

BRINGING YOUR NEW DOG HOME, TIPS & TRICKS!

1. Please remember, this is *another* new world for your dog; new people, new house, new rules, so PLEASE be patient and let him settle in slowly! Even good things can be overwhelming, so as much as you want to have a huge welcome home party for your new family member and introduce him to everyone and everything, let him get used to you, his new schedule and new environment, first.
2. To feel secure, your dog needs to feel like he is a part of the group, or family. Your dog should be around “his new pack” as much as possible. From a dog’s perspective, isolation is one of the worst punishments, so use baby gates and crates instead of shutting your new dog in a bathroom or laundry room away from everyone and everything. Especially when it comes to sleeping, your dog will feel much more secure and safe if he can be in the same room as you, so he can hear you breathing and snoring and dreaming, This will also have him close enough to you to know if he has to use the restroom.
3. Your dog needs a “team leader”, (not an “alpha” or a “pack leader”) to gently guide and teach what is expected. The greatest gift you can give your dog is patience and consistency. Everyone on the team must be in agreement and follow the same rules so your dog doesn’t get confused. Taking training classes is a great idea and a wonderful way to bond with your dog. Just make sure to find a certified trainer (CPDT-KA, CAAB,) who uses science based training techniques and wants to help you build a relationship based on trust and respect.
4. Go slowly with introductions. Your dog needs time to transition to this new life. He will be anxious to blend in with the family, but needs a little time to adjust and trust that you are not going to leave him. It may take 2-3 weeks before your dog will relax enough for you to see his true personality. Just because he doesn’t get along with a resident dog or cat right from the start doesn’t mean it won’t work. Give everyone time to adjust. Behaviors may sometimes manifest to be extremely hyper and anxious, or withdrawn and unsure, but please be patient. You will be rewarded with a dog that will love you forever.
5. And speaking of rewards! *Reward, Reward, Reward!* The first few days is not the time to punish or make harsh corrections, but an opportunity to build a positive relationship with your new dog right from the start. Keep treats nearby, reward when he looks at you, when he comes to you, reward when he sits nicely. This will keep him checking in with you, paying attention to you, come when called by you, etc... Treats can be faded out over time, but in the beginning, it’s a great way to form a positive association with you, other family members, and other pets in the home.
6. The first couple of weeks should be as POSITIVE as possible. This initial period is setting the tone for your future relationship, and your dog needs to trust you. He will make mistakes, but that’s all they are - mistakes. Nothing to scream, yell, or hit over. Teach the behavior you want by re-directing. And NEVER punish your dog when you call him to come. Even if he chases the cat, if he stops and comes when you call him, REWARD that behavior and you’ll always have a dog that comes when called. If you punish him, he won’t relate that to chasing the cat, he will learn that to coming to you = pain and fear.
7. Punishment ruins relationships. Punishment teaches animals to be wary of the punisher because—in truth—the punisher is a threat. Re-direct and use positive reinforcement training techniques to build a relationship with your new dog based on praise and trust. Dogs have the mental and emotional capacity of a 3-5 year old child. A good motto is; if you wouldn't do it to a kid, don't do it to your dog.

8. Exercise is extremely important and will help prevent a slew of behavioral issues. Your dog needs to explore and sniff and learn about the world outside his backyard. Dogs need not only physical exercise, but mental stimulation as well, so go for walks, take car rides, play brain games! It will benefit you both! If you are thinking of taking your new dog to the dog park, wait until you know each other well. He needs to know you are his person, and you need to know he will come when called. Once you get to know each other, it could be fun, and it can be a great way for your dog to socialize and get exercise. Just remember, dog parks are like defensive driving, you never know who's out there or what they may do! Only take him to the dog park once you know him very well and feel you can keep him safe.

9. In the beginning, it is very important that each time the door opens your dog is either on a leash or in another room. He may be confused and try to bolt out the door. The first few days home you should walk him around the block and to your front door several times in a row, circling farther and farther each time so he starts to learn where he lives. In case he does escape, he may be able to find his way back home. And speaking of bolting, until you know how your new dog does with loud noises like thunder and fireworks, please try and keep him in a safe, secure spot when he may be exposed to loud sounds. And you can NOT reinforce fear. It's an emotion, not a behavior. Feel free to pet, comfort, and console your dog if she is scared.

10. More than anything, please don't give up on your new dog, and follow thru with the commitment you made in the adoption interview. Remember, most rescue dogs have been thru a LOT, and we are always available to answer any behavior questions and help with training. Call 303-506-3286 or email dogtrainersusan@gmail.com if problems occur or you see behavior that worries you. Don't hesitate to contact us. We are very happy to try and help, and the sooner you can identify a possible problem, the less likely it will turn into something major.

Remember that your dog is trying to please you. He has to try and learn a foreign language, (english), learn to follow rules he doesn't understand yet, he has to get along with all people and other pets in the family, and he has no way to communicate if he is confused, concerned, scared, or maybe not feeling well. Your dog is an emotional, sentient being, and just like us, he can be tired, cranky, bored, as well as happy, excited and playful. So roll with the punches, be patient, have fun, learn, and love.

SUGGESTED READING:

[On Talking Terms with Dogs: Calming Signals by Turid Rugaas](#)

[The Power of Positive Dog Training, by Pat Miller](#)

[Feeling Outnumbered? How to Manage and Enjoy Your Multi-Dog Household, Patricia McDonnell, Karen London PhD](#)

[The Other End Of The Leash, by Patricia McConnell Ph.D](#)

[Plenty In Life Is Free, Kathy Sdao](#)

[Bonding With Your Dog, by Victoria Schade](#)

If you come across any other books by these authors, go for it! Please avoid books, cd's, etc.. by Cesar Millan, The Monks of New Skete, or other "alpha-compulsion-dominant based training systems.

POTTY TRAINING:

Even if your new dog is already potty trained, a new home, new food, and new schedule may lead to accidents. Remember, your new dog doesn't know when he will be let out, and you don't know his signals or body language telling you he needs to go, so **BE PATIENT!** One suggestion is to give a cue, ("go potty", "do your business") go out *with* him, and reward when he poops or pees. Then toss a ball, play tug, run around for a few minutes after he goes. This will teach him to go on cue, (useful before car trips or before leaving him alone), it teaches him to go first thing and not take his time messing around, (because he isn't brought back in right away, he gets to play for a few minutes after), and it captures the behavior you want, (using the bathroom outside).

Unless you catch your dog in the act of pooping inside, **DO NOT** punish, scold, rub his nose in it, etc... This will only teach him that you are dangerous and that you will attack him unprovoked. If you catch him in the act, clap your hands gently, or say "you-hoo!", "uh-uh" , etc.. to get his attention, take him outside, give your potty cue, and reward him for going where you want him to. Remember, if you don't catch him in the act, just clean it up and move on. If you are too loud or scary and frighten him, you may end up with a dog who is scared to go in front of you and will sneak around and potty inside where you can't see him.

Diarrhea is not uncommon when a dog moves into a new home. Just like in people, stress, a new diet, new treats can all lead to an upset tummy. Above all, **BE NiCE!** You know what it feels like to be sick, right? He can't help it, so just clean it up and move on. If he's vomiting and not eating or drinking water, take him to the vet right away. If the diarrhea lasts more than three days, that's not normal, and should be taken to the vet to get checked out. Otherwise, it should pass as he starts to relax and settle in.

CHANGING YOUR DOGS NAME

Some dogs may know their name, some dogs have a bad association with their name, some dogs were strays and don't even have a name. If you want to change your new dogs name, or just help him learn his current name better, there are a couple of things you can do.

You can feed part of his meals by hand the first two or three days. This helps establish you as the bearer of all good things in life, and allows you to work on taking food from hands gently., and is also a great way to teach your dog a new name if you're changing it. Just say his new name in a happy voice as you feed a handful of food!

Another way to change your dogs name or name a puppy is to use a technique called "stuff the puppy" or "stuff the dog". Take 10-15 small (about the size of your pinky fingernail), super yummy, super smelly treats. Pieces of hotdog, roast beef, liver treats, or mini- meatballs work well. Say your dogs new name and hand over a treat, 10-15 times, right in a row. Do this drill 4-5 times a day, and do this drill using different inflections, so your dog learns when he hears his name, great things are in store for him!

Try to remember that you want your dog to associate his name with positive things, such as treats, affection, walks, and games. Try not say your dogs name when disciplining or with punishment. And try not to overuse your dogs name. He will begin to tune you out if you have have constant conversations with him, using his name without rewarding his attention, especially in the beginning.

Introducing your new dog to other dogs in the family:

Have both dogs meet by taking them for a walk together outside before bringing the new dog into the house. Have them walk, dog-person-person-dog, no stopping, then person-dog-person-dog, then person-dog-dog-person. Let one walk ahead so the other can butt sniff, switch places, then keep walking. Walk at least around the block once, then you can let them stop and sniff face to face for three seconds, then walk some more. If all goes well, you can stop and let them sniff how they want. Then have new dog go into the house first and explore. I like to have a "safe" room for the new dog, a room off the main area that I enclose with a baby gate so new dog isn't overwhelmed by all the other dogs and people trying to meet him, but he can still see and hear what's going on in the rest of the house and interact with the other dogs safely through the baby gate.

Have all toys and bones put away the first few hours so there will be no resource guarding or possessiveness. Have a new or washed separate bed for new dog, and do not leave both dogs home alone together in the same room until you are POSITIVE there will be no issues, separate with a closed door. Even if you think they are getting along great, don't risk it! Keep them apart if you are not there.

The whole "alpha" and "dominant dog" theory is fluid and may go back and forth. One dog may go thru doors first, one dog may take toys from the other, so you don't need to feed one dog first, or pet one dog first. A good rule, is, the dog who is the most polite gets rewarded first. There's an excellent book by Karen London PhD and Patricia McConnell PhD called "Feeling Outnumbered? How To Manage And Enjoy Your Multi-Dog Household" that I recommend to everyone with more than one dog.

It would be a good idea to feed dogs separately, either in separate rooms or on opposite sides of the room, and supervise until you're sure there will be no resource guarding, potential problems, or even stress for one dog or the other. And until you are positive there is no snarking, also be careful giving treats and bones when dogs are close to each other

CLASSES

Taking training classes with your dog is a great way to build a positive relationship, have fun, and help communication. Please find a trainer who only uses positive reinforcement and is a certified dog trainer, (CPDT), an Applied Animal Behaviorist, (IAAAB, CAAB) or Veterinary Behaviorist, (PhD), etc... Some trainers are deceptive, they will be a “member” of one of those organizations, so double check that they only use positive reinforcement. Beware of terms like terms like “alpha training” “balanced”, “eclectic”. Typically that means they are an dominance/compulsion type trainer.

There is NO professional organization that supports the use of pain/dominance type training. That means no choke chains, prong collars, shock collars, citronella or vinegar spray, spanking, scruff shakes, take downs or roll overs. The United States Veterinary Association, the International Veterinary Association, any US or International Humane Societies, almost all rescues and shelters discourage the use of force and encourage rewards and positive reinforcement. Even if you end up with a trainer that has all the right credentials, if something makes you uncomfortable, listen to your gut and walk away. *Walk away.* **Only you can protect your dog and be her advocate. Do not let anyone, hurt, scare, or intimidate your dog for any reason.**