

**Early Days - Building Trust:** Some dogs may be ready to integrate into the house pretty quickly, while others may need much longer to settle in, build trust and gain confidence in their environment. For the first few days your dog should remain in the decompression room most of the time, with the exception of potty breaks or other activities. Create a schedule/routine for potty breaks and meals. Rather than immediately focusing on showing your dog off to the world, take this time to spend time in their world, in their room getting to know them, what treats do they like? Do they enjoy toys? Look for signs of any concerning behaviors such as fear or aggression. This is a great time for some basic trust building exercises, such as:

- Hand feeding meals or treats
- Giving long-lasting food treats such as stuffed Kongs, bones or food puzzles
- Practicing relaxation exercises and conditioning calm behavior
- Playing “no pressure” games of “find it” (tossing treats one at a time on the floor to your dog)
- Massaging and petting your dog while settling (if the dog is comfortable with body handling)
- Passive attention - just spending time in the room with them, sitting on a chair working on your laptop or phone or reading a book. If your dog successfully occupies himself or settles down, reward with periodic treats.
- If you have another dog (or cat) swap scent items between the two by giving each dog a blanket or bed and swapping the objects every few days. This allow the dogs to get used to the scent of their new housemate, before the pressure of a face to face meeting.

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**Transitioning Time:** Assuming they’re doing well so far, after a few days of arrival you can help your new dog begin to transition to other areas of the house and family pets. This is the time where most people struggle as it is tempting to move quickly and try to integrate the dog completely, as soon as possible. Slow the process down, especially if you have other dogs in the home. It may take longer to do a slow introduction but it is worth it as you will greatly increase your chances of success - remember, your dog has been through a LOT, let them take time to gain the confidence they need! During this time you can:



- Bring your dog out on leash to explore the house a little every day. Give them the freedom to choose where to go (while keeping them out of trouble when needed!) and let

them sniff EVERYTHING! As an added bonus - any time your dog looks up at you to check in, smile and feed a small treat! This fosters more trust, confidence and creates a team between the two of you. Keep sessions short if your dog is nervous, and return to their decompression room for breaks.

- If you have another dog, or dogs, have them isolated to another area of the home when you allow your pup out to explore.
- As your dog gains confidence in the house, play your fun “find it” games, or practice some basic fun sits and downs for rewards out in the house!

