

## **Integrating your new Dog**

A normal home is a new and often frightening experience for an adopted dog. Rescued dogs might be overwhelmed by a new home – especially if it includes, children, other pets, or a lot of noise.

It's tempting to introduce your newly adopted dog to all your family and friends in a wild debut party.

However, most rescued dogs need time to adjust to foreign surroundings, family, and routine. Too much commotion may cause an upsurge in anxiety or fear, which can lead to hiding, cowering, or nipping.

Here are some tips to integrate your new family member:

- Provide a quiet place where they can't get out and other pets can't get in until they feel comfortable with their new surroundings and people. Give them plenty of love and attention in this safe haven.
- Allow your new dog to sniff, explore, and approach each person at his or her own pace. When you feel the new dog needs it, give them a private place to escape, snooze, and relax, such as a crate or small room.
- Using crates should always be a positive experience – never punish a dog by putting them in a crate – this is their safe haven and they should not be disturbed while in their crate – by anyone in the family especially children.
- Make introductions slowly. Avoid overwhelming your dog with people and other dogs. Watch closely and move her away from uneasy or scary situations. You may wish to start gradually, on a leash and keep interactions gentle and positive with lots of treats and praise.
- Slowly expand the area that they can roam in – use baby gates and closed doors to block off a small part of your home as needed.
- Always supervise interactions and redirect potential problems. Keep the closest eye on children and other animals, and be prepared to jump in if the situation turns serious. Some growling may occur – but remember growling is a warning sign. Dogs don't have hands to keep people or other dogs away – they communicate with body language and vocal sounds. Try to understand the behavior and work within the animal's comfort zone and of course your family.

- Keep the new dog confined when you have to leave until you're confident that they can stay home alone without breaking any rules or destroying things.
- Dogs pick up on stress and fear, so stay upbeat, relaxed, and confident, and ask your guests to relax as well.
- Your new dogs adjustment period may take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks or longer. Until then, use patience and consistency to guide your new friend.
- And remember – if you already have another dog – don't forget to give them lots of love and attention during this transition period. They need to know that they aren't being replaced – much like children and new babies.

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