



# Dog Behaviour Guide

## Post Adoption Tips



Bringing your new dog home is exciting! However, your new pet may find this transition a bit stressful at first. Here are some recommendations for helping your pet feel at home!

### Keep a Routine

Dogs thrive on predictability. Keep a consistent schedule, such as feeding and exercising your dog at the same time each day. Remember, your pet is transitioning from a shelter environment (which is stressful!) to an unfamiliar environment (your home). They need time to rest, decompress, explore their new home, and adapt to a different routine.

### Limit Exposure

Keep your dog's world fairly small until they have had time to adjust to their new environment. Avoid going to dog parks or other busy areas. Limit the number of introductions to unfamiliar people or dogs, until your dog is comfortably interacting with everyone in your own household.

Introducing your dog to a new environment (your home), unfamiliar people, or other animals at the same time can be very overwhelming! Too many stressors can cause a dog to become overly aroused or fearful. This is referred to as "trigger stacking." Dogs may display unpredictable behaviour in a stressed state. It is essential that you do not overwhelm your new dog, so take things slow.

For exercise, try playing with your dog in your backyard or take them for a short leash walk in a quiet area. This limits distractions and helps you become familiar with your dog's behaviour.

### Give Space

Allow your dog to investigate (sniff) their new environment when they arrive! Provide your dog with a safe, comfortable, and quiet resting area in your home. If your dog enjoys their kennel, you can try draping a towel or blanket over the kennel to encourage sleep. Ensure that whenever your dog is in their safe space, no one in your household interacts with the dog. This is your pet's space to retreat, which helps them feel secure and allows for quality rest.

Note: Never force your dog into a kennel. If you are using a kennel, leave the door open and allow your dog to enter and exit freely.

### Manage Your Expectations

Every dog is an individual. We cannot expect them to become comfortable in their new environment overnight. Some dogs might adapt quite readily, while other dogs may require several weeks to start showing signs of relaxation. Remember, socialization is NOT forcing your dog to interact with new

people, objects, environments or other animals. This can worsen fear or reactive behaviour. Appropriate socialization is ensuring your dog has positive experiences in new situations.

## What to AVOID

Here are some things to avoid when bringing your new dog home:

- Hosting a party or event that involves many new people interacting with your dog at once. This can be very overwhelming and can trigger reactive behaviour.
- Having guests bring their pets to your home or bringing your dog to someone's household. Avoid introducing your pet to new people, animals, or environments until you have become familiar with their behaviour and preferences.
- Bringing your dog to a busy location, such as a dog park or urban area.

## Helpful Tips

- Keep a consistent household schedule to help your dog adapt to their new environment.
- Interact with your dog in your household or in a quiet environment, and avoid exposing your pet to new people, animals, or environments initially.
- Try using a calming pheromone called Adaptil® when you bring your dog home. This product is available for purchase at Bingo's Pet Shop at the Edmonton Humane Society. All sale proceeds go directly back to the Edmonton Humane Society to help the animals in our care.
- Designate a safe, comfortable, and quiet area for your dog in your home. Ensure your dog is never interrupted when they choose to go to their safe space.
- Go at your dog's pace. Wait until your dog shows signs of relaxation and has adapted to their home, routine, and family members before introducing them to something new.

## **Additional Resources:**

The Training Academy at the Edmonton Humane Society offers training classes, such as Creating Courageous Canines! This class helps fearful dogs become more confident using reward-based training. For more information, visit our website:

<https://www.edmontonhumanesociety.com/sessions/creating-courageous-canines/>

### Did You Know?

You can also ask us behaviour questions by emailing:  
[askthespecialist@edmontonhumanesociety.com](mailto:askthespecialist@edmontonhumanesociety.com)

It takes approximately \$7 million to keep the Edmonton Humane Society operational for one year and 40% of these funds come from generous donations made by supporters like you. Please Donate.