

A Successful Move with Your Dog

a guide for transitioning smoothly into a new home with your dog, courtesy of



Whatever stage you're at in the home-buying process, we congratulate you on this exciting phase in your life! Moving can be exciting and busy for dog owners and at the same time, it can be an important and potentially challenging event for your dog that is worth paying attention to. Below you'll find some tips and tricks to help your dog transition smoothly into the new home and neighborhood, and save you time and attention to devote to other aspects of the move.

Stress Management

Getting used to a new environment and any new routines may be stressful for your dog and the process of moving your possessions can be overstimulating and put your dog on edge. High levels of stress can have adverse behavior effects on your dog and lead to the formation of undesirable habits if not handled properly. **Try to prevent your dog from becoming stressed or overstimulated by limiting her exposure to extra commotion related to your move.** If your dog is comfortable being put in another room, outside, or in a kennel for short periods of time, consider using that option when people are entering and exiting the house repetitively, or moving furnishings continuously. Giving your dog something safe and enjoyable to do while she is spending time alone will further contribute to reducing stress, among other benefits (read about puzzle toys in the next section).

Most dogs will take a couple of days - up to a couple of weeks - to adjust fully to the new home and neighborhood. **Add your dog's favorite things (maybe belly rubs, favorite games, special foods, etc.) into this adjustment period as you're able, to build a positive first impression with your new home environment and help put her at ease.**

Exercise and Stimulation (on a limited time budget)

Physical exercise and mental stimulation are crucial for preventing stress from accumulating and preventing boredom behaviors like inappropriate chewing, digging, excessive barking, and over-excitement. **If you find yourself short on time to exercise your dog, consider substituting on-leash walks for a higher-intensity form or exercise** – like playing fetch, off-leash playtime with another dog, or another activity that allows your dog to run at her full speed.

In addition to physical exercise, mental stimulation can help to burn excess energy, relieve stress, and keep your dog occupied in a healthy and appropriate way. **Edible chews (like meaty bones, and other commercially available animal parts) and puzzle toys (toys that can contain food for your dog to 'work' out) are usually great options for mental stimulation.** Once you've made sure that your dog interacts with a certain chew or puzzle toy safely, you can use them to take your dog's focus off of a stressful event, and help her to release residual stress she may be holding in her body. They also help to

burn excess energy and prevent bad habits from forming out of boredom on days when you have less attention to spare on your dog. **There will likely be many occasions for chews or puzzle toys to be helpful during a move, so we recommend keeping a couple ready and on-hand** so you won't have to scramble to find or prepare one when you need it (usually when you have the least time to spare)!

For a guide to using puzzle toys (including getting started, getting the most out of each use, and some recommended toys that are easy to use on a regular basis), go to palsdogtraining.com/puzzle-toy-guide.

Adjusting to the Home and Neighborhood

Dog behavior and learning is very-context specific, so your new home may or may not seem similar to your previous home, in your dog's opinion, and she may be inclined to behave somewhat differently. Additionally, the new neighborhood will have different smells, animals, people, and sounds and some of these may cause suspicion or motivate other behavior changes in your dog. We advise you not to take wanted or unwanted behaviors for granted in the new setting, and instead **seize the opportunity to kindly show your dog the ropes early on.**

A simple way to do this is to **keep extra tasty treats (like a single-ingredient meat or liver treat) available around the home and on walks – feed some to your dog right after she does desirable behaviors, or encounters something new.** For example, feed a treat right after your dog encounters new dogs, people, sounds, or anything conspicuous on walks, and for desirable behaviors like:

- going potty in the desired area
- coming inside when called from the yard (if applicable)
- staying back from an open door (or just not running out)
- not barking at the new doorbell or dog sounds (if applicable)
- simply laying around and relaxing during downtimes, etc.

Finally, your dog might not know that you plan to return to 'this new building we are bringing boxes to' when you leave for the first time (or first few times). **Chews and puzzle toys that you've determined are safe for unsupervised play can be left with your dog the first few times you leave to help prevent her from panicking, give her positive associations with alone time, and provide a way for her to occupy herself appropriately.**

We're here to help!

If you have questions about how, or whether, to implement any of the above recommendations with your dog, or if you're worried about your dog's behavior, please give us a call at **720-285-9978** or email us at contact@palsdogtraining.com.

Feel free to share this guide with friends and family who are changing homes with their dog(s). For more dog training quick-guides like this, like our page at Facebook.com/PalsDogTrainingCO.