

## Helping Your New Rescue Dog Decompress

These first few days are about calm, quiet, and building trust. Go slow and be gentle, your new dog may be scared or unsure. They don't know yet that they're safe.

### DAY 1 KEEP IT QUIET

- Set up a safe space (crate, cozy bed, or quiet room).
- Let the dog rest and settle. Avoid trying to comfort by fussing or petting.
- Use a soft voice and slow movements.
- Take them outside on leash for potty breaks.
- Let them sniff and explore when ready — don't pull or guide them forcefully.

#### Gentle Tips:

- Pet under the chin or on the chest — avoid reaching over the head.
- Never grab or lean over the dog. Let them come to you.
- Always reward interest or approach — use treats, food, or quiet praise.

### DAY 2 SET A ROUTINE & RESPECT BOUNDARIES

- Feed and walk at consistent times.
- Keep walks slow and exploratory.
- Sit nearby quietly and let them choose when to interact.
- Don't introduce to all other dogs at once.

#### Dog Introductions

- Introduce dogs one at a time in a large, open area.
- Keep leashes on but drop them — avoid creating tension.
- Remove food, treats, and toys during initial intros to prevent guarding.
- Feed separately and in quiet spaces.
- Don't feed in a crate if other dogs are nearby or watching.

### DAY 3 LET TRUST BUILD

- Don't rush. Consistency and calm will help the dog feel safe.
- Spend calm time in the same room—read, hum, or sit quietly.
- Watch for signs of curiosity or relaxation.
- Continue rewarding calm and friendly behavior.
- Keep introductions slow and always supervised.
- Stick to your space and routine.

### WHAT HELPS



- A quiet place to rest
- Calm voices and slow movements
- Rewards (treats or praise) for curious or gentle behavior
- One-at-a-time introductions in open spaces
- Dropped leashes for freedom of movement
- Separate feeding areas with no pressure

### WHAT TO AVOID



- Do not hug your new dog- This is not normal dog-to-dog behavior and can create fear and stress.
- Petting over the head
- Pulling, grabbing, or hovering
- Tight leashes or forced introductions
- Feeding dogs close together
- Leaving food or toys accessible
- Rushing social interactions

### NEED SUPPORT?



If the dog is showing signs of fear (e.g., growling, hiding, or avoiding contact), stay calm — this is normal. **Please inform your point of contact.** A trainer will be contacted based on your location.

**Give the dog regular breaks from you and other animals.** This could be in a crate, ex-pen, or a quiet room. If the dog is uncomfortable with separation, solo leash walks or calm yard time can help.

**Use a hands-off approach unless the dog clearly seeks touch.** Trust builds quickly when a dog learns you won't reach for them uninvited. If they lean on you, nudge your hand, or sit close, they may want affection. If they move away, respect that by pulling your hand back immediately.