



Congratulations on your new best friend!

This is an exciting day – the day you bring home your new dog!

Here are some tips and general guidelines for the first days home with your new furry friend. Every dog is different, some adjust in moments while others take a little time. If you have ever started a new job or moved to a new place, you should know this feeling. The feeling of being in an unfamiliar place, with unfamiliar people, and with new rules. **Even dogs or puppies that don't have past traumas need time to adjust to new house rules, new routines, and new humans.**

By understanding what the dog is going through you will be able to make it easier on them. **This is also the period where you get a chance to really show your new dog that you can be trusted and that beautiful lifelong bond starts to form.**

The Rule of 3s

**In the first
3 Days**

Decompression Period

- Feeling overwhelmed
- May be scared and unsure of what's going on
- Not comfortable enough to be "himself"
- May not want to eat or drink
- Shut down and wants to curl up in crate or hide under furniture
- Testing/learning boundaries (ex: unwanted chewing, forgetting potty training, etc.)

**In the next
3 Weeks**

Starting to Settle In

- Starting to settle in
- Feeling more comfortable
- Realizing this could possibly be his forever home
- Figured out his environment
- Getting into a routine
- Let's his guard down and may start showing his true personality
- Behavior issues may start showing up

**In the next
3 Months**

Secure and Happy!

- Finally completely comfortable in his new home
- Building trust and a good bond
- Gained a complete sense of security with his new family
- Set in a routine

The First Days Home...

1. **Start small.** You may want to keep the dog in one area of your house at first. This minimizes how big and new everything feels. As he becomes more comfortable, start opening up the rest of your house to him.
2. **Patience!** If the dog is displaying signs of fear/aggression/hiding, give them that space. If you have a crate, this is a great gift to give him to feel safe while he adjusts to his new world and new people. Remember crates are not punishment! If they are retreating to the crate, leave the crate door open.
3. **Don't force anything** – that includes the leash, snuggles, food. Sometimes keeping the leash attached even when they are walking around or retreating to the cage will help them get used to it. A lot of rescue dogs take a little bit to learn that the leash means walks and fun, not danger!
4. **Keep things low key during the first few days.** The first thing you may be inclined to do is to show off your new best friend! We totally get that. Remember, the dog has been through a lot, he may have lost his family, or been rescued from the streets or a shelter. He needs a little time to get to know and trust you first. So wait a little before introducing new people.
5. **Start establishing a routine.** Schedule feeding, walks, sleep and play time. The dog will pick up on what happens at each point in the day and knowing what to expect will start to make them feel comfortable.