



## CONGRATULATIONS, IT'S A PIG!

### What happens after adoption

**GET THE PIG HOME.** Your newly adopted pig will need a ride home from My Pig Filled Life. Take notes on your transport, as you'll want to periodically practice taking your pig on drives so you're well prepared in the event of an urgent visit to the [vet](#), or even an impromptu road trip.

Plan to transport your pig in a closed, climate controlled vehicle, even when temperatures in Texas aren't extreme. We've found a wire kennel to be optimal, and it must be large enough to allow the pig to turn 360° for comfortable travel. Particularly for larger pigs, the kennel should be reinforced with a plywood bottom; in most instances, MPFL can provide a crate to new pig-rents. Appropriate flooring material such as blankets, shavings or hay will prevent the pig from slipping in the kennel. There is very little though that will prevent your new adoptee from stressing during the drive. Odds are, he WILL potty, WILL vomit and WILL lay in the mess. You can mitigate cleanup by packing plastic shopping bags, paper towels, baby wipes, and pee pads to place under the blanket. When you become aware of a potty accident, stop to scoop out anything that will soil the pig. If you arrive home with a stinky piggy, you can gently hose him off while he's still in the kennel, if external temperatures allow. Have a plan for disembarking at home and getting piggy right into his new space. And be aware that the transport can make your pig anxious, stressed, and in some cases, even aggressive.

**LET YOUR PIG SETTLE!** Help your pig settle into its new life by giving it space - patience is your best friend during the initial 1-2 weeks after adoption. As noted in our [Adoption Guide](#), piggy will need his own space, and this is key to helping him feel safe upon arrival. Leave him there to adjust, play soft music, and give him time to smell and explore the place. As he begins to settle, a "designated person" who will be the primary caregiver should spend time in proximity to him, sit on the floor, lay next to his pen, and just stay close so he can adjust to your presence and your smell. Some pigs trust quickly, others very slowly. You'll see when he begins to settle, as he approaches you, wags his tail, accepts rather than tests his barriers, seeks your attention. Take this time to learn to read your pig. At all times, put yourself in his hooves - everything in this new place feels like a threat to your pig, who is a prey animal. It's very hard for new pig parents to accommodate this slow transition, but self control at the front end will result in a much better relationship over the 15-20 years to come.

**HELP YOUR PIG SOCIALIZE AND ADAPT.** As he adjusts to his new home, your pig may remain a bit nervous. Continue to spend floor time with him; rub his belly, or just sit with him and read a book. You can occasionally entice or reward him with treats such as Cheerios, but don't build your interactions around food as it will become the basis of your long-term relationship. Introduce routine to his day, feeding him at his accustomed times of approximately 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., and slowly helping him adapt to new feeding times that are convenient for you. When he's ready, his designated person should introduce him to the household. This includes other family members, who will have to approach piggy with equally slow and deliberate moves. Great care should be taken when introducing children, who can startle or injure the pig, or even be injured by a frightened pig.

When introducing him to other household pets, have a barrier between the animals and carefully read body language. Dogs and pigs should be introduced slowly and allowed together only when supervised. Other pets may be safer with the pig, but remember that he is always driven to establish his place in a linear hierarchy. This means that the dog, the cat, the bunny and even your child may have to fit into your



pig's idea of the ladder - each one neatly tucked on its own rung - so he knows exactly where he fits. If this hierarchy is not clear to the pig, he may injure other pets, or be injured by them because they don't understand his language. If you are introducing pigs to one another, use our [Integration Guide](#) and allow plenty of time to avoid fights and bloodshed.

#### MANAGE YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Let's get real. You may cajole, entice, even bribe a pig to do as you wish, but it's not truly possible to control a pig. What you CAN control is the environment. Here are some examples:

- If you have a bed of prized gardenias, fence the pig away from the plants. He WILL root them up.
- If you're preparing the pig's dinner and he gently roots your legs to hurry you along, exclude him from the food preparation area with a gate. Those little nudges will eventually leave bruises, no matter how sweet, gentle or well intentioned.
- If you're late feeding the pig and you fear that his screams will summon the authorities, take him to his pen where he will have to wait - QUIETLY - until you're ready to feed him.
- If you have fine rugs, tablecloths, a lovely sofa throw, put them away from the pig. Don't give him unsupervised access to anything he shouldn't shred.
- If you need to move the pig to his safe place, have some treats handy to entice him - but ensure that they're out of his reach, preferably sealed in a plastic bag so he can't even smell them!
- If piggy just won't go along with anything you have in mind, use the [sorting board](#) that you have handy, and control your environment!
- To prepare for and preempt moments of conflict, regularly practice your [Move The Pig](#) technique.

#### EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

Your pig will frustrate you more than you can imagine. They are mischievous. They have temper tantrums. They demand people interaction. They must build a nest in their space, and they see your draperies, dog leash or mixing bowl as potential nesting material. You can preempt these potential problems by anticipating. Buy sheets and blankets from the thrift store to give to piggy. If he has access to the kitchen, child-proof the cabinets. Teach your family members to use the [sorting board](#) and [move the pig](#), or they'll end up at the bottom rung of the ladder. Expect him to pee or poop inappropriately when he is angry with you. Anticipate his boredom and plan enrichment activities, whether it's outdoor access to rooting and a mud pit, or indoor activities that replace rooting and stimulate neck muscles, like a ball pit.

Pigs are very intelligent and very emotional. This means that yours will be affected at times by hunger, by furniture that's been moved, by changes that you can't begin to identify or understand. Irrespective of the cause, never give in to your pig's demands or irrational behaviors. You may feel fear, you may feel overwhelmed, you may feel you've made a mistake in adopting; take time to put the pig in his safe place, decompress, seek help from our rescue or a pig-knowledgeable friend. And when you're ready, resume your investment in this unique and rewarding relationship, and remember that it will all be worth it!

IN THE EVENT... We all have situations we can't handle on our own. Health issues require professional veterinarian care, not advice from a friend. If your pig lunges and attempts to bite or attack you, put him in isolation immediately and seek aid from a behavior expert. If life throws you and your piggy a curveball that seems "unhittable", contact us at [My Pig Filled Life](#).