



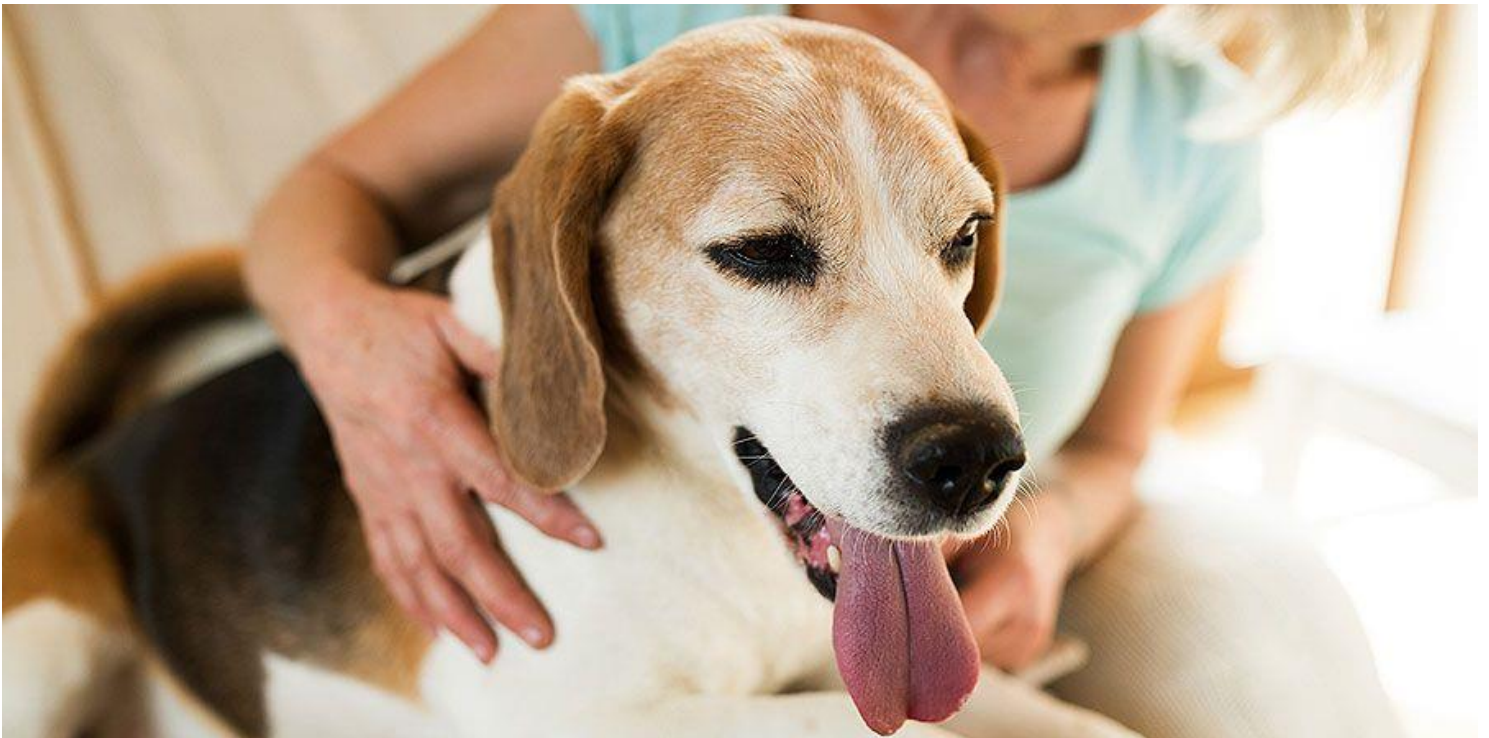
# The First 7 Days – Bringing Your Adopted Dog Home

- Adopting a Dog or Puppy

Bringing home your newly adopted rescue dog is super exciting. You are starting a new life journey with your dog, he is now forever part of your family!

The **first few days and even weeks can be confusing for you and your rescue puppy**. Learning what to expect this first week can help ease your worries.

As a foster family we get to experience the joy of bringing home a new dog several times a year.



# What to Expect When Adopting and Bringing Home a Rescue Dog

You have just adopted your new pup and he is now in his forever home, but your dog does NOT understand that yet. Your dog may have been in a shelter, foster home or bounced from shelter to foster home several times. He is most likely confused, stressed out, and unclear of his future.

Hopefully, you prepared before [bringing your new dog home, but now is a good time to review](#) to make sure you didn't forget anything.

Each experience with each dog is different. Every dog is unique! I've learned something new with every new dog we've fostered and adopted. I hope my experiences can help you make your dogs transition to his new home as smooth as possible.

## Day 1: Bringing Your Adopted Dog Home

### Let Your Newly Adopted Dog Decompress

- Before you bring your dog inside your home, take him outside to where you want him to go potty and take him for a long walk.
- The first day your adopted dog comes home should be uneventful. Keep things quiet and calm, as tempting as it may feel, don't invite all your friends to meet him.
- It's important to give your new dog space to decompress. Set up an area of your home that he can chill out for a while. A crate with a bed or blankets in the room is a great start. You don't need to shut the door to the crate, just have it as space for him to retreat if he wants.
- Sit back and observe your new best friend. **Let him come to you**, if you have kids, don't allow them to hang on the dog, hug him, put their faces to the dogs face, etc. In other words, explain to your kids they need to give the new dog some space for a little while.
- [Learn to read your dogs body language](#). It will help you bond and understand your dog so much better!
- When we first bring in a new foster dog, she is on a leash next to me, in my home office while I work, or in their crate. I never give a foster dog free roam of our house. I learned my lesson pretty quickly on this... too many potty accidents and personal items chewed upon.

## **Bringing Home a Shelter Dog and Other Pets**

If you have other pets in the home, keep them separated for the first 24 hours. Remember, your new dog is stressed; meeting another dog just adds another layer of stress and can result in a dogfight. This goes for even if your dog is the most friendly dog ever or if the dogs have met before. Bringing another dog into your home is different than a casual meeting and dogs react differently when it is in their territory.

Whenever we bring in a new foster dog, they are separated from our dogs for a full 24 hours. The 24-hour rule is actually required by the rescue I work with. I will admit, the first few times we brought in a foster, this was very hard.

It's so tempting to want to bring the dog in and let everyone play. Our home is an open concept and it's hard to divide any spaces, but I use a baby gate and a room divider to block off our kitchen. This is where our foster dogs stay the first day in our home.

## **Your Rescue Dog May or May Not Want to Eat**

Don't worry if your dog doesn't want to eat the first few days, this is completely normal. Try to feed the same food he was eating in his foster home or shelter, to alleviate any belly aches. You can wean him to a new food next week, but the first week keep things simple. Make sure he is drinking water; you don't want him to get dehydrated.

This is a little gross but look at his poop for the next few weeks. Even if the shelter or foster home gave him a clean bill of health, sometimes worms and parasites can creep up under time and stress. Any signs of abnormal poop warrants a visit to your vet.

Which reminds me, you should make an appointment to have your vet take a look at your new dog. Again, even if he's gotten a clean bill of health through a rescue or shelter, I recommend having your own vet take a look at your new dog and give them a copy of his health records.

## **Your Rescue Dogs First Night**

Your new dog is most likely going to be exhausted the first few nights. If at all possible, I recommend having your dog sleep in his crate at night. A crate will keep them safe and out of trouble when you are sleeping. We put a crate in our bedroom for our new foster

dogs to sleep, this helps the dogs feel more comfortable in the crate if they are not already crate trained.

## Day 2: Getting Your Dog Comfortable

The second day your dog may want to explore his surrounds more. Every dog is different; so don't be concerned if your newly adopted dog prefers to hide under the table or in his crate. This is perfectly normal and part of the decompression processes.

But if your dog wants more attention, then give it to him slowly. Do not give your newly adopted dog full access to your home. Keeping his freedom to a minimum will help keep unwanted behaviors at bay.

I know, you look into those puppy eyes and wonder what could he possibly do that would be unwanted! Well, when a dog is stressed and in a new environment, there is a lot of trouble to be found. Potty accidents, chewing, male dogs may mark, trying to claim their territory, and who knows what else!

If you have other pets, you may introduce them now. If it is another dog, make the meeting outside in a neutral area. Take them both for a long walk together before entering the home again. If you have a cat, then I suggest keeping the introduction on the cat's terms. Using a baby gate to give the cat a space to escape if desired.

Remember, **your new dog may have never seen or experienced things you take for granted**. Stairs, television, kids, bicycles, etc. can all be strange to a new dog. It's always interesting to me with every foster dog we bring in, each one has some sort of quirk. A many of our fosters have never been on a structured walk, so when we walked by a big boulder, or a someone riding a bike, the dog would jump back out of fear. It's important to keep all this in mind when introducing and exposing your dog to new experiences. Always be patient, positive and reassuring. Don't avoid the things that make him fearful, but slowly show him there is nothing to be afraid of.

# Days 3-7: Creating a Routine for Your Adopted Dog

Slowly add activities throughout the first week. Simply going for daily walks to explore the neighborhood is enough. Every dog will be different and each dog will need its own amount of time to adjust to his new home. So learn to read your dog's body language and take it slow.

If you thought your dog was potty trained but is having accidents in the house, don't be too alarmed... this is pretty normal. Just go back to basics of potty training. If he is marking in the house, keep your dog on a leash or crated until you can trust him. This could be days, weeks or months.

**Create a routine.** Dogs and people alike strive on a schedule. Feed your dog twice a day, walk every day, etc.

**Don't allow behaviors just because you feel sorry for your dog.** If you allow it now, it makes it more difficult to change in the future. Lay the rules down now. If you don't want your dog on the couch, never allow him on the couch. If you don't want your dog to beg at the kitchen table, don't allow it this week just because he's new to your home.

**Do you need to take a dog training class?** Every dog is different. You may get lucky and your dog was already trained in his previous life. But 9 out of 10 times, your dog was surrendered or abandoned because he wasn't trained.