



Dog Adopter Tips: Welcome Home!

Congratulations! We know you're excited to start bonding with your new dog, and we've got a few tips to help it go smoothly.

Schedule your day together

Dogs thrive on a daily routine, and knowing what their day will be like helps with house training and reduces anxiety. From day one, stick to the same daily schedule, planning when your pup will eat, walk, be crated, and be left alone. If you adopt when you have a day off work, make sure you still leave for a few hours during the time you'd normally be at work. If you have an irregular schedule, try to standardize it as much as possible for the first few weeks after you adopt.

Keep them out of trouble, and give praise for everything they do that's right!

Because your dog won't yet know the rules of the house, it's best for them to be contained in a dog-proof area when unsupervised: a crate, playpen, or gated kitchen all work well. Just before you leave, give them something to do (like their meal in a Kong toy). As soon as you get home, take them for a walk immediately, since they've been holding it all day. Check out our Crate Training tips if your new dog needs to be housebroken.

When you are home, slowly introduce them to the rest of their surroundings by keeping them tethered to you using a leash or baby-gated in the same room. Supervise them closely for the first two weeks. If they do anything unwanted, gently correct them ("Oops!") and give them the right activity instead (for instance, swap your shoe for a chew toy). Dogs have very short attention spans, only a few seconds long, and you can only teach them something is good or bad if it's happening in the moment. If you notice it later, even just a minute, it's too late to say anything! And be sure to praise them for all of the good things they do, such as choosing their chew toy, since it will make them more likely to repeat those behaviors.

It takes time to adjust

Shelter dogs have recently been under a lot of stress, and any animal can get overwhelmed when transported to a brand new situation. Be patient with your dog as they settle in, and remember that PAWS is here to help if any issues arise – sometimes all it takes is a little adjustment to make a big difference. Please call us before anything gets out of hand!