

BRINGING YOUR NEW DOG HOME

The first few days in your pet's new home are special, but this critical time is for structuring a well-balanced relationship. Keep in mind that these first few days will be confusing for your pet, and he won't be sure what to expect. The following information should help guide you through your dog's transition from shelter life to life in a home.

BEFORE FIDO ARRIVES HOME

- I. **Choose an area where Fido will be spending most of his time.** The area you choose should be easily accessible for you to make routine visits, to be sure he feels included and not left out. For example, a kitchen may work best, just in case Fido has an accident. It's also a good idea to purchase a few gates before you bring him home. Gates will provide confinement to certain areas of the house and block off areas you don't wish for your dog to visit.

- II. **House Training.** While we are on the topic of accidents, let's discuss a house training plan for Fido before he arrives at your home. First- Are you crate training? Have you researched the appropriate size crate Fido will need? He should have at least 6 inches above and on each side of him at all times. If you haven't purchased a crate yet, have an area of your home picked out for the crate and make sure it's ready to go. You don't want to be moving furniture, running a vacuum, mopping, etc. while Fido is sitting there unsure of what's happening.


Accidents can and will happen! A bit of information- Fido and his shelter friends have access to the outside part of their kennel for a large portion of the day. A new home will not have that option. He will be confused about what you want from him, so you will want to decide on a potty trip routine that will be as consistent as possible. ****Please see Crate and House Training section for more information.***

- III. **Food.** Have you picked a food brand or type for Fido? If you adopted a dog from HSHA, they eat two times a day, morning and afternoon. They receive a mixture of different dog food brands. Some of the dogs, especially the small dogs, enjoy a mix of wet food with dry kibble. You may need to do the same at first, but try to wean him off of the wet food because it's not the best. Some healthy alternatives to wet food are: plain canned pumpkin, coconut oil, frozen or fresh green beans, or just add some water to dry kibble. When choosing a food, it's good to do your research first. Stay away from foods that have a lot of colorful (dyed) pieces of kibble.

- IV. **Establish a routine.** Keep Fido's day to day routines as consistent as possible. Feeding and potty trips should be provided around the same time every day. Talk to your family about how to make this work. A consistent routine will help him adjust and know what to expect.



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- V. **Dog-proof your home.** Move fragile items and plants up high, tape or hide electrical cords, and move chemicals to a storage area. Most dogs love digging in a trash can, either place it in a closet or purchase a trash can with a lock on it. (Just remember- Fido is smart, he might be able to figure out how to open it!)
- VI. **Create a list of commands for Fido.** Make sure everyone in the home uses the same words and know what the expected results should be.
- VII. **Is Fido allowed on the furniture?** If not, how are you going to teach him to stay off? Everyone in the home must follow the same rules when it comes to this topic. Otherwise, Fido will be confused on his boundaries.
- VIII. **How is Fido traveling home with you?** We aren't always sure how the shelter dogs will do on a car ride, so you should be prepared. If you can fit a crate in your vehicle, that would be the ideal situation for traveling. If not, ask a family member or friend to sit in the back seat with him. Bring a sheet or a towel to cover your seat. Fido might get car sick!
- IX. **I.D. TAGS.** Prior to your finalized adoption, you should have an I.D. tag made for Fido. The I.D. tag should include your contact information with the dog's name.
- X. **What are you going to use to walk Fido?** There are many types of collars, leashes, and harnesses to choose from. Keep in mind that, once you get Fido home, you may need to make adjustments more suitable for Fido's personality. However, whatever you choose, make sure he can't slip out of it. A sturdy, regular style harness with a clip on the back is a good choice. Try to stay away from retractable leashes because they break easily and can be dangerous to both your dog and you. ****Check out HSHA's retail store, Furget-Me-Not, for a selection of collars and leashes in a variety of colors.***
- The logo for Furget-Me-Not features a stylized blue paw print above a blue leaf-like shape, with the text "Furget-Me-Not" in a blue serif font to the right.
- XI. **The Yard.** If you have a fenced in yard, check to make sure it is secure before bringing Fido home. Look for holes that he could fit under or easily dig through. Sturdy wire fencing could help block any holes. Are the latches easily flipped open? Carabiner clips are an easy way to secure most latches.
- XII. **Do you have an established veterinarian?** Or have you researched one in your area that you intend to use? It's a good idea to call around and do your research, especially if you do not already have a relationship with one. ****Please see the list of area veterinarians for contact information.***
- XIII. **Moving can be a very stressful time.** Try to give Fido time to adjust without overwhelming him. Planning for friends and family to come meet him? Wait till Fido feels comfortable with his surroundings and with you. The average canine takes three days to adjust to a new environment. It's a good idea to give Fido at least five days before having company over for a visit. ****Please see Social Scene section for more info on introductions with new people.***

AFTER FIDO COMES HOME

- I. **Be realistic in your expectations of Fido.** He has been through a lot and now he's in another environment. It is your job to be consistent, patient, and calm during Fido's adjustment. Do your research and be willing to reach out for help if you are having issues.

- II. **Walk and play with Fido daily.** This will help Fido bond with you and should help him relax. A tired dog is a good dog! If you are a person who walks or runs for miles and miles, keep in mind that Fido isn't used to long distances. He will need to be conditioned and build stamina in order to go far.

- III. **Enroll Fido in obedience classes.** Training will help him understand how to listen and it will help you understand how to teach. You are in control of Fido's success, so you will need to practice between training sessions. Training and working with Fido will create an incredible bonding experience for both of you.

If you have behavioral questions you would like to discuss, please contact HSHA's Behavior Team at (717)564-3320 ext.118 or see the list of area dog trainers.