

## **What to Expect:**

### **Bringing Your Adopt-A-Pet Dog Home**

#### ***Getting Home . . . Your New Dog's First Days***

##### **'Stuff'**

Be prepared to spend from \$50 to \$250 in upfront costs. Collar, ID tag, leash, bowls, food (20 lbs.), toys, bed, etc. For a medium sized dog (40 to 65 lbs.), altogether in one year, expect to spend approximately \$40/month on food and toys, or \$600/year in total including annual physicals and shots. If you travel, kennel or pet sitting costs run approximately \$100-\$200/week. Surgery (sometimes necessary) can range from \$100 to \$1000+.

##### **Take time off -- 48 hours at least, 1 week even better**

This is important bonding time when your new dog is feeling most stressed and vulnerable in its new environment. Keep household activities to a minimum while your new dog adjusts.

##### **Give your dog a place of its own**

A retreat. Create a safe haven for your new dog with a bed or blanket tucked away in a corner of your home.

##### **A good bath**

Your dog will really shine after a good bath and rub down. Great for bonding and contributes greatly to new dog huggability.

##### **Lack of appetite**

It is not uncommon for your new dog to lack an appetite for a period of 1-2 days. After day 2, if your dog still has not eaten, see your vet.

##### **Introduction to other pets**

Other Dog(s). Try introducing dogs in a neutral territory, a park, a parking lot, etc. It will take a few weeks to months, depending on individual personalities, for the dogs to work out a new pack order (establishing alpha, i.e. who's dominant). Be patient, it may take 6 months for your 1st dog and your new dog to bond and truly enjoy each other's company.

Watch your new dog learn from your first dog, its amazing. Having a second dog can be a wonderful experience for both dogs and humans alike.

Cat(s). Two words sum up the best approach to introducing your new dog to a family cat: slow and careful. Be sure you're there to make the first introduction in person, and plan on supervising the subsequent get-togethers for at least the first week. You'll need to show the dog that the cat is important to you. Firmly, but gently, tell your dog "no" at the first signs of chasing or intimidating the cat. Expect to reinforce this for at least a few weeks. Have separate feeding areas, preferably out of sight of each other (some dogs just love cat food!). Oftentimes shelter dogs turn out to have grown up with cats -- and your new dog may be one of them.

##### **Marking the house**

Not uncommon, especially for males. Keep your eyes open. Take your dog outside frequently to relieve his/herself. Watch for repeat offenses in the same spot. Try Nature's Miracle (in white bottle, red lettering) from your pet store. If, in fact your new dog does mark the house, it is likely only temporary. A great reason for the Leash Bonding method (see below). If the marking behaviour persists for many days, it may be that your dog needs housebreaking (see next page).

### **Running off**

New dogs have not established loyalties or attachments to you or your home. This will take weeks to months. It's best to keep your new dog on a lead or in a fenced yard when he/she is outside.

### **Try 'Leash Bonding'**

Also referred to as 'umbilical cording' - leash bonding is a great way to start bonding and socialization. The real trick during your new dog's first days will be to supervise your dog without overwhelming him/her with excess attention. Just snap an end of a leash each one to your new dog, and one to yourself. Let your new dog trail you around the house for a while. By spending time in your presence and going where you go, your new dog will start learning that you're its leader and friend. Also a very good way to monitor any undesirable behaviors during those first weeks.

### **Car Sickness**

If your new dog gets carsick easily, try ginger pills or Dramamine (ok for larger dogs) to settle its stomach. Over time, take your new dog for short car rides, with plenty of fresh air. After 3 to 5 months of this, your dog should be acclimated to increasingly longer rides.

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## ***Your Dog's First Weeks to Early Months Patience, Patience and.... Patience***

Your new dog's first weeks to early months are the settling in period. Your new dog will look to you, as leader (alpha) of its new pack, for structure and ground rules. No matter what the dog's background or personality, it must know (it need to know) what is appropriate or inappropriate behavior.

The best correction of all is simply a firm "NO" issued at the time of its bad behavior- when it is chewing, when it is marking, when it is stealing that steak off the kitchen counter. Correcting your dog after the fact will confuse it, as it will not remember its offense, as a human being would. Dogs live for now.

A dog that's been abused or neglected will be low on self-confidence and self-esteem. However, the abused or neglected dog, like any other, still will yearn for structure and ground rules in its new home. Appropriate correction for these dogs still come in the form of a firm "No", but a softened firm "No" less stern, more loving. After weeks and months of TLC, training and consistent reinforced structure, the chances are good that you will wind up with a new best friend that worships the ground that you walk on.

### **Socialization**

This is an important time in his new surroundings. Take them with you.... it not only teaches them how to ride but it also allows them to see new things. The more the better. The more they are relaxed in new environments, the more stable they will be wherever you choose to go.

### **Basic Training**

After a couple of weeks setting in, start your dog on the basics: sit, lay, heel, come. The payoffs of fifteen to twenty minute training sessions 4-5 times/week with your new dog, are many. First, you'll get a well-behaved, well-mannered dog. Second is the bonding and trust-building which takes place when working one on one with your new dog. Third, training sessions will reinforce your 'top dog', leadership role that your new dog needs to know during these early weeks of ambiguity. Fourth, your new dog's gradual successes during these sessions will be a tremendous confidence builder, especially for a dog that's been neglected or abused. Fifth, training sessions actively engage and stimulate your dog's mind - making them less anxious or neurotic during the rest of the day. Too many great reasons no to put it off!

### **Play and Exercise**

Play stimulates bonding, stimulates intellect and reduces anxiety. At first, your new dog may or may not be good at play. But play is a cornerstone of canine interactions with other 'pack' members. For the dog home alone many hours during the day, play and exercise are superbly important. It stimulates your dog's mind and, also, physically tires your dog. Results: less boredom, less anxiety while you're away, ergo less chewing, less digging, etc.

### **Chewing**

Sometimes, a new (adult) dog will chew out of frustration, anxiety or nervousness. Setting in, basic training and plenty of exercise and play will greatly reduce your new dog's desire to chew. Provide an assortment of chewable toys (nylabones, Kong's etc.) around the house and encourage your new dog to chew them--not the furniture. Use commonsense about dog-proofing your house ("an ounce of prevention"): keep shoes, purses, boots, toys, clothing out of your new dog's reach. An Apple Bitter type spray product (from your pet store) is natural, inexpensive and will usually deter your dog from chewing on where it is applied.

### **Housebreaking (if necessary)**

Most dogs, even housebroken ones, make a mistake or two in a new house. If so, be sure to neutralize the odor with plain white vinegar or Nature's Miracle (from your pet store) to prevent re-attraction to the same spot. With your new dog at home, keep a close eye on him/her, and make a point to bring the dog outside frequently. If you catch your new dog in the act, correct him/her with a firm "NO" and immediately take the dog outside, where it is appropriate for it to relieve itself. Praise him/her when they finish what they started. Eventually, your new dog will learn to expect the opportunity to go outside, and wait for it.

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*First 4 to 6 Months. . .*

#### ***Patience begets Rewards***

### **Settled In**

You'll realize your new dog has settled in by the little things. All of a sudden, you'll notice your new friend is excited at the sound of car keys. He'll begin to sit down next to you, wherever you are. He'll start standing by the counter where the dog cookie jar is, waiting for a treat. He'll begin to realize that when you're at the front door, there's a 1-in-10 chance you might be getting ready to take him for a walk. If your new dog was abused before being rescued by the shelter, you may notice the things he doesn't do: he stops jumping at certain everyday sounds, like a door closing or a drawer opening, and begins ignoring them; he stops backing away from you when you approach, and starts wagging his tail at your sight; he stops walking with his tail down, and begins carrying it higher and higher. You'll know when your new dog has settled in.

### **The Rewards**

The ultimate reward is knowing that you've given a "second-hand dog" a new home and "a second bite out of life," as one writer put it. In return for your patience and love, you'll watch your new dog come out of his shell, gradually but unmistakably, and bond with you in ways you never imagined. You'll end up with a friend who trusts you implicitly, who can't wait for you to come home, and for whom you are now the center of the universe. Because they've been abandoned, and because their hearts have been broken at least once, second-hand dogs try harder. You'll see it. And you'll be richer for it.