

Advice from MSPCA at www.mspca.org

Bringing Your New Dog Home

Congratulations, you have made a wonderful decision to adopt an adolescent or adult dog from the adoption center. We hope that you and your new dog will bond and have a long lasting relationship. To insure that you get started on the right foot we have a few suggestions.

It's important to give your new dog structure and guidance in the first few weeks. Dogs feel better when they know their place in the family.

Give your new dog a schedule so he learns when feeding time, play time and exercise time will come. Let your dog know what behaviors please you (give a treat for being good). Teach your dog to "sit" and ask him to sit before he gets anything — food, attention, play, going outside. This simple practice teaches your new dog that you are the boss.

It's likely that your new dog may have a few accidents in the house the first few days, even if he is housetrained. To help prevent this and retrain your new dog, do the following:

- Keep the dog on a leash when you first let him explore the house. This way you can interrupt any signs of having to go to the bathroom and quickly take him outside.
- Accompany your new dog outside to the same area each time to go to the bathroom. This will allow you to reward for "going" outside. Use a food treat and plenty of praise to reward your dog for doing the right thing.
- Never punish a dog for going to the bathroom inside if you did not catch him in the act. Simply clean the area well with an enzymatic odor neutralizer and pay more attention next time.
- If you do catch your dog in the act of going to the bathroom inside, interrupt the behavior by making a loud noise (clap your hands) and then urgently say "outside" and take the dog out. Don't forget to praise and give a treat for finishing outside.

Dogs that are rescued from a shelter often bond very rapidly, closely and deeply with their new owners. This can cause a problem when you have to leave him alone. You must teach your new dog that you are not going to abandon him when you leave the house.

Do not make a big deal out of your departures and arrivals. Just come and go without saying anything to the dog. The very first day you should depart frequently. Just go in and out of the house numerous times for a few seconds and then a few minutes. Ignore your dog completely for 15 minutes before you leave and 15 minutes after you come home. Leave your dog with a food stuffed toy to keep him busy for a while after you leave. Leave a radio or TV on when you are gone to keep your dog company. This may calm him and will also provide background noise that will block all the noises outside. We want you to form a long-lasting positive relationship with your new dog.