



Adopting a High-Energy Dog

Congratulations! High energy dogs are always up for an adventure! Although these dogs may be challenging at times, they also seem to have a true zest for life and being with people. Oftentimes, dogs who are a bit naughty, are the smartest and most willing to please as long as their energy is channeled in a positive manner.

Here are some tips on making the first few weeks successful and ways to keep your high-energy dog happy and healthy.

- Don't overwhelm them too soon with lots of visitors and trips to places. **Too much too soon can be an invitation for unwanted behaviors.** It will take them a few weeks to adjust to their new surroundings and learn what is expected of them.
- Make sure your new dog has plenty of physical and mental exercise from day one. **A tired dog is a good dog!** Behavior issues (destructiveness, barking, jumping up, mouthiness) are likely to arise if your high-energy dog is not properly exercised.
- **Establish a routine immediately.** Even though they are adjusting to their new home, you should implement a routine and the whole family should be involved. If the dog is going to be crated, start working on crate training right away. It is difficult and confusing to the dog to allow them freedoms that are then taken away.
- **WALK, WALK, WALK!** Even if you have a backyard, every dog will benefit from daily walks. All of the sights, sounds, and smells that a dog experiences on a walk are excellent mental stimulation.
- **Exercise BEFORE you leave for work if you expect your dog to be crated or calm in the house while you are gone.** This may require you getting up earlier, but it will pay off. When leaving, give your dog a long-lasting chew or durable toy that he only gets when you are gone. Also expect that they will be ready to exercise again when you get home!
- It is important for your dog to learn that there are times to be calm and settle down. Just like people, dogs need time to decompress and relax. Create a "calm spot" for them and encourage them to relax there. Providing a blanket or bed in the area where the family relaxes and giving them a special toy or treat to enjoy when they are calm is a good start. If your dog has difficulty relaxing, you may need to use a crate to get them to calm down. Be sure you have properly exercised them and are not using the crate as punishment, but as a tool to let them know it is time to relax. (nap)
- If your dog is a Wayside Waifs Peace Academy graduate, they will likely already have several basic commands down. We highly encourage you to continue training. **If your dog does not know their basic commands, you should get started ASAP by finding a trainer or class to join.**
- Impulse control training will be very beneficial for your high-energy dog. **NILF (Nothing In LIFE is FREE) training refers to teaching a dog that it must offer a desired behavior (like sitting quietly) before it gets something it wants (treat, going through a door, getting a toy, attention from you).** NILF training

also helps the dog feel like it has control over what comes next while also learning to respect their owner.

- **Lastly, it is crucial to always use reward based (positive reinforcement) training.** Ignore the behavior you would like to see disappear, and reward the behaviors you would like to see them repeat. **Have fun and be creative!**

If, after trying these suggestions, you are still experiencing undesirable behaviors in your dog, SUBMIT QUESTIONS by clicking the link under Ask A Trainer on the Behavior and Training page of the Wayside Waifs website: www.waysidewaifs.org.

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