

How to Help Your Puppy Adjust to Your Home



These tips will help your new dog settle into their new home, and they'll increase the bond you form with your new dog. It might take a day or two, or it might take months — each dog comes with their own personality and experiences. Going from one home to another home is a big transition, so don't be discouraged if your puppy takes a while to get comfortable in your home.

1. Give Your Dog Time to Decompress By Starting Slowly

You can help your dog adjust to your home by taking it slow for the first couple of days. He'll appreciate some one on one time getting to know his new family and surroundings. Let him explore the house and yard at his own pace. Some dogs take a while to adjust to new settings, and sometimes that can be exhausting for them.

Don't over stimulate your dog during the first couple days. If your dog is a bit standoffish just let them check things out for themselves. If they come up to you for attention by all means be as affectionate as they seem comfortable with.

Not all dogs bond immediately with a new owner – don't take it personally. They're in a brand-new environment getting used to new sights, smells, and sounds. It can be a stressful time for your new dog so try to make them as comfortable as possible by keeping things calm and positive.

2. Introduce him to his new home and family members

You've already prepared a puppy-proof area of your house, right? This is where you'll bring him. Many people erroneously think they should just let the puppy loose to explore the house at will, but this is a sensory overload. Too many new places, smells, and people at once may just confuse him. Instead, let him explore a designated area. Perhaps where his food and water are. Or he can familiarize himself with the small, puppy-proofed space where you've placed his crate. Let him get used to this space before you go on further exploratory missions. Then introduce him to the rest of the house, one room at a time,

skipping the rooms you've decided are off-limits. Introduce him to his new family members preferably one person at a time, although this will be difficult with all the excitement about a new puppy. But try to give him a chance to meet each of you quietly.

3. Give Your Dog His Own Space

Puppies sleep between 15-to-20 hours a day, and although they're often likely just to drop in their tracks, bring him to his crate or dog bed when he seems to be ready for a nap and at bedtime. One way you can help make your new dog more comfortable is by providing him with his own comfy bed or safe spot where he can retreat to when he's tired or overwhelmed. Some dogs need a little extra time to just chill out every once in a while, especially with all the stress of being in a completely new environment. Contrary to what you may think, crates are not "doggie jail." Dogs prefer the security and safety of a den, and this crate will become his safe place, with some encouragement. If your new dog isn't in the mood to cuddle or play you can try giving him something to do on his own by offering a food dispensing toy or stuffed Kong. By offering yummy treats in a Kong you're showing your new dog that you're the provider of awesome things. It's a simple way to build trust, and if your dog is feeling uneasy in his new situation, he might appreciate having a nice treat on his own.

4. Be Prepared For Stomach Issues When Changing Diets

Diarrhea is common among newly adopted dogs, either from stress or sudden dietary changes. Your puppy came home with food to help prevent an upset stomach from a sudden change in diet. If you're not a fan of the brand they've been feeding you can switch but you may want to consider slowly transitioning them over to a new food by mixing some of the old in with the new. Stress from moving into a new environment can cause diarrhea in newly adopted dogs. Ease their stress by taking things slowly the first week and giving them time to adapt.

5. Dogs May Lose Their Appetite in New Surroundings

The stress from being in a new environment can cause dogs to lose their appetite. If you've adopted a shy dog, they might need a few days before they're comfortable enough to eat a normal meal. A new diet or change in food can also cause a dog to refuse to eat. A dog won't starve himself as long as your dog is healthy, he'll learn to adapt to his new diet.

If you're concerned about your dog's appetite offer them a piece of high value food such as chicken or ham. If they'll readily eat high value food, they're likely just going through an adjustment period.

6. Make It Easier In The Long Run By Keeping Your Routine

Dogs thrive on routine, and the sooner your new dog learns how your home functions the more comfortable he'll be. You can help your new dog adjust to your home by:

Going outside for potty breaks consistently

Going for your daily walk at the same time

Going to bed around the same time each night

This also includes exercise time, cuddle time or any other daily games or activities he'll be involved with. He'll feel more secure once he starts learning your routine and what is expected of him at any given time. I know many owners want to spend as much time as possible with their new dog, and that's wonderful. But try to incorporate at least some of your normal activities into the day during those first few weeks to help your dog adjust to what will become his normal routine.

7. Supervise Your New Dog

Keep a close eye on your new puppy at all times! He should be supervised or at least within your vision in his "doggie den" at all times during these early days. Take him with you from room to room, giving him a chance to explore under your watchful eye.

If your dog is already crate trained you might want to consider leaving him crated while you go to work, and this is especially true if you have other animals at home. Some dogs can become destructive or overly anxious when left alone.

If you're not sure how your new dog will react when left alone crating is a good way to have some peace of mind while you're at work. Just remember to introduce your dog to their crate slowly and make it a positive experience for them. When introduced properly a crate becomes a relaxing place for your dog.

8. You May Have a Few House Training Issues

Puppies will need to be house trained, but you can also expect a few house training issues with newly adopted dogs as well.

You and your newly adopted dog aren't automatically going to be on the same schedule, so be prepared for a few accidents during the first couple of weeks. Your new dog might be getting fed more than usual and he very well might be drinking a lot more. Make sure you take him out regularly to decrease the likelihood of any accidents.

9. Beware of Escape Attempts

When going outdoors remember to keep your new dog on a leash at all times. When in a new environment some dogs will have a tendency to try and run away or escape. And since dogs can dig under or jump over fences don't leave your dog unsupervised in the yard. Until you know your dog is comfortable with you and will come back when called it's best to keep them leashed at all times when outdoors. Be sure to supervise your new dog when outside until you're confident they won't try to escape. Many dogs are able to jump 6-foot fences, and a lot more can dig under them. When dogs enter a new environment, they can become stressed out & fearful, and that can lead to escape attempts.

10. Don't Overwhelm Them if They're Anxious

I know it's tempting to introduce your new dog to all of your friends & family right away by inviting everyone over, but make sure your dog is comfortable in your home first. Some dogs can get overstimulated and excited by all that excitement, and some are extremely nervous around strangers. If your dog shows any signs of discomfort take it slow. Make sure they have access to their own safe space or area that they can retreat to if they get overwhelmed. The same goes for trips to the park or store. Until your dog is comfortable around you take it easy when introducing them to new areas.

11. Be Patient With Your New Dog

Imagine yourself in your dog's shoes (or paws) for a moment – surrounded by strangers in a new place where everything is unknown. It's a bit scary to say the least. Your dog might adjust within days, or it may take weeks. Each dog is an individual with a history all their own.

Take it slow and make it easier on them by giving them space when needed. Gradually expand his environment, under your supervision, of course. Give them some time to settle in and get comfortable with their new surroundings. With lots of affectionate contact with the family, consistent rules and routine, rewards for good behavior, and gentle corrections for unacceptable behaviors, he'll quickly learn his place in his new "pack." It may seem like a slow process, but it won't take long until your adopted dog becomes your new best friend.

12. Love Your New Puppy

The first few days and weeks with a new puppy are both exciting and exhausting! But most dog parents agree that the joys far outweigh the challenges. Above all, enjoy your precious little bundle. When the puppy days are behind you and you're enjoying the amazing dog he's become, you'll probably look back and think about just how fast the time went by and wish you could get some of it back.

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