

Adopting A New Puppy or Dog- A Trainers Perspective On What To Do First. By Trainer Donna Rogers of K-9 Capers Dog Training Academy

Rarely, I'm asked what to do **after** a new dog or puppy is brought home from the shelter. However, this question, is crucial to keeping a dog in the home longterm. As a trainer, I think the first meeting of other people and pets in the home, and establishing the house rules are important part of the adoption process.

Just think about the first day on your job. You must learn everyone's name, all the company rules, when to take a break, where to park, and even where the bathroom is located! I'm sure you would agree it takes about two weeks or so to feel comfortable.

Now think about a new dog or puppy coming into your home! Here are a few ideas to get your pup off to the best start in life:

1. Go home-not the pet store, but to **your** home. Start with the back yard. Slowly introduce your new pet the back yard on leash (in case they have to pee),then while they are still on leash, take them inside and show them around in the house. Also show them the water dish,where they will eat, and sleep. BE KIND. know that accidents could happen so keep them behind a baby gate or crate when they are not with you for the first few weeks so you can help them establish proper bathroom routines.
2. Leave your dog in the place they will be when are going to be away WHILE you are at home to see if the area will be safe. How will they act? Are they chewers? Are they afraid? Your first "trip" should be to the mailbox and back. How did they do? Were they stressed? Try leaving the TV or radio on and don't make a big deal about leaving.
3. Leave them in a safe situation do not leave plush or rope toys as they could choke. Kongs filled with food or hard nylabones are best. Remember some dogs get very stressed if you leave at first. Try putting them away throughout the day in the place you will leave them while you are at work to help them cope with being alone.
4. If you have other pets, you should make certain they are getting along BEFORE you adopt, then you should not let unknown animals stay together alone for two to three months until you know how they will do alone. Some animals fight over food,toys and sometimes water bowls.
5. Always keep safety first. Some dogs have been known to strangle on harnesses and bedding. Make sure all the "first" go well; the first car ride, first veterinarian visit, first visitors over, etc. Never leave children alone with pets. It is never a good idea.
6. Finally, give your dog lots of little breaks, even the super friendly dogs. All pets must learn impulse control and how to handle down time.
7. For more details on making a great transition to your home download the FREE adoption guide at :<http://www.k9caperstraining.com/training-tips.html> or sign up for our free monthly dog workshop the first Saturday of each month: register by email at k9capers@gmail.com or 704 721 6757.

