



## Bringing Your New Dog into Your Home

### 10 Things to Know Before Adopting Your Heeler

Thank you for considering a new family member! Here are a few helpful tips to ease your household into life with a new dog, and help ensure successful and lasting adoption.

**1) Plan for an adjustment period.** Your dog is adjusting to a new environment and learning how your household functions. The adjustment process can take three weeks, three months, or longer. Your dog may not display all aspects of his/her complete personality during this time, and may behave in a surprisingly different manner once he is settled in and begins to feel comfortable and confident. Please remember to be patient with your new dog during this time, while providing clear and consistent leadership and instructions. [It Doesn't Happen Overnight – The 3-3-3 Rule for Dog Adoptions](#) | [Three Ways to Confuse a New Dog](#)

**2) Introducing your current dog to your new dog.** Never leave the new dog unsupervised with other household pets until you are confident that there will not be any issues. It is important that your current dogs meet your new dog *in a neutral location*, a place that your current dogs do not view as "their territory" and won't feel the need to "defend" or "protect" from the new guy. Plan to have *one person present for each dog*. Each dog should be on a leash and handled by a separate person. If there are multiple dogs in your household, each dog must be introduced *one at a time*. Do not allow your dogs to crowd the new dog. Have the person walking the new dog approach from the side and "catch up" to you and your dog as you walk. Pick an area where you can walk with a little distance between each of the dogs. Allow them to sniff and look each other over as they walk, but don't force any interactions or correct either dog for checking out other interesting things along the way. Try to do this in an area where there are not a lot of other people and dogs present, to avoid over-stimulation. Keep meetings and interactions brief, taking a break and walking away after just a few minutes.

Also, keep a close eye on each dog's body language, know which signs indicate that your dog is stressed and respect those actions. Repeat these brief meetings a few times, striving for positive experiences for each dog, and teaching them that good things (treats, praise, petting) happen when the dogs are in each other's presence. [How to Successfully Introduce Two Dogs](#) | [Tips on Introducing a New Dog](#) | [Introducing a New Dog to Your Current Dog](#) | [Canine Stress Dictionary](#) | [How to Read Dog Body Language](#)

**3) Establish "house rules."** Your dog's foster will provide detailed information about the dog's training. These skills will give you a place to begin and facilitate familiar communication. Many new adopters make the mistake of letting the dog "settle in" before they begin teaching rules and manners. Avoid this mistake. Your dog has been learning skills and manners while in foster care, skills that will help you guide him as he settles into life in your home. Waiting can cause setbacks, impede communication, and also result in the dog "making his own rules" if he feels there are none. Your dog is looking to you for leadership and guidance. Provide rules, routine and structure from the beginning. [Leadership and Relationship Restructuring: or How to be a Good Leader](#)

**4) Establish a schedule.** Your dog's foster will inform you of the dogs mealtimes and daily routine. Stick closely to this routine for a couple of days and then begin transitioning to your own daily schedule. While adjusting to your home, establish a potty schedule for your new dog to avoid accidents. Remember, you are communicating to your new dog the routine of his new home. He is looking to you for guidance and direction. Dogs thrive on routine—they like knowing what comes next.

**5) Invest in a crate.** Crates are a great way to keep your dog and your belongings safe when you cannot be there to supervise. The crate isn't meant to be used for punishment; it is the dog's safe space. Rattling around a big house can be very overwhelming to a new dog. As your dog settles in and matures, he can be introduced to more rooms in the house and trusted with more space and responsibility.

**6) Understand housebreaking.** Your dog is or is in the process of "housebreaking." *However*, this should be understood as "Your dog is 'housebroken' *in his foster home*." Your home is new. It smells different. The path to the yard must be learned. Treat your new dog as if he is *not* house trained. Acclimate your new dog to eliminating in his new yard the same way you would if you were housebreaking a new puppy. Supervise him and crate him when you can't watch him. Count on a dog marking or having accidents the first few days and have pet-specific cleaning products on hand. [Six Steps to the Perfect Puppy](#)

**7) "Puppy-proof" your home.** Get down on your hands and knees. Look around. Pick up, relocate or hide any potential dangers or belongings. Tuck cords and wires away, clear low tables and shelves. Keep phones, eyeglasses, remote controls, shoes, etc., up high or behind closed doors. If you catch your dog with one of your things, gently remove it with an "ah-ah!" Offer an appropriate chew toy, instead. If you adopted a puppy, he will be teething. The need and desire to chew increases at 3-4 months. By 6 months, the pup will have lost all of his baby teeth, the adult teeth will begin to fuse with the jawbone. Chewing relieves the discomfort, so be prepared by encouraging appropriate chewing now. Most people view chewing as an undesired habit, however, chewing is really a great way for a dog to relieve stress and boredom, in addition to the discomfort of teething. [When Your Dog Grabs Your Stuff](#)

**8) Exercise regularly.** Your dog needs structured daily activity. A nice yard is not a substitute for a good walk or jog. Commit to daily exercise with your dog as part of your new household routine. A good walk is one that "leaves you both panting." If you begin your dog's day with a good bout of physical activity, he will be ready to settle down and nap while you are at work. Daily walks strengthen the bond with your new dog, and will also reinforce your leadership. Structured exercise is important. Turning the dog out in the yard to amuse himself results in boredom, or the dog "making his own rules" both of which can result in unwanted destruction and behavior issues. [Fitness Together](#)

**9) Teach self-control.** Your dog needs to learn to amuse himself in an appropriate way when you are busy. Encouraging constant activity can inadvertently teach a dog to be "on" and active all of the time. The above example of a good, structured walk, followed by the dog resting and recovering while you are at work is an example of both regular exercise and downtime. Build an "off switch" into your dog by coordinating structured exercise/play activities with "downtime." [Teaching "go to your place"](#)

Heelers need both mental and physical stimulation. Games are a great way to keep you dog mentally stimulated. You don't have to spend a lot of money on toys. Checkout the internet for fun games to play with your dog.

**10) Keep training simple.** A lot of dog and puppy training is simply catching the dog in the act of doing something you *want* him to learn, and praising him for it. When your pup naturally sits or lies down, get excited! Praise him for it! Reward him with a treat! Your pup will work hard to figure out what he was doing that made you so happy, and be sure to do it again and again! Just watch your dog- when he does something you like, celebrate that action, give it a name, and continue to do so every time. Capturing a behavior is one of the easiest ways to train and is very helpful with puppies and new dogs. [Five Ways Teaching Tricks Can Improve Training](#)

Spend a few minutes, several times each day on training. Short, upbeat training sessions are most productive. Dogs learn through play. Playtime is a great opportunity practice your dog's skills. Keep interactions brief and end on a positive note, with something "easy" that he knows and can do well, so that your dog finishes with success! [Five Things You're Doing to Make Your Dog Misbehave](#)

Also, taking classes with a good dog trainer can be an excellent way to bond with your new dog and improve your dog's socialization skills.

We are here to help you and your dog have a wonderful life together. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact [adopt@texascattledogrescue.com](mailto:adopt@texascattledogrescue.com).