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Bringing Your New Dog Home



Some helpful information to help transition your new dog into your home

COURTESY OF PAWSITIVE ALLIANCE

When bringing a new dog home it is important to be aware of the variety of experiences your new dog may have had, and to know how to help him make the transition into a new home.

Dogs need order and leadership. They are pack animals, so you must be the "pack leader." Your dog needs to know that you are the boss and that you have a set of house rules. A good leader is firm, consistent and patient – it is not necessary to be harsh or mean. This makes the transition into to your home easier, faster and more rewarding. With the right balance of discipline, understanding and affection, your new dog will become a loyal, grateful and loving companion.

BEFORE YOU BRING YOUR NEW DOG HOME

- Hold a family meeting to create rules about caring for the dog. Will he be allowed on the couch, the bed, and in all rooms of the house? Where will he sleep and eat? Who will walk him and clean up after him? As a family, you must all be consistent with your decisions or you will confuse the dog, usually resulting in the dog making his own rules and causing unnecessary tension.

- Have the necessary items your dog will need from the start: ID tags, a collar and a 6-foot leash, food and water bowls, food, dog toys, a crate and bedding, and basic grooming tools.
- Just before you bring your dog into the home for the first time, take him for as long a walk as possible through his new neighborhood. During this walk you are building a bond of trust with your new companion and establishing your position as pack leader. You are also creating for him what it might feel like to migrate to a new home with his pack leader. And, of course, you are tiring him out so he'll be more amenable to conditioning once you enter the house.
- Walks are not only good exercise, but they also serve as a training tool and an opportunity to establish yourself as the pack leader.

ESTABLISH GROUND RULES IN THE FIRST DAYS

- Entering the house for the first time is as important as that first walk together. Make sure you enter the house first. Then “invite” the dog in. Don’t let your spouse and kids come running out to shower the dog with affection and welcome him home. As hard as it will be for them, tell them to stand where they are. Bring the dog to them and let him approach them and learn their scents.
- When with your dog for the first few weeks, leave him on a leash to quickly guide him to appropriate behavior.
- At first, limit your dog to one room or area. Allow him time to familiarize himself with the smells and sounds of his new home. Try to limit your time away from home those first days; your spending time with him will help him to become more comfortable in his new, unfamiliar home.
- Expect housetraining accidents. Your dog is in a new territory and is establishing a new routine, so accidents probably will

happen. Review housetraining information available from the shelter, your veterinarian or your trainer. The key is to be consistent and maintain a routine.

- Dogs instinctively like to den, and a crate makes the ideal place for your dog to sleep and get away from household hubbub. A crate also makes housetraining and training in general easier, but limit the amount of time the dog is crated. The crate should be roomy enough to allow your dog to stand up, turn around, and lie down comfortably. An alternative to a crate is to confine him in a dog-proofed part of your home, such as a laundry or mud room. You can use a baby gate or dog gate to block off the area from the rest of the house.
- For the first few days, limit guest visits to allow your dog to get comfortable with his new family. When you do have guests, ask their help in training your dog by instructing them not to pay attention to him until he has calmed down.

A TRAINED DOG MAKES FOR A HAPPY HUMAN-CANINE BOND

- Get guidance for training your dog. A well-trained dog is a happier dog and a joy to have around.
- Dogs need a pack leader. If they don't find one, then they try to become the leader, which can create numerous behavioral problems. Thus, you -- and all humans in your home -- need to be the pack leader. Practice obedience training, set rules and apply them calmly and consistently, and praise your dog's good behavior. He will see you as his pack leader and will bond more quickly to you.
- It is amazing how quickly dogs learn what is acceptable and what is not. Dogs have a language of their own, and once we understand it, we can communicate better what we expect of them.

RESOURCES

GREAT INTRODUCTORY BOOKS

“The Culture Clash: A Revolutionary New Way to Understanding the Relationship Between Humans and Domestic Dogs” by Jean Donaldson

“Don’t Shoot the Dog” by Karen Pryor

“It’s Me or the Dog: How to Have the Perfect Pet” by Victoria Stilwell

“A Member of the Family” by Cesar Millan & Melissa Jo Peltier

PUPPY BOOKS

“The Perfect Puppy” by Gwen Bailey

“Before and After Getting Your Puppy” by Dr. Ian Dunbar

WEB RESOURCES

www.aspca.org/dogcare

www.petvideo.com

www.sfspca.org/behavior/dog_library/index_library.shtml