



# A Timeline for Your New Dog

Congratulations on adding a new dog to your family! This will be a time of transition for both you and your new dog. Below is a timeline of what you can expect over the coming days, weeks, and months. Knowing what to expect can help you plan ahead for a smooth transition.

## First 24 Hours

Your new dog is coming from a shelter kennel or foster home to enter a new forever home with you. Most likely your pup just had surgery, or recently endured a long road trip. We do know that consistency in their life has been lacking, and the only thing predictable for the first day is that everyone will be under a lot of pressure. Behavior can be all over the place, and may include:

- Lethargy
- Avoiding contact or interaction with new family members
- Overly clingy with new family members
- Hyperactivity
- Housetraining accidents
- Mild signs of anxiety or aggression

## How to prepare

- Dog proof your home before coming to pick up your new dog. Purchase all the necessities (see “Starting Out Right”) ahead of time and have them ready for arrival.
- Take the first day or two off of work, and don’t make any big plans. Take the time to help your dog transition into their new home. Take several walks to build your bond and alleviate stress. Teach them where they can go to the bathroom and begin to get them accustomed to the routines of the house. Avoid having visitors over the first few days. Let this time be for family bonding.
- Learn more about how your dog communicates by learning dog body language! We recommend signing up for a free Fear Free Happy Homes account and checking out this video: <https://fearfreehappyhomes.com/lessons/dog-body-language-101/>

## Week 1

The first week will be an adjustment period for everyone. There will still be some residual stress (heightened cortisol levels) from your dog’s time at the shelter. Your dog may be experiencing the following:

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- Shyness
- Anxiety
- Restlessness
- Excitement
- Excessive vocalization
- Excessive water drinking or binge eating
- Anorexia
- Housetraining inconsistencies
- Isolation distress

#### How to prepare

- Limit interactions with new people to only a couple friends or outside family members. These should be dog savvy people who will follow your guidance.
- Limit interactions with new dogs. Your new dog may be recovering from surgery and is still coping with the stress of transitioning into a new home. This will not usually make a great first impression at the dog park!

#### Week 2

This is the real start of your “get to know you” phase. Your dog should not be experiencing quite as much stress, and their health should be stable. This is a good time to begin gently socializing your dog to new places and faces, as well as begin training!

#### How to prepare

Consider starting training classes. Training is a great way to bond with your new dog and establish a shared line of communication. AWS offers group classes and private lessons! We recommend only working with positive reinforcement or force free trainers.

#### Weeks 3-6

This is the time where behaviors that are related to lifestyle changes are dissipating and your dog’s true personality is beginning to show. You may find that as your dog is becoming more comfortable with your routines, some of the early behavior challenges are subsiding, and new behaviors are cropping up. Many of the behaviors that show up in this period can be considered part of your dog’s personality.

#### How to prepare

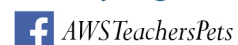
Establish rules and stick with ‘em! For example, if your dog is not allowed on the furniture, everyone in the family must adhere to that decision so that the rules are clear to your pet.

Make sure your dog is getting enough exercise both mentally and physically. Playing fetch, going for walks, and puppy play dates can help your dog settle at the end of a day.

Remember that every dog is an individual. Following the guidelines on this sheet will help recognize what is normal and what is not when transitioning your new dog into your home. Please reach out to our training team if you have any questions or concerns. We are here and happy to help!

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# Starting Out Right

Tips for Bringing Home a New Dog

Bringing a new dog home can be overwhelming, there is so much to think about! This guide will provide some tips on how to get started with your new pup.

## The Shopping List

### **Feeding**

Food for everyday meals - dog food, wet or dry.

Training treats

Items for your dog to chew on

Food and water bowls

### **Walking and Transportation**

Flat six-foot leash (and a long 15'+ leash)

Quick release buckle collar for tags

Harness for walking (we recommend the Pet Safe 3-in-1 No Pull Harness)

ID tags

Dog seatbelt or crate for the car

### **Home management**

Crate

Exercise pen and/or baby gates

Soft bed

Variety of toys - tuggers, soft plushies, treat dispensing, and tough rubber toys (like a KONG)

### **Grooming and Care**

Brush

Dog shampoo

Nail clippers

Canine toothbrush and paste

Pet Wipes

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## Home Setup

Before bringing your dog home, set up an area for your dog to safely rest. This is a place for your dog to stay when you can't provide 100% supervision. For example, when you are out running errands, taking a shower, or otherwise busy around the house. This safety zone prevents chewing accidents, potty accidents, and provides a safe place for your dog to be alone. This space should be a positive den for your dog, and not associated with punishment. To give your new dog full run of the house from the start sets everyone up for failure by allowing the opportunity for accidents. Instead, give your dog a safe place from the beginning, and let them make a gradual and successful transition to their new home.

The ideal area is easy to clean and easy to close off with a door or baby gate. It should be mostly free of furniture and non-dog related objects. The best places for a confinement area are the kitchen, laundry room, bathroom, or an empty spare room. Furnish your dog's safety area with a bed or a crate with something soft to sleep on, a water bowl, and several toys, including a chew toy or a Kong stuffed with part of your dog's meal. You may want to try an Adaptil plug in and some calming dog music in this area to help ease any potential stress.

## House-training 101

Accidents happen! Even with adult and previously house-trained dogs. Dogs will need a little time to adjust to their new environment and figure out the new bathroom rules.

Teach your new family member to distinguish between indoors and outdoors by getting them to go in a designated area. When your dog goes to the bathroom in the right place, be sure to reward with praise, treats and/or playtime. With a little patience and supervision, your new dog will soon be fully versed in toilet etiquette.

**Prevent Accidents.** Supervise your dog in the house. Use a crate or your dog's safety area if you are not sure if your dog's bladder and bowels are empty.

**Reward your dog for going in the right spot.** Praise at the right moment, and reward when finished.

Until your dog is perfectly house-trained, do not leave them unsupervised with the exception of their safety area or crate. If you see your dog sniffing around or circling, take them out

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immediately. Never yell or punish your dog for a bathroom accident, otherwise they may become afraid to relieve themselves in front of you.

## Crate Training

Another good habit to start right away. A crate is a terrific training and management tool, useful for house-training, brief alone-time, settling, and any form of travel. Most importantly, a crate teaches your dog to hold it when they have to go to the bathroom.

**Get started.** Throw small tasty treats into the crate one at a time. Praise your dog when they go in to get the treat. When your dog is comfortable going into the crate, practice closing the door for 1-2 seconds, then treat through the door. Let your dog out and repeat this step several times, gradually building to 10 seconds.

Next stuff a Kong with something very yummy or use a special chew that will take a lot of time to get through. Put the treats in the crate. Shut the door. Move about the house normally. Let your dog back out after 5 minutes or while they are still working on his treat. Don't make a fuss when letting your dog out, keep it cool. Repeat this step several times as you practice your short absences, varying the length from 1 to 20 minutes.

## 4 Keys to Long-term Happiness with your Dog

### 1. Exercise

Give your dog plenty of exercise both mentally and physically. Well exercised dogs bark less, chew less, sleep more, rest easier when alone, and less likely to get into trouble around the house due to boredom. Leash walks as well as aerobic exercise are important. Make sure your dog gets at least 30 minutes of heart pumping exercise per day! Run, swim, hike, doggie play dates, and fetching are all great activities to get you started.

### 2. Mental stimulation

**Play with your dog.** Toys are a great way to engage your dog's brain. Do some

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detective work and find out what your dog truly loves out of play and toys. This can be different for each dog, and time of day!

**Train your dog.** Enroll in positive and force free training classes to give your dog some work to do. This will help build your bond and keep your dog mentally tired. 30 minutes of training can do more to tire out your pup than 30 minutes of walking!

**Food Puzzles.** Keep your dog's brain and body occupied with working for their food. Puzzle bowls, muffin tins, treat balls, and Kongs are all great options to keep busy. Your dog will spend the first part of the day figuring out how to get to the food, and the second part recovering from the mental effort!

**Kong stuffing for pros.** Don't just throw in a few cookies—take your Kong stuffing prowess to the next level. But start with easier Kongs and then make them tougher, so your dog succeeds while developing perseverance.

Easy stuffing = Loosely packed food and pieces small enough to fall out.  
Difficult stuffing = Tighter packed food, with some big pieces that take effort on your part to get into the Kong.

Stuffing tips:

- Use a matrix (peanut butter, cream cheese, baby food) to hold in smaller bits
- Stuff with meat and mashed potatoes and freeze
- Stuff with cheese cubes and then microwave briefly to nicely coat the inside
- Plug the small hole with peanut butter, then fill the cavity with broth and freeze to make a 'Kongsicle' (can be messy, so give it to your dog outside)

3. Prevent mistakes before they happen

**Chewing.** Chewing is normal and healthy canine behavior, but it can still be a problem—for you and your furniture. You need to teach your dog what is and is not okay to chew. In other words, give them plenty of appropriate things to chew right away to get them hooked on those instead of your shoes.

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*Prevent chewing mistakes.* When you can't supervise, put your dog in their safety area with a sanctioned chewie.

*Interrupt chewing mistakes.* If your dog tries to chew the wrong thing, interrupt and trade them for something they can chew on. Praise liberally when your dog accepts the appropriate chew item.

**Barking.** Generally falls into five categories:

*Boredom barking.* Happens when a dog is left alone often and does not get enough exercise or mental stimulation.

*Barrier frustration barking.* Mostly happens on a leash, in cars, or in fenced in backyards.

*Demand barking.* Dogs that bark to get something. For example, to have balls thrown, doors opened, food, or for attention.

*Alert barking.* Triggered by passersby, slamming car doors, a cat on the lawn, etc. This barking is a perimeter alert.

*Separation anxiety barking.* A symptom of underlying anxiety about being alone.

To cut down on any kind of barking, give your dog plenty of exercise and arrange for mental stimulation when they are left alone. Feed your dog using puzzle toys or stuffed Kongs. If any type of barking is becoming a problem, consult a certified professional trainer.

**Jumping.** Dogs get excited and jump up to say hello! They do not know how humans prefer to be greeted and it never occurs to them that they might knock us over or ruin our clothes. With consistent training you can train your dog to wait with all four paws on the ground when greeting people and dogs. Here are some tips:

- Help people to help you! When someone asks to pet your dog, let them know it's ok (or not ok), and that you are in training and want to work on polite greetings. Ask

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the person to only pet your dog if all four paws are on the ground and encourage them to get down to the dog's level.

- Have your dog check in with you first, before you tell them to go say hello to the new person. If they are bouncing around and jumping, they do not get to say hello. Calm behavior earns attention from the new person.
- Use a leash to prevent your dog from making a mistake. If your dog is on a leash and starts jumping, you can ask the person to walk away, or you can calmly walk away with your dog, this takes away the opportunity to continue jumping.
- If your dog jumps up on you as well as other people you can toss a treat behind them as they are running up towards you. This will slow the dog down and give you a chance to approach them at their level. Repeat as needed for all paws to stay on the ground.

- 4. Prevent unnecessary aggression.** The majority of canine aggression can be blamed on poor breeding, medical issues, or a lack of socialization. These can be severe problems that require professional help, so call us for advice if you think that's your dog. Aggression is also a normal response to stress even in well-adjusted dogs, which is why avoiding stressful situations is crucial in the first few weeks and months of bringing your new dog home. Here are some pointers to help avoid tense situations that made lead to an aggressive response from your dog:

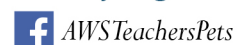
**Don't overwhelm your dog.** Give them time to settle in. Your dog does not have to meet the extended family, all your friends, and the neighbors in the first week.

**Provide enough downtime.** Give your dog plenty of quiet time, especially in the beginning. This will help them adjust to their new environment. Go for quiet walks and avoid big gatherings like the dog park.

**Monitor interactions.** In the beginning (and always with kids), do not leave your dog alone with new people or dogs. Be there to supervise and step in to end the interaction if your dog appears uncomfortable.

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**Use treats liberally.** Sweeten all introductions, scary noises, and new sights with a tasty treat. That will help your dog form positive associations with these things.

**Never force the issue.** If your dog shows fear or reluctance in any situation, do not force them through it. For example, don't make your dog submit to being petted or to being jumped on by another dog. Allow them to withdraw and try another time.

**Let eating dogs be.** Possessiveness of food bowls, bones, toys, garbage, sleeping locations, etc. is natural dog behavior. To us humans it seems less than polite if our dog snarls when we reach for his food bowl, but it makes perfect sense to the dog.

To avoid problems, don't approach your dog when he is eating or chewing on something particularly good. If you need to take something away from him, offer something better. Toss a couple of tasty treats on the floor away from the contested object and remove it while they eat the treats. Remember you are new to the dog and they may not be willing to share until they know you better. (If the behavior worsens or there are children in the household, call us.)

**Hold the hugs—for now.** Allow time for you and your dog to get to know each other before you try to handle them completely. Dogs can be just as particular as humans about being touched by strangers and as long as your relationship is brand new, proceed with respect. You wouldn't ask for more than a kiss on a first date, right?

To make it a pleasant experience for your dog to be touched, offer a treat every time you touch them in a new area. Any kind of grooming or holding should be minimal at first and always combined with lots of delectable treats. If your dog is on medication of some kind, be extra gentle and careful. A good rule of thumb is to let the dog initiate petting sessions until you know each other well.

If you need any help with your dog, we are here for you! The AWS Behavior and Training department can offer advice, group classes, and private training lessons based on your needs. Never hesitate to reach out with updates about your experiences.

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# Training for Your New Dog

Training with your dog is a great way to build your bond, learn to communicate, and give your dog some extra mental exercise. Led by an experienced team of certified professional dog trainers, AWS' Behavior and Training Department offers a variety of exciting and progressive classes for pups of all ages, breeds and abilities. We can also offer support in the form of private training lessons for your specific needs that may not be easily addressed in group classes.

## Why take canine training classes?

- **Provide a solid foundation for your dog's growth and development.** Classes teach dogs how to interact with people, including members of your family and strangers. Dogs learn manners around other animals, including family pets. Dogs, from the youngest puppy to the most distinguished senior, can benefit from training classes.
- **Bond with your companion.** Classes are just as much for people as they are for pets. Training classes teach you and your human family members many important skills. Dog owners learn how to identify and react to common dog behaviors by understanding how dogs think. Training together builds trust and enhances your relationship between you and your pooch.
- **Teach your dog social norms in new environments.** Dogs learn essential skills for navigating new environments such as how to walk on a leash, how to greet guests and strangers, and how to come when called. Trained dogs can participate more fully in social functions by being present at kids' sporting events, attending family holiday celebrations and taking part in outdoor activities like sledding, cross country skiing, jogging or just exploring the neighborhood. A trained dog is part of the family!
- **Experience fun new activities together.** Training opens up a new world for you and your dog, one you might never have considered. Classes provide dogs with the skills and training to do agility trials, AKC Rally obedience, tracking, search and rescue, water rescue trials, reading programs, and therapy work – just to name a few. There are plenty of amazingly fun and philanthropic activities you and your dog can do together!
- **Have fun!** Simply put, you and your pooch will love training classes.

Call or email us for advice, or to enroll in training classes today!

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