



## Bringing Your New Dog Home - The First Few Weeks

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Congratulations! You are now the proud owner of a new dog or puppy! This can be an exciting time but also a stressful time. Everyone is going to need a little time to adjust to new routines and new relationships. Here are a few tips to help the first weeks go smoothly.

- You and your dog need time to adjust! **Try to limit visitors and outings to busy places.** There will be plenty of time to go places and meet people once you get to know each other. Remember that your new dog may have experienced many changes in the weeks prior and they will benefit from just being able to unwind and settle in. Set aside time to bond.
- **Allow existing pets and new pets to get to know each other slowly.** Baby gates, crating, and allowing them alone time can really help them form a lasting relationship. **WALK, WALK, WALK.** Leash walking together can be one of the most bonding experiences you can do for your pets. Always refrain from having bones, and other high value items out for at least the first 2 weeks. We recommend introducing one type of toy at a time and having several. (example-4 tennis balls)
- **Your new dog should NOT be left alone unattended with existing pets** until you have monitored interactions for several days and have had no issues.
- **Expect some mishaps!** There will likely be a few potty accidents and possibly a chewed up item or two. It is important to set them up for success and dog-proof as much as possible prior to coming home. **Even housebroken dogs can have a few accidents as they adjust.**
- Feed your new dog lots of tiny treats. **They should think that you are the most awesome person and that good things happen when you are around.** Hand feeding a portion of their meals before you set their bowl down is also a great idea. We recommend feeding from separate bowls a distance apart. Shared water bowls usually do not cause any conflict.
- **Crate train!** Crate training will allow you to set a schedule with ease and allows the dog to have “their own” place or a “safe spot” for more timid dogs. Whatever you choose, start from day 1. We recommend you start with an old comforter or towels in the crate until you know they are not going to chew them up. Then splurge on the orthopedic dog bed.
- If you experience any distress when crating or leaving your dog alone, we recommend the following
  - Leave the radio or tv on.
  - Leave something with your scent on it.
  - Make sure they are properly exercised, and have eliminated beforehand.
  - Leave them something to occupy them such as a frozen Kong or chew toy.
- Make sure all family members are aware of the schedule and expectations for the new family member. **Consistency is KEY!**

- **Always monitor children when they are interacting with any dog.** Children should not be allowed to hug, hang on, sit on or chase a new dog. The dog needs time to feel safe and bond with the children as well.
- **Start training basic obedience right away.** Sign up for an appropriate class to ensure your new dog is well mannered and well socialized.

Last but not least...don't expect your new dog to be or act a certain way. Each dog is an individual. With your guidance, let them develop their personality. Adopters often say they don't see their dog's true personality until several weeks after adoption. Be patient and understanding while you become best friends.

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](http://www.waysidewaifs.org).

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