



Bringing Home Your New Family Member

Before you bring your new dog home, there are a number of ways that you can prepare for your new addition. It is important to be proactive and keep in mind what is best for your new dog.

1. Get your dog an ID tag with your information on it (name, phone number, address).
2. Make sure your dog's collar is not too loose. Many dogs in new situations can get scared and pull out of their collars. Look into a martingale collar (no slip collar available at pet stores) or a harness in addition to the regular collar.
3. Keep your dog on a leash except in a fenced-in yard and be aware of your surroundings.

Making the Transition

During the first two weeks in the new home, you should keep new experiences to a minimum. You must remember that being in a new home is already a big change for your new dog, so bringing them to pet stores and meeting a bunch of new people or dogs too fast can be overwhelming and can end up having negative effects.

Instead, spend the first couple of weeks spending quality time with your dog and getting into a routine. This will allow your dog to bond with you and come to expect how his day is going to go. This consistency means less stress for your dog.

After the "transition" time, you can slowly start to venture out to new places. Always remember that you are your dog's biggest advocate, so if at any point you feel like he is uncomfortable, it is up to you to remove yourself and him from any situation that can lead to negative effects and fears in your dog.

Setting Boundaries

Before you take your new dog home, you should dog-proof your home the same way that you would child-proof your home for a toddler. Pick up things that he can get into or chew (like shoes), close off rooms to restrict access to the entire house at first, and make sure there is no food or enticing things on the counter.

It is typical for adopters to be so excited to take their new dog home that they end up letting the dog have a little too much freedom at first. Instead, the best thing to do is make sure that rules and boundaries are clear from the very beginning. Structure and consistency in your dog's daily routine will give him a healthy feeling of stability.

Decide what your expectations are for your new family member. Fostering good behaviors is the key to success. Have your dog sit for his food bowl, sit before opening the door or putting his leash on, and ask permission before getting on the couch. This will not only set good boundaries for your dog, but will lead to him looking to you more for direction instead of making decisions on his own.