



TOP TIPS FOR SAFELY BRINGING HOME a RESCUE or SHELTER DOG



Congratulations on choosing to adopt a rescue dog! Rescues and shelters everywhere house wonderful dogs, each of them just waiting to become a member of your household. Below are tips to help ensure a smooth transition for your new furry friend.

IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY DONE SO . . .

Have a set of house rules. Dogs need order and leadership. They are pack animals, so you must be the "pack leader." Your dog needs to know that you are in control and that you have rules established.

Hold a family meeting to create rules about caring for the dog. Will he be allowed on the couch, the bed, and in all rooms of the house? Where will he sleep and eat? Who will walk him and clean up after him? As a family, you must all be consistent with your decisions or you will confuse the dog, usually resulting in the dog making his own rules and causing unnecessary tension.



Have the necessary items your dog will need from the start: ID tags, a collar and a 6-foot lead, food and water bowls, food, dog toys, a crate and bedding, and basic grooming tools.

Bring your new dog home when you can be there for a few days so you can get to know each other and establish rules.

Just before you bring your dog into the home, take him for a walk to tire him out a little. Walks are not only good exercise, but they also serve as a training tool and an opportunity to establish yourself as the leader.

ESTABLISH GROUND RULES IN THE FIRST DAYS

At first, limit your dog to one room or area. Allow him time to familiarise himself with the smells and sounds of his new home. Try to limit your time away from home those first days; your spending time with him will help him to become more comfortable in his new, unfamiliar home.

Keep your dog on lead for the first few weeks so you can immediately teach him what behaviours are not acceptable. NEVER leave a leash on your dog when he is unsupervised.

Your rescue dog should NOT be left alone in the house with your existing pets until you have carefully monitored and controlled their interactions for a period of time.

Expect housetraining accidents. Your dog is in a new territory and is establishing a new routine, so accidents probably will happen. Review housetraining information available from the rescue, your veterinarian or your local Bark Busters trainer. The key is to be consistent and maintain a routine.

Dogs instinctively like to den, and a crate makes the ideal place for your dog to sleep and get away from household hubbub. A crate also makes housetraining and training in general easier, but limit the amount of time the dog is crated. The crate should be roomy enough to allow your dog to stand up, turn around, and lie down comfortably. An alternative to a crate is to confine him in a dog-proofed part of your home, such as a laundry or utility room. You can use a baby gate or dog gate to block off the area from the rest of the house.

Most rescue dogs have been given basic vaccinations and many have already been spayed/neutered. It is important that your dog is examined by a veterinarian within a week after adoption for a health check and any needed vaccinations. While there, arrange for the spay/neuter surgery if needed.

For the first few days, limit guest visits to allow your dog to get comfortable with his new family. When you do have guests, ask their help in training your dog by instructing them not to pay attention to him until he has calmed down. One way to communicate this request is to post a sign on your front door informing visitors that you have a new dog in training.



A TRAINED DOG MAKES FOR A HAPPY HUMAN-CANINE BOND

Get guidance for training your dog. A well-trained dog is a happier dog and a joy to have around.

Dogs need leadership. If they don't find it then they can become unruly and disruptive, which can create numerous behaviour problems. Thus, you—and all humans in your home—need to show leadership. Practice obedience training, set rules and apply them calmly and consistently, and praise your dog's good behaviour. He will see you as his leader and will bond more quickly to you.

It is amazing how quickly dogs learn what is acceptable and what is not. Dogs have a language of their own, and once we understand it, we can communicate better what we expect of them.

A BRIGHT FUTURE



Hats off to you for bringing home a rescue dog! Your patience and training will help to create a bond that will reward you both for years to come. With the right balance of discipline, understanding and affection, your rescue dog will become a loyal, grateful and loving companion.