



YOUR NEW DOG

We are so excited that you decided to adopt your new dog! We want this to be a positive experience so that you and your new dog can live happily together for a long time, so here are some tips for starting your new relationship off on the right “paw.”

First Day Home

We know you have just committed to a new family member, and this can be stressful and exciting for all involved, including your new dog. When bringing your dog home for the first time, keep in mind that he or she has probably been through a lot in the last few days. He may have been lost on the streets for a period of time before coming to the shelter or given up by his previous owner. Being adopted into a new family can be very overwhelming for a dog. Here are some tips on introducing your new furry friend to your home.

What to Do

Establishing a routine will ensure there are no surprises and help your new dog adjust more quickly. Try to work the adoption into your schedule so you have a few days to be at home with your new dog and help him adjust while you get to know him. Your first day with your new dog should be spent allowing him to get used to his new home. Everything he encounters will be new and possibly stressful for him, so it is important to allow him to adjust at his own pace. It could take two days for him to be his normal self, or it could take two months. There is no set time limit on this adjustment period because every dog is different.

It is best to give your new pup some time to adjust to you and your family before taking him to new places. As much fun as it is to pick out toys and supplies with your new pup, it can be very overwhelming for him to be in a busy store with so many new people and smells. You can purchase everything you need to get started from the Sit ... Stay ... Shop here at the Dumb Friends League, and then go to the pet store another day when your dog has had time to adjust to his new home. We strongly encourage you to take advantage of the free exam within 14 days of adoption generously donated by members of the Denver Area Veterinary Medical Society (DAVMS). However, be aware that a veterinary clinic is a stressful environment for any dog, and do everything you can to make it a positive experience for him, like bringing treats with you.

Introductions

If you have other pets at home, take your time introducing your new dog to them. It is always a good idea to bring your resident dog(s) into the shelter for a dog visit before adopting to ensure they will get along with your new dog. See our handouts “Introducing Your New Dog to Your Resident Dog” and “Canine Rivalry” on our website. Other animals, like cats, take a little bit longer to get used to having a new dog in their home. See our handout “Introducing

Your New Cat to Your Other Pets.”

Training

Training is an important thing that should begin early, no matter what age your new dog is. Socializing puppies is crucial to their development and will help you have a well-rounded pup as an adult. For all dogs, we recommend clicker training (see our “Dog Clicker Training” handout online). This is a great form of positive-reinforcement training that can help teach your dog manners, help a fearful dog become more confident and is also a great stress reliever.

Resources

If you have any questions regarding your new dog's behavior, we offer a free Pet Behavior Helpline. You can sign up for an appointment online at <http://ddfl.org/behavior-help>.