

## Overview

You've decided to adopt an adult dog! Congratulations! The experience of being in a shelter or foster situation is very stressful for animals. They may be shy or fearful for the first while. Don't be discouraged! We have some tips below to help with the transition.

## Before the Arrival

You should do a few things to prepare your home to help make it as comfortable and welcoming as possible. You'll want to gather the following supplies:

- A flat buckle dog collar
- A sturdy harness
- A pet ID tag
- A 6 foot leash
- Pheremone spray or diffuser
- Food and water bowls
- TOYS! Until you know that your dog is not likely to ingest toys, we would recommend sturdy toys like Nylabones.
- If you know what type of food the dog has been eating, it's a great idea to have a bag on hand. Diet changes should be done gradually.

### A NOTE ON PHEROMONES

Products like Adaptil mimic the natural 'appeasing pheromones' that are released by all lactating mammals to comfort and reassure their young. These have been proven to have a comforting influence on adult dogs, and are recommended for helping your new dog during the transition period.

If you have the chance, it might be a good idea to introduce your resident dog to the new addition at the shelter, or foster home, and take them for a walk together.

## The First Day Home

An introduction outside of the home is a great way to help them adjust. Take them for another walk around the block together, or keep the resident dog in the yard, and bring the new dog to the outside of the fence for a sniff! It's important that the resident dog doesn't feel like his territory is 'invaded'. Take these first steps slowly. Try to wait 24 - 48 hours before making the full introductions between dogs.

When you are ready to enter the house, start small! Restrict access to just one area of the home. This will help him be more comfortable. Keeping them on a leash for the first few days can also be helpful. You don't have to hold it, but it can give you easy access if needed.

Be sure to reward all friendly behaviour! Try to make all interactions positive. Have a good stash of training treats on hand.

The first few days will be overwhelming for them, so some time and space are needed. They may not want to eat much, and may just want to hide. They just need some time to adjust. Having patience during this time is very important. Depending on their previous situation, they may be dealing with some emotional trauma, and need some time to decompress from their experience in a shelter or temporary home. They may also start testing the boundaries. If they show unwanted behaviour, be sure to use positive reinforcement as your training method.

Ensure that the new addition is included in the current routine. This will help everyone adjust more quickly.

Once you have had them at home for a few days, it's time for them to meet the vet! If they have vaccination or health records, be sure to bring them along. We can help with any health concerns that have come up, help you choose an appropriate diet, or advise on some behaviour concerns that may have developed.

## Settling In

They will start to settle in after about 3 weeks. their personality may start to come out, they're getting into a routine, and are feeling more comfortable.

After about 3 months, they are finally feeling at ease in their new home. They will start to build trust and bond with your family. This is where the fun really starts! Once they know that you are their forever family, all your hard work and patience will be reward with their love for you.



Adopting an adult dog can be a very rewarding experience. We are so pleased to be a part of your new dog's health care team. We look forward to helping you keep your new pet in the best health. Feel free to contact us with any questions that might arise over the adjustment period.