

Bringing your new dog home

Preparation and patience are key to building a happy relationship

The key to helping your new dog make a successful adjustment to your home is being prepared and being patient. It can take anywhere from two days to two months for you and your pet to adjust to each other. The following tips can help ensure a smooth transition.

Preparing your home

Gather supplies

Prepare the things your dog will need in advance. You'll need a collar and leash, food and water bowls, food, and, of course, some toys. And don't forget to order an identification tag right away.

Establish house rules

Work out your dog-care regimen in advance among the human members of your household. Who will walk the dog first thing in the morning? Who will feed them at night? Will they be allowed on the couch, or won't he? Where will they rest at night? Are there any rooms in the house that are off-limits?

Plan the arrival

Try to arrange the arrival of your new dog for a weekend or when you can be home for a few days. Get to know each other and spend some quality time together. Don't forget the jealousy factor — make sure you don't neglect other pets and people in your household!

Prepare for housetraining

Assume your new dog is not housetrained and work from there. Read over the housetraining information given to you at the time of adoption and check out our housetraining tips for adult dogs. Be consistent, and maintain a routine. A little extra effort on your part to come home straight from work each day will pay off in easier, faster housetraining.

Ensure all pets are healthy

Animal shelters take in animals with widely varying backgrounds, some of whom have not been previously vaccinated. Inevitably, despite the best efforts of shelter workers, viruses can be spread and may occasionally go home with adopted animals. If you already have dogs or cats at home, make sure they are up-to-date on their shots and in good general health before introducing your new pet dog.

Take your new dog to the veterinarian within a week after adoption. There, they will receive a health check and any needed vaccinations. If your dog has not been spayed or neutered, make that appointment! There are already far too many homeless puppies and dogs; don't let your new pet add to the problem. Most likely, the shelter will require that you have your pet spayed or neutered anyway. If you need more information about why it is so important to spay or neuter your dog, read our online information on spaying and neutering.

The first weeks

Give them their own dog proofed space, It makes housetraining and obedience-training easier and saves your dog from the headache of being yelled at unnecessarily for problem behavior. Of course, you won't want to separate your dog all day or all night, or they will consider it a jail cell. Consider some sort of confinement to a dog-proofed part of your home. A portion of the kitchen or family room can serve the purpose very well when sectioned off with a dog or baby gate.

Use training and discipline to create a happy home

Dogs need order. When you catch them doing something they shouldn't, don't lose your cool. Stay calm, and let them know immediately, in a loud and disapproving voice, that they have misbehaved. Reward them with praise when they do well, too! Sign up for a local dog obedience class, and you'll learn what a joy it is to have a well-trained dog.

Long-term

Let the games begin

Dogs need an active life. That means you should plan plenty of exercise and game time for your pet. Enjoy jogging or Frisbee? You can bet your dog will, too. If running around the park is too energetic for your taste, try throwing a ball or a stick, or just going for a long walk together. When you take a drive in the country or visit family and friends, bring your dog and a leash along.

Patience is key

Finally, remember to temper your expectations. Life with you is a different experience for your new companion, so give them time to adjust. You'll soon find out that you've made a friend for life. No one will ever greet you with as much enthusiasm or provide you with as much unqualified love and loyalty as your dog will. Be patient, and you will be amply rewarded.

Diet

A well-balanced dog diet consists of:

Dogs will do well on an advanced, natural or essential dog food. Match food to size and life stage.

Treats should not exceed 10% of total diet.

Table scraps are not recommended.

Clean, fresh, chlorine-free water changed daily.

Feeding

Things to remember when feeding your dog:

Feed puppies 3 to 5 times daily, adult dogs 1 to 2 times daily.

Follow recommendations on manufacturer's label as a guideline and discuss your pet's individual needs with your veterinarian.

Feed large, deep-chested dogs 2 to 3 smaller meals a day to help avoid Gastric Dilatation and Volvulus Syndrome, commonly known as bloat, a serious condition that causes food to be trapped in the stomach.

Health

Signs of a Healthy Animal

Active and responsive

Eats and drinks regularly

Clean fur

Walks normally

Clear eyes and nose

Vaccination Info

Your puppy requires a number of vaccinations including:

8 weeks

First series (Distemper, Hepatitis, Parvovirus)

9-11 weeks

Second series (Distemper, Hepatitis, Parvovirus)

12 weeks

Final series (Distemper, Hepatitis, Parvovirus)

Rabies (required at 16 weeks and then annually)

9 in 1 (annually)

Deworm:

Every 3 month if kept in apartment/bungalow.

Every 2.5 month if living on a farm.

Red Flags

If you notice any of these signs, please contact your veterinarian and us:

Missing fur

Diarrhea or dirty bottom

Uneven gait

Distressed breathing

Eye or nasal discharge

Weight loss

Lethargic

Excessive thirst

Ten Things Your New Dog is Trying to Tell You

If only your new dog could talk. Well, they can, in a way: if you listen and observe you'll pick up some important cues. For now your relationship is in its initial stage so here are some of the key things your new dog is trying to tell you:

Thank you for welcoming me to your family. I need time to acclimate to my surroundings. Everything is new, and I need to know what is out of bounds and what will now be a normal part of my day.

I need to be introduced to everyone in the house—that includes other pets.

I need a collar with an I.D. tag. The tag should have your phone number, my name, and your name on it. Even if I have been micro chipped, having a visible tag can help bring me back to you if I get lost.

I need to be updated on all of my shots. Believe me, I'd rather skip those vaccines but they will keep me healthy and happy.

Training should start immediately once you get the okay from my veterinarian. By establishing a routine of positive challenges, I won't get bored, which means I won't get into trouble in my new home.

I love the new nutrition you are giving me. However, at the shelter where I lived, they fed me a different brand of kibble. Any change in my diet could upset my stomach, so please introduce me to it by mixing the two brands and slowly transitioning me onto my new yummy food. Also, I need some help with portion control: please don't overfeed me or give me table scraps—even when I stare at you with adorable, pleading eyes.

My water bowl needs to be changed each day to make sure my water is fresh and bacteria doesn't start growing in my bowl.

Potty training is just as important for me as it is for you, a consistent routine containing lots of positive praise when I am going at the right place at the right time will keep us both happy.

I know you are busy. Can you spend quality time with me? Maybe we can toss a ball around or visit the dog park. It would be great for me if you create a schedule and try to stick to it.

Please show me some patience. I am new to everything, and I have to learn to trust you. You will see my personality bloom over the next few weeks and I will spend the rest of my life showering you with affection to show you my gratitude for giving me my forever home.

Dog Spaying and Neutering

All our dogs come sterilised to adopters.

canine health

Along with a high-quality food and appropriate veterinary care, spaying or neutering can have a positive impact on the quality and length of your dog's life.

The procedures:

Males are neutered, meaning the testicles are surgically removed. This is a commonly performed procedure. Your dog can usually go home the same day and return to regular activities within a few days.

Females are spayed, which surgically removes their ovaries and uterus. Surgery is more involved for females, since an incision is made in their abdomen. Females also usually come home within 24 hours, have limited activity until the stitches start to heal (for two or three days) and then return to regular activities within a week to 10 days. These procedures are painful and post-operative pain medication should be prescribed by your dog's veterinarian to control the pain after these surgeries.

Depending on the breed, most dogs can be altered as young as four months. Females should be spayed before their first heat.

Why spay or neuter?

Prevent pet overpopulation:

There are thousands of animals in shelters and rescues across the country that are waiting for someone to adopt them. Spaying or neutering your pet helps prevent unwanted litters of puppies and gives the animals at the shelters and rescues a better chance of finding their forever home.

Fewer behavior problems:

Intact dogs dig out of yards, jump fences and run from home more often than altered dogs. Male dogs can smell a female in heat at a great distance away. Neutered males are also less likely to mark their territory.

Less aggressive:

Altered male dogs are less aggressive toward other dogs than intact males. Altered females are also less aggressive, since a mother may become aggressive if she thinks her puppies are threatened.

Better health:

Female dogs are at risk for mammary or uterine cancer. Male dogs often get testicular or prostate cancer. These risks are reduced or eliminated as soon as your dog is altered. They are also less likely to escape your yard and get injured while running loose.

Females do not go into heat:

Female dogs in heat may leave messy stains on your furniture and carpet. Heat "seasons" can last up to three weeks, twice a year. The scent of a female in heat can attract males from a great distance.

Common objections:

"My dog won't be protective"

Neutering has no effect on your dog's ability and instinct to protect. Your dog will actually be less distracted by other dogs and better able to concentrate on work.

"Altering makes them fat and lazy."

Overeating makes dogs fat and lazy, not spaying or neutering. There are lots of overweight intact dogs out there. Your dog will be healthy and live longer when altered.

"I want my kids to experience the miracle of birth, and puppies are so much fun" or "We want to keep a puppy."

Pregnancy is not risk-free. Are you willing to risk losing the mother dog? Are you willing to do the work to find responsible homes for every puppy she produces? If the new pet parents discover they are unable to keep their puppy, are you willing to take it back and find it a new home? A dog is a big responsibility. A litter of dogs multiplies that responsibility and the work. There are thousands of dogs and puppies euthanized every year.

"My dog's too old."

Your dog is almost never too old for spay/neuter surgery. Unless your veterinarian finds a health reason to avoid surgery, go ahead and have it done. You can always combine the procedure with another one, such as teeth-cleaning, to reduce down-time for your pet and possibly reduce cost.

Changing from the basic shelter food to more nutritious/ balanced diet.

Need to switch dog food or cat food? There are several reasons why you may want (or need) to change to a new food brand or formula:

*Your pet has a food allergy or sensitivity

*Your pet is entering a new life stage

*Your pet needs to lose or gain weight

*You're bringing a new pet home

*Your veterinarian has recommended a specific diet for your pet

*You want to give your pet more of a variety

Dogs and cats can experience an upset stomach if you don't transition them to a new food gradually. Transitioning too quickly can lead to diarrhea, vomiting or even loss of appetite.

When transitioning to a new pet food, do so slowly over a period of about 7–10 days, mixing an increasing amount of new food with old food each day:

Start with 75% old food mixed with 25% new food for approximately three days.

Then mix 50% old with 50% new for approximately three days.

Then 75% new, 25% old for approximately three days.

Then 100% new.

Some pets may be easier to transition than others, and cats tend to be more finicky than dogs. Closely monitor your pet during the transition to ensure they are getting the nutrition they need. If you notice your pet refusing to eat the new food, or if your pet starts vomiting or has diarrhea or constipation, you should slow down the rate you are switching the food. If problems continue, consult with your veterinarian.

Prevention Tips: Avoiding a Flea or Tick Infestation

It sometimes feels as though fleas and ticks are a common part of life with pets, but it doesn't have to be that way. By providing a balanced program of preventative steps coupled with appropriate treatment options, you can avoid flea and tick infestations and put your pet on the road to a life that's free of these troublesome pests. Here's how:

Prevent flea and tick infestations—indoors and out

To effectively prevent flea and tick infestations, you must first understand their life cycle. They begin as eggs that are found in areas

that are frequented by your pet, such as grass, carpeting, and furniture. These eggs hatch into larva, followed by the pupa stage (for fleas) or the nymph stage (for ticks), and then finish their cycle to adulthood. The female fleas and ticks then lay their eggs and the cycle begins anew.

Preventing flea and tick infestations includes minimizing or preventing the presence of eggs in your pet's environment. Stray animals—can carry fleas and introduce them into your yard. A fenced-in yard can minimize the presence of these animals in your yard and thus minimize the presence of fleas and ticks.

Indoors, you'll want to pay special attention to areas that are prime locations for fleas and ticks to be found. Prevent fleas from establishing residence in your home by treating your pet based on the treatment plan outlined on the flea preventative treatment you select. Also, be sure to wash your pet's bedding frequently and be on the lookout for any signs of tick infestation.

Treat your pet – even if you don't see any fleas

To prevent fleas and ticks from infesting your home, select a preventative treatment plan that best fits the needs of your home and your pet. There are many options from which to choose, including collars, sprays, spot-on treatments, oral treatments and shampoos. Ask your veterinarian for advice on choosing the appropriate treatment option and dose for your pet's age, weight and health condition.

Evaluate your pet

Measure the efficacy of your flea and tick prevention and treatment regimen by regularly checking your pet for fleas and ticks. Use a flea comb to carefully examine your pet's coat and check for the presence of fleas, then use your fingers to feel all over their body to thoroughly check for ticks. And even if you don't find any fleas and ticks, be sure to look for other clues. Does your pet seem itchy? Are they scratching a lot? Do they have areas of hair loss or tiny specks (black or light-colored) on their coat? These symptoms can alert you to a flea problem and signal a need for additional treatment measures and preventative steps.

Keep fleas and ticks away—permanently

You can prevent infestations by making year-round flea treatment a part of your pet's regular maintenance schedule. Spot-on and oral treatments that contain an insecticide and growth hormone regulators will provide excellent protection. Additionally, you can help keep fleas at bay by placing a flea collar in your vacuum bag or canister.

Keeping your pet flea-free will make him—and you—much happier.

YOUR PET'S PLEA

My life is likely to last 10 to 15 years, maybe more. Any separation from you will be very painful. Give me time to understand what you want of me.

Place your trust in me - it is crucial for my well being. Don't be angry with me for long and don't lock me up as punishment. You have your work, your friends, your entertainment. I have only you.

Talk to me. Even if I don't understand your words, I understand your voice when you speak to me. Be aware that however you treat me, I'll never forget it.

Never hit me! Remember I have teeth that could crush the bones in your hand, and claws that can tear your skin... but I choose not to hurt you.

Before you scold me for being lazy or uncooperative, ask yourself if something might be bothering me. Perhaps I'm not getting the right food, or I've been out in the sun too long, maybe I have a cold, or my heart may be getting old and weak.

Take care of me when I get old. You, too, will grow old. I have trusted you all this time.

Go with me on difficult journeys, Never say, "I can't bear to watch it" or "Let it happen in my absence." Everything is easier for me if you are there.

In the event something happens to me... naturally, or accidentally... remember I loved you, and I thank you now, for taking such good care of me while we were together.

Please burn a candle for me on the day of our parting, to shed light for me at the bridge. Light one for me each year on that day, to brighten your heart with the memories you carry of me. I am with you always and forever... until we meet again.