

Introducing your newly adopted dog:

Dogs that have been re-homed often come with 'baggage' that will slowly become apparent as you get to know your new pet. So as to get off on the right paw it is important to introduce your new dog to new situations slowly and positively.

How slowly or gradually you work will very much be dictated by your new pet as different individuals will have very different histories of socialisation and will therefore respond to new situations in varying ways. The important thing to remember is that you should not force your new pet to 'come around' to a new person, animal or situation - they will do so in their own time.

Introductions: new people

When you bring your new pet home it is likely that the entire family and their friends will want to meet the dog but this should wait until the pet has had the chance to settle in and find their feet.

The whole family (those who will live with the pet) should be involved in choosing and initially meeting your prospective pet, which will probably occur on 'neutral ground'.

- have a DAP diffuser plugged in nearby the dog's bed area before bringing him home
 - bring a bed with you when you go to get the dog and allow him to sleep on it on his way to his new home
 - bring the dog to his 'toilet' area before taking him inside
 - make sure everyone that is to meet the dog has some yummy treats
 - bring the dog inside on leash and show him around a limited area of the house
 - allow the dog to take a treat off each person
 - if the dog is cowering or appears unsure do not approach; have everyone avert their eyes and each person can drop a treat and allow the dog to pick it up from the floor
 - talk softly to the dog and do not force him to approach anyone
 - make sure that children are quiet and not moving suddenly or quickly
 - keep the meeting low key and calm
 - remember to take the dog outside to toilet area regularly until you know the dog's habits
 - show the dog his bed area and give him treats for sitting and lying down in the area
 - stuff a Kong toy and give the dog the chew toy to work on in his bed area with you nearby so as to keep him comforted
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- over the next few days other people can be introduced slowly
 - if your dog is comfortable a couple of people can be introduced at a time in the same way
 - always allow the dog to go and hide out in his bed if everything gets a bit much for him
 - if the dog shows signs of fearfulness or aggression during introductions a professional trainer should be contacted

Introductions: other pets

- you should not bring another pet into your house if your resident pet cannot cope with other animals around it - this is unfair on your pet and your new pet
 - your resident dog and potentially new pet should be first introduced on neutral territory away from valuable resources such as toys or food
 - keep both dogs on leash but try to maintain a loose leash at all times – a taut leash can cause a rise in tension and frustration
 - when approaching do not allow the dogs to approach head-on; be calm
 - take the dogs for a walk on leash so that they can get used to each other's company
 - on the day that your new pet comes home have someone take your other dog out to meet the dog somewhere neutral and then take them inside their to be shared home
 - have all toys, food, treats, toys or any other potential resources tidied away out of reach; confine your new dog from your own dog's bed with a baby gate or closed door
 - make sure that both dogs have an area that they can escape to should they feel the need – separate from one another
 - the new dog should be on leash, even just dragging a line while around your own dog so that he can be grabbed if necessary (only when supervised though!)
 - the two dogs should not be left unsupervised together until you are sure that they have bonded and are safe together
 - have the new dog sleep in a crate near your other dog's bed area
 - feed the dogs separately and only give them toys or chews when they are separated or supervised
 - your new dog should have limited access to the house and the other dog for the introduction period, which is at least a month
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- if you are introducing your new dog to other pets such as cats please let us know and we can help you with that
 - when selecting a new dog for a multi species house make sure that the dog has been tested with other animals before taking the dog home

Introductions: new situations

- never force your new dog to face anything that he may be nervous of
- remember some dogs find household noises distressing such as washing machine, vacuum cleaner, television etc.
- expose your new dog to these sounds and sights gradually while feeding him something he really likes
- if something has scared your dog take note of it and expose your dog to this situation from a distance while feeding him something yummy
- leash and collar training may have to start from the beginning as your new dog may never have worn one before
- your dog will need basic manners training and many require housetraining even if they were house clean in their last home
- spend the first month getting to know your new dog and introducing him to his new life but it may be six months before you fully know your new pet
- other animals, traffic and livestock should be introduced slowly making sure that your new dog is under control at all times

Having a new dog is a big responsibility and making sure you get off on the right paw with gradual and positive introductions will help to ensure that your new pet settles and becomes part of the family.

