



Adoption / Drop Off Day Acclimating Your Dog To Your Home

Keep It Small! Keep It Simple! Keep It Home! This builds trust.

Think about what would make sense for you or a child. If everything was new and different, including the people caring for you, then you'd probably appreciate just settling in and staying put until you figured out what's safe, especially whether or not your new family was safe! Dogs, just like children, enjoy structure and routine. It helps them have some predictability about their lives, and that feels safe. This is why it's super important that you keep the drop off weekend simple and at home. It's all new to him, so things are interesting, and he might be very tired from all the new stimulation.

Before you can safely take your dog places, there needs to be some trust building. Get to know your dog, and let him get to know you. Have some bonding time at home during that first day or evening. The next day, take a walk around the neighborhood to let him know his whereabouts and to build pack trust. For dogs, walking is like a pack working together. It's bonding, and you will build trust with your dog and show him he's safe in your hands. Limiting walks to the neighborhood or park should be done for the first weekend, or several days when you first get him. As time progresses, you

can expand what you do because you've gotten to know your dog better, and your dog has learned he can trust you. How can you take your dog into various situations when you don't know him well enough to predict what he'll do? You can't! And that's not safe for him.

With all this said, let's be clear - Keep the weekend at home, in the yard and for walks around the neighborhood or a park. Absolutely no restaurants, coffee shops, Home Depot, pet stores, dog parks or dog beaches, nor gatherings at friends' houses. All of these places require you to know your dog and how he handles meeting strangers, children, dogs, and situations. You need to learn his body language to know when he's not comfortable. You'll save everyone, including him, a lot of stress and heartache. We HIGHLY recommend you do training with your dog because it builds bonding and teamwork, and you'll learn a lot about your dog. Please let us know if you need recommendations for a good trainer. We have many!

Keep It Just To The Family Or Those Close To You

Since you and your dog need to get to know each other the most, it's really important that this time be spent with just your family or those in your home. Too much stimulation creates anxiety in an already stressful time for your dog. Don't have your drop off weekend during a time when you'll have too many guests over, if any. Let him settle before meeting a bunch of new people, and also, watch how he acts while walking and seeing people and dogs. If you feel the need to show him off during this time, snap some photos and put them on your social media. ;)

In addition, don't have your drop off weekend during a time when you'll be gone a lot, or for a long period of time. This would create a ton of anxiety. Can you imagine being taken from what you've always known, being placed in a new home, then left alone without knowing if your new people

are coming back? How scary is that? This is why we suggest teaching that you COME BACK! See below.

Teach that YOU COME BACK! This creates peace and reduces anxiety.

On your first day, if it's closer to the evening instead of the morning, plan to have at least one person home with your dog. This is the scariest time for him. The next day, plan to leave for about 30 minutes, and make sure you leave your dog inside the house with no access to the outside. Your new dog may fear you've left for good and try to escape a yard, so a home with closed doors and windows is important. You should act normal and like no big deal when you leave. Big goodbyes and hugs only communicate something scary is about to happen, and you want him to know this is normal, so don't reassure him, just leave! When you leave, if you're able to listen for a bit, you'll have a chance to see if your dog howls or settles down quickly. Of course he shouldn't see you while you listen. Some people even video their dog to see how they act while they're gone. When you come back after 30 minutes, ACT NORMAL! Acting normal communicates there's nothing to worry about, and they will learn this from your behavior and the way your voice sounds. Be cool to teach cool. Dogs know and understand things by the way you behave.

The next day, do the same thing during the day. Daytime leaves are better initially. This time, your leave time should increase to an hour, or an hour and a half. The day after this, the leave time can be increased to possibly 3 hours. This should be a nice build up to get your dog prepared to be home alone while you're at work for a full day.

Always take into consideration any special needs your dog has that your adoption coordinator has discussed with you. Call or text your adoption coordinator or trainer at any time. We are always here for you!

Backyard Supervision While You Learn Your Dog

It's important to never leave your dog in your backyard unattended while you are still learning what he will do. A new dog in a home can possibly dig out or jump. It's the highest time when a dog may escape. Your adoption coordinator will go over areas to keep watch on. Remember, you start out with the most control, and you release more only when you're sure your dog will always be safe and when you can predict what he will do.

Workers Who Always Let Dogs Out

As much as your housekeeper, gardener, or any other worker reassures you that they will shut doors and gates, they will accidentally make a mistake. It's only a matter of time. And visitors do this all the time, too. It is the most responsible and safest thing to schedule cleaning people when you're home, or put your dog in a crate, or area separated from cleaning people, gardeners, and workers. Your dog could be gone forever, hit by a car, be attacked, or fight with another dog. We know you don't want to have to deal with this, so taking precautions are super important.

Have All Necessary Items Ready For Drop Off Day

Please go to either Petsmart or PetCo and purchase a dog tag. We like the double sided one, usually a bone shape so that there is enough room for the needed information. On one side include:

Dog's Name

Cell #

Cell#

MICROCHIPPED

On the back side put:

Home address

City, CA zip

Other needed items you should have in place might be their crate and some of your dog's current dog food so you can slowly transition him into the new brand, which can be done by starting with 75% old brand and 25% new brand, followed by transitioning at 25% every two or three days until you reach 100% of the new brand.

We look forward to our partnership with you in acclimating your dog into your life and family. Please know we are always here for you.

4Life Animal Rescue

4LifeRescue.org