she is outdoors to prevent her from becoming lost.
- 3) Find out what food your new dog eats and make sure you have enough of it for the first few weeks. If you plan on changing her diet, wait at least a week to start the new diet. Then, gradually transition her to the new food over the following ten or more days. Both stress and diet change can cause stomach upset and diarrhea, so keep an eye out for these or any other signs of illness (many of which may also be brought on by stress).
- 4) Try to spend the first few days bonding with your new dog, but also give her space. If she wants to spend time in her crate rather than with you, let her do so. However, you can encourage her to interact with you through the use of treats and a soft, calm voice. On the other hand, you still need to establish a routine and

set down the "house rules." Begin feeding, walking and interacting with your dog on the same general schedule each day. If there are areas in or around your home that are off-limits to your dog, establish this up front, either by blocking access to the areas or by using the "leave it" command.

5) Training should start from the moment your new dog comes home, but start slowly. Housetraining is a priority. Many rescue/shelter dogs already have some housetraining, but expect a few accidents over the first few weeks. In other training, work on basic commands and loose leash-walking at first, then move on to tricks and advanced training. Above all, remember to keep things positive!

6) Take your new dog to the veterinarian within a few days after she comes home. It's a good idea to establish a relationship with your vet and open the lines of communication early on. This way, if your new dog becomes ill, your vet will have a better idea of her overall health before she became ill. The shelter or rescue group should have provided you with her vaccine and previous health records. Be sure to bring these records to your first vet visit.

Be aware that your newly adopted dog may act differently in your home than she did at the shelter or foster home. A long talk with the shelter workers or foster owners can give you an idea of her personality and habits. However, once she comes home with you, there's no way to be sure how she will behave. Be prepared for it to take weeks or even months for your new dog to show her true self. Be patient and loving, but also be consistent. Make sure she gets plenty of exercise, mental stimulation, socialization and attention. All of these things can lead to a long and happy life together. Congratulations on your new dog!

Information provided by: <http://dogs.about.com/od/becomingadogowner/qt/What-To-Expect-After-Adopting-A-New-Dog.htm>



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