



Bringing Home A New Dog

You've found the right dog for you. Now what? Here are a few helpful hints to help you to make this transitional period smoother for your and your dog.

You can expect an adjustment period, whether you are adopting a puppy or an older dog. The dog will be in new surroundings and everything will be new to him. Be patient, your dog may be overwhelmed.

When you go home with your new dog for the first time, let him explore his new surroundings. He'll be very excited and will want to investigate all the new smells and sounds. Your new dog may want to "mark" his territory if there has been a dog in the house. You may want to stick close to the "newbie" to keep an eye on what he or she may get into. Once he is more comfortable in his new surroundings, and you are more comfortable knowing what he may get into, you'll be able to give him more freedom.

If you already have a dog at home, introduce your current dog and the new dog on neutral territory. This could be done at the shelter, a friend's house, a park... It is best to introduce them this way because your current dog may feel territorial and protective of "his space." Even if you introduce them on neutral ground, and they do fine together, you still need to take precautions when you arrive home. Bring both dogs outside, on leashes, and let them get reacquainted. When you do enter the house, let the new dog go first. Keep your dogs on their leashes for a while. This will give you an advantage if a skirmish arises and you need to separate them. It will also keep both dogs close, so you know where they are and what they are doing during the get acquainted period. Again, be patient. Dogs are pack animals, and they will establish their own hierarchy for their pack, and this will feel very natural for them.

By doing your homework before you bring a new dog home, the transition period will be easier for you and the dog. If you have other dogs already at home, these tips will make the settling in period more comfortable for your four-legged friends.

Congratulations on finding the perfect companion!

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