



Pawsitive Alliance



Bringing Your New Dog Home

Congratulations on your adoption!

It's exciting to bring your new pet home, but please also know there will be an adjustment period for both dog and humans.

Everyone will need to get to know each other and learn to be comfortable and settled into their new situation.

This guide contains some helpful tips to help you successfully transition your new pet into your home and family.



Pet Care Supplies

Here are some key items your dog will need:

- A crate and bed
- Water and food bowls
- Leash
- Collar or harness with ID tags
- Toys
- Enzymatic cleaner
- Grooming tools

You can talk to your local pet store or trainer for help in picking out the right items for your pet.

Before You Bring Your New Dog Home

Establish a family plan for caring for your new pet.

Who will be responsible for your pet's exercise, feeding and daily care routine?

Establish the household rules and apply them consistently – for example, will you allow the dog on the furniture?

Where will he or she sleep?

Learn about body language and signs of stress in dogs.

Do you know the signs of fear, anxiety and aggression? Refer to the Resources page in this guide for further information.

Introduce Your New Pet Into Your Home

If you have small children and/ or other animals in your home, new introductions should be handled with care and attention.

Maintain a calm environment as you perform the first introductions – no running and excitement for that first step, gently and calmly introduce your new pet to your family and keep dogs on leash until trust is established.

Keep an eye on your dog's body language – are they anxious or threatened?

Avoid face to face greetings, remain calm, and let them familiarize themselves with the family and their new surroundings.

Before introducing friends and neighbors, let your new pet adjust and transition into his new home.

Adolescent or adult dogs often already have basic training skills, but may also have learned behavior that you wish to change – be prepared to be patient in transitioning them into their new homes and their new family's rules of behavior.

Relationship Building

Building a strong bond and relationship is key to having a happy and well-behaved pet.

Your pet should learn that good things are provided from you and your family.

Here are some ideas for beginning that relationship:

Try hand feeding in those first transition days – this will teach your pet that you are the provider of his or her food (good stuff!), and becomes a training opportunity.

Remember those household rules you set up in the beginning? Consistency in applying them will help to forge this new relationship.

Whatever your dog finds value in – food, walks, toys, that favorite spot on the couch – they will learn comes from you.

Refer to the Resources page for further guidance and links to the Learn to Earn program.

Socialization

Socialization is important for the training and manners of your new dog.

Providing them opportunities to be around new people, new environments and other animals will help them learn good behavior and adapt to future situations.

Consider training classes to teach them appropriate behavior skills while in the presence of other dogs.

Never allow unsupervised play with children. Instead, introduce your dog to children in a safe and supervised environment, and let the children give your dog treats to create a positive association.

Get your dog used to new places, loud noises, different people and different animals through controlled exposure to these scenarios over time.

Potty Training

Your dog may or may not have had house training in their past and depending on the amount of time in a shelter they may have forgotten the rules. Any dog coming into a new environment still requires time to learn the new rules, so expect accidents.

But, with a plan, patience, and consistency, you and your dog can successfully master housetraining!

Here are some tips:

Supervise your dog when they are out of their crate or confined area and watch for signs of needing to go, such as circling, pacing, or scratching at doors.

Set up a bathroom schedule – for example, take your dog outside every hour, then decrease frequency as they learn the time and place to use the potty, and you learn the amount of time after feeding/watering that they need to go.

Reward them with treats when they go in the right area! Positive reinforcement is key.

When accidents happen (and they will), use an enzymatic cleaner to dispel the smell so your dog won't be inclined to go in that spot again.

Mouthing, Play Biting and Chew Toys

All dogs learn about mouthing and play biting as they develop and learn, and adult dogs will still use their mouth during play.

However, if bite inhibition wasn't taught during their puppy years, adolescent and adult dogs can still learn the appropriate behavior and pressure by getting feedback from you and other dogs.

If during play the teeth come into contact with any fingers or skin, a simple high pitched "ouch" and ending play will give your dog feedback.

If mouthing continues, stop the play or give your dog a timeout - i.e. back in crate, bed, a down-stay (if trained) or other confined area.

If chewing or biting is on inappropriate items, trade whatever it is with a chew toy.

Monitor your dog's play with other dogs to make sure everyone is safe and playing appropriately.

Set your dog up for success!

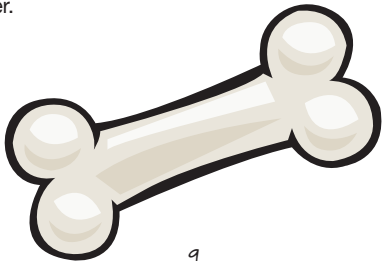
Provide your dog with the right things to chew on – raw/smoked bones, dental chews, toys (like Kong), etc.

Avoid items that can be consumed like rawhides, greenies, or plush toys unless they are supervised.

Provide non-consumable chew toys when your dog is alone to keep them occupied.

You can fill a Kong with treats or food to keep your dog engaged.

Consider a training class to assist with any behavioral issues as you and your dog adjust to your new life together.



Grooming

All dogs need regular grooming, and your new dog may or may not be used to bathing, brushing and nail trims. During this transition period into his or her new home, introduce these activities slowly to gauge your dog's comfort level and experience with grooming.

For example:

Try introducing your dog to a wet cloth wiped over their body – use lots of positive reinforcement – before putting them into the tub or sink for bath time.

Your dog should be brushed regularly, but start first by showing them the tool – go slowly and give them treats during those first brushes.

Let your dog get comfortable with having their feet picked up and toes touched before starting on nail trims. Start introducing trimming tools by just touching to nails without clipping.

Dental checkups and regular cleaning can prevent expensive dental bills later in life. Teach them to accept a doggy toothbrush and enzyme toothpaste slowly and with plenty of positive reinforcement.

Health and Wellness

Your dog needs regular checkups just like you do!

By adopting at a Pawsitive Alliance event, you know your dog has already received some veterinarian care, has already been spayed and neutered, and has already received some vaccinations!

Regular wellness exams, keeping vaccinations current and proper nutrition are keys to a healthy and happy pet. Dogs also need to be on a flea preventative, and depending on where you live they may also need a tick and heartworm preventative.

Find a veterinarian or clinic that you like – ask friends and neighbors for referrals or contact the American Veterinary Medical Association.

Exercise and stimulation are also an important part of your dog's health and wellness – and yours! Taking walks, playtime, proper chew toys and training will help ensure a happy and healthy pet for years to come.

Continue practicing skills and teach new ones to keep your dog interested and prevent boredom. And as always, reinforce with positive motivation tools like treats.

Safety

Nutrition, exercise and veterinarian care are important for your pet's health into the future, but there are also **a few key safety tips to keep your pet healthy during all seasons of the year:**

Never leave your dog in a parked car on a hot summer day – not even for a few minutes, and not even with the windows cracked. A dog's body temperature can reach fatal levels in as little as 15 min in a hot car.

Holidays can be a wonderful time for you, your family and your pet. But plan for safety – keep holiday food away from your pet, keep holiday plants like holly and lilies out of reach (also tinsel!), and watch out for anything your dog might excitedly bump into.

Many dogs don't like the loud noises associated with The Fourth of July or New Year's Eve. Provide a safe place for them to escape the noise and reduce their stress.

These are just a few common sense things to be aware of to keep your pet safe and healthy. With training, consistency and the building of your relationship with your pet, you can navigate these and other potential issues with success.

Resources

If you'd like assistance or more details on any of the topics in this guide, you can refer to the Pawsitive Alliance website at www.pawsitivealliance.org/education

A few additional resources:

The Art & Science of Animal Behavior by Dr. Sophia Yin:
www.drSophiaYin.com

Poster on body language in dogs:
www.drSophiaYin.com/blog/entry/dog-bite-prevention-week-poster-on-the-body-language-of-fear-and-aggression

The Learn to Earn Program: Developing Leadership in Humans and Impulse Control in Dogs:
www.drSophiaYin.com/blog/entry/the-learn-to-earn-program

American Veterinary Medical Association: www.avma.org

Dr. Ian Dunbar: www.dogstardaily.com

ASPCA, Pet Care section: www.asPCA.org/pet-care

Pawsitive Alliance Education Committee Partners:
Canine Behavior Center: www.caninebcenter.com

Great Dog Daycare: www.gogreatdog.com