

# Bringing Home a Rescue Dog

## 1. Outside Before Inside

When you first get home, introduce your new dog to the outside of your house before bringing him inside. Let him take in all the new smells, and take him for a walk around the block to burn off any extra energy. Show him where he will go potty.

## 2. Bringing a New Dog Home to Another Dog

If you have another dog at home, introduce them outside before bringing him inside. Even if they've already met at the shelter or foster home. Take them for a walk together or put the resident dog in the backyard, bring the new dog to the outside of the fence to let them smell each other. It is important not to let the new dog "invade" your resident dog's territory. Take this step very slowly.

As hard as it may feel, you should really wait 24-48 hours before fully introducing the new dog into your pack. Keep them in separate areas of the house for the first day to let everyone decompress.

## 3. Introduction to Inside Your House

When ready, enter and introduce your dog to your house slowly. Restrict his access to one area of the home. He is going to be stressed for the first few days, so the smaller the new area is, the more comfortable he will be. Keep him on a leash for at least the first day, preferably the first three days. You don't always have to hold on to the leash, he can drag the leash around with him, but this gives you quick access to him if needed.

## 4. Low-Key

Keep the first few days low-key. Don't overwhelm him with visitors coming to see how cute he is, wait until he has a chance to get to know you and his new home first. Give him plenty of quiet time to settle in. Crate train your dog, giving him a safe area to decompress will help him feel more comfortable.

## 5. Routine

Creating a routine will also help your dog feel more comfortable. Schedule his feeding, walks, sleep and play time. The sooner you establish a routine, the better you both will feel. A feeding schedule will help if your dog is not **potty trained** yet.

## 6. Training

Research dog training classes. Training is just as much for you the owner, as it is for the dog. Training your dog is so important, please don't skip this part of being a responsible dog owner.

## 7. Kids and Dogs

Don't leave kids along with your new dog. For the first few weeks, your dog is going to be stressed just from the fact he has moved to a new place he is not familiar with... add a child that just wants to hug and kiss the dog, and it's a recipe for disaster (i.e. dog bite). Even the nicest dog can bite out of fear and protection.

## **How Long Does it Take a Rescue Dog to Adjust?**

### *The 3 Days, 3 Weeks, 3 Month Rule*

The common milestones your new dog or puppy will go through will be the first 3 days after **bringing your dog home from the shelter**, then 3 weeks, then 3 months. If you've ever started a new job or moved to a new school, you should know this feeling. The feeling of being in an unfamiliar place, new surroundings, new people, new rules.

The first few days are spent trying to figure it all out. Then a few weeks later, you are getting more comfortable, meeting new friends, learning the schedule, and rules. After a few months, you've got it all figured out and are settled in your new job or school.

#### **In the first 3 days,**

- your new dog will be overwhelmed with his new surroundings. He will not be comfortable enough to be himself. Don't be alarmed if he doesn't want to eat for the first couple of days, many dogs don't eat when they are stressed. He may shut down and want to curl up in his crate or under the table. He may be scared and unsure what is going on. Or he may be the opposite and test you to see what he can get away with, kind of like a teenager.

#### **After 3 weeks,**

- he's starting to settle in, feeling more comfortable, and realizing this really may be his forever home. He has figured out his environment and getting into the routine that you have set. He lets his guard down and may start showing his real personality. Behavior issues may start showing, this is your time to be a strong pack leader and show him what is right and wrong.

#### **After 3 months,**

- your dog is now completely comfortable in his home. You have built trust and a true bond with your dog, which gives him a complete sense of security with you. He is set in his routine and will come to expect his dinner at his usual time.

#### ***Enjoy your new rescue dog, he will be your best friend!***

The first thing most people want to do is show off their new puppy. Just take it slow. Realize that you are excited but keep in mind how your dog is feeling. He has been through a lot, he may have lost his family, abandoned in a shelter... it's all very stressful. He needs time, so give it to him.

*(Source: Debi McKee / [www.rescuedogs101.com](http://www.rescuedogs101.com))*