



BRINGING YOUR NEW RESCUE DOG HOME

THE FIRST FEW WEEKS...

For an adult dog, the first few weeks in a new home are a critical transition period. How well you manage the dog's behaviour during this time will greatly affect the success rate for a well-rounded, loving pet. This information will help you know what to expect from a new dog.

Adoptive owners view a dog's new life in their home as a wonderful change from a shelter, which it is, however; the transition can present some big changes for the dog. The transition brings a change in the dog's daily routine and in the caretakers. In the new home, the dog suddenly faces a new set of social companions in a new environment filled with unfamiliar sights, smells and sounds. Your dog may be confused, over-stimulated and frightened. Your dog faces a big adjustment as they learn their way around and develop relationships with their new family. Some undesirable behaviour may result. **DON'T PANIC!** By modifying or redirecting the actions of your new dog, you can help your dog feel at ease, feel safe and begin to understand the new rules.

WHAT TO EXPECT...

- Jumping up (you can discourage this by ignoring the behaviour and ensure you do not reward for this behaviour)
- Exploratory behaviour, including sniffing, mouthing and chewing new things
- Stealing food
- Accidents in the house (shelter rules differ from rules in your home. The routines of your home take some time for your dog to understand)
- Wild running, hyper behaviour, the 'zoomies' – your new dog cannot yet distinguish between indoor and outdoor behaviour

MANAGING YOUR DOG DURING THE TRANSITION...

The first few days are critical for learning rules and breaking bad habits. Dogs are particularly impressionable in a new environment, especially the first time they try a new behaviour. Dogs will try to push boundaries to see what they can get away with. Therefore, plan to invest time during this period to get acquainted with your dog, to teach and socialize your new dog. Plan and prepare yourself in advance of your new dog's arrival by

- Research and read about basic behaviour
- Research and discuss different plans with local trainers in your area.

- Decide where your dog will be in your home when you are not going to be home. Arrange for a bed, crate and/or pen in that area.
- Refer to the Recommended Essentials list provided by Final Victory Rescue.

PREPARE YOURSELF MENTALLY & YOUR HOME PHYSICALLY...

Not all things will go smoothly at first. As soon as you get your new dog home, behaviours need to be managed and you need to supervise your new dog closely. DO NOT give your new dog the run of your house! The most important thing your dog needs is STRUCTURE and ROUTINE. Enforce the rules for living in the home. Freedom comes later as your dog develops the responsibility to handle freedom. No couch time, no human bed for AT LEAST 2 weeks.

**** Failure by adopters to properly teach a dog the house rules, and for rewarding unwanted behaviour is a chief reason for unsuccessful adoptions ****

Provide your new dog with plenty of crate time in the first few days. Ensure your crate is in a quieter area of the home, not a lot of high traffic. Gradually increase the time out of the crate. This allows time for proper decompression. It also ensures that your dog is not over-stimulated. Section off areas in your home so that when the dog is out, they do not have free reign and can explore smaller areas and become acquainted with them systematically. Allow your dog to exit their crate on their own and approach you when they are ready. Please remember that you and your family are strangers to your new dog.

Your new rescue dog should be crated when you are not home (or at least in a confined area where they cannot get into trouble, hurt themselves, or damage your belongings). This ensures your dog's safety and curbs unwanted behaviours. If your new family member is left free to roam unsupervised, it is almost a guarantee that they will get into trouble, hurt, or damage something.

Allow your new dog to leash drag (***ONLY when supervised***) for the first couple weeks in your home. This allows you to easily control movements and control/correct unwanted behaviours. Again, your dog will be attempting to figure out what the boundaries are, by having the dog on leash in the house, even tethered to you, the correction is immediate and your dog understands the boundary you set. A quick and gentle collar correction will alleviate inappropriate behaviours.

****DO NOT FORGET TO PRAISE YOUR DOG ONCE YOUR DOG HAS DONE WHAT YOU HAVE ASKED****

SKILLS NEW ADOPTERS MUST LEARN...

Correct, Praise and Re-Direct. If the dog ignores corrections, work to improve your communication skills. Pay attention and be consistent. Do not send mixed messages. If you correct a behaviour sometimes and ignore it or inadvertently reward it at other times, the dog will be confused and will not behave reliably or consistently. Keep the rules simple and enforce them, but always remember to praise for good behaviour, and when your dog listens and makes a correction.

Dogs look for authority in their lives. If no authority is forthcoming from people, your dog will begin to act as their own boss and may even try to push their human companions around. This can also be followed by growling, snapping and lunging.

Dogs are pack animals and will be looking for their leader to show them the ropes and help them understand their place in your pack.

Leadership with your dog is a positive relationship, it is not based on punishment or abuse. Once your new dog has settled in, we strongly recommend enrolling in a positive enforcement based obedience class. There are many different trainers and training styles out there and a representative at Final Victory Rescue would be happy to discuss some options for you. Game-based training is another really good one for your dog and humans. Training is not so much about training your dog as it is about training YOU to help your dog succeed in your pack. You should never wait until an issue arises to consider training. Training strengthens the bond between you and your dog, it greatly reduces the likelihood of any issues later and, if in a group setting, can begin to instill positive socialization techniques. A certain level of trust needs to be present before going to training. Decompression varies for each dog, but we recommend not enrolling in training until at least 3 weeks after your new dog arrives home.

***** TRUST BEFORE TRAINING****

Dogs have an amazing way of completing our families. You can enjoy all of the benefits, with some well-directed efforts to help the dog adjust to life in their new home.

Please be patient, be kind and be supportive with your new rescue dog ~ they are worth it and remember...

Anything is PAWSible 