

Adopting a dog is an exciting experience, but for your new friend it can be a time of uncertainty! Follow these steps to help your new pup feel more comfortable in their new home.

1 manage expectations

Adopting a dog is one of the most rewarding and exciting experiences we as animal lovers can have. Part of the reward is the journey, so prepare yourself to have some patience. Smooth sailing right off the bat can happen, but more often than not this is a period of a little chaos, a lot of patience and getting to know each other. Your new dog has just been brought to a place they have never been with people they barely know, so keep that in mind as you navigate this new adventure! Accidents are bound to happen and skittishness is understandable.

2 stick to a routine

Try to get into a routine right from the start. Decide on a potty schedule that is right for your dog (this may need to be adjusted as you get to know your dog and it's needs), feed meals around the same time and get a good play and exercise schedule going. Being able to predict their day allows your dog to feel more control over their life and environment, and they can now make decisions based on their knowledge of how their day goes. If your dog is home alone but knows you come home at a certain time, it will be a lot easier for them to stay calm than if they have no idea when you will come back. If you are adopting a dog during a week off of work, make sure your dog gets to experience you leaving the house for the day so they can begin to understand the routine of home-alone-time.

3 positive reinforcement

We are of the mindset that any dog can learn new tricks! So no matter what age your new friend is, do some research into positive reinforcement training and learn how to tell your dog "I love what you're doing!" and "Yes, that's exactly it!" Your adoption counselor can provide you with some resources to help you learn about positive reinforcement training or even specific training goals.



4 take it slow & stay patient

This is a whole new world for your dog, so don't expect them to learn the rules and routines right away. Your dog may have never lived in a house before or had a traumatic past, so patience is key! If you are concerned about any behavior in particular, feel free to give your adoption counselor a call and they can give you some suggestions on how to work with your pup.

5 expanding horizons

The first month of having your new dog is simply not the time for camping trips, day hikes or vacations. Even the pet store may be too overwhelming for your new pup! Before going on any big adventures, it is important you and your dog have gotten to know each other, have some basic commands down, and have a good understanding of how your dog feels about new people, new dogs and new situations. Not rushing into big adventures will help set you both up for success in the long run, and ensure everyone has a great time!

6 reach out for help

If you are struggling with your newly adopted dog, you're not alone. We know it's not easy, so give us call and let us help. We are not here to judge, but we ARE here to help when things get tough. Whether its pointing you towards resources, giving you tips and tricks to help with difficult behaviors or to give you the contact information for local trainers, we are happy to help. Don't suffer in silence and reach out before any behavior problems become unmanageable.

