

Bringing Mister Dog Home

So you've taken the plunge and adopted a dog of your own. Congratulations! But what do you do now? No doubt you're excited and looking forward to forging a lifelong friendship with your new buddy. But try to keep in mind the confusion he is feeling right now. Whatever his past history, coming home with you is a new experience. He is likely to be a little disoriented, wondering where he is and who all these new people are.

The key to helping your new dog make a successful adjustment to your home is being *prepared* and being *patient*. It can take anywhere from two days to two months for you and your pet to adjust to each other.

The following tips can help ensure a smooth transition:

1. **Outfit** your dog with a collar and ID tag that includes your name, address, and telephone number. No matter how careful you are, there's a chance your companion may become lost—an ID tag greatly increases the chance that your pet will be returned home safely. Ask Dogstar about our custom tags!
2. **Follow** local laws for licensing your dog and vaccinating him for rabies. For Multnomah County, please visit: www.co.multnomah.or.us/dbcs/pets/onlineLicensing.shtml
3. **Follow** this simple rule—*off* property, *on* leash. Even a dog with a valid license, rabies tag, and ID tag should not be allowed to roam outside of your home or fenced yard. It is best for you, your community, and your dog to keep your pet under control at all times.
4. **Give** your dog proper shelter. A fenced yard with a doghouse is a bonus, especially for large and active dogs; however, dogs should never be left outside alone or for extended periods of time. Dogs need and crave companionship and should spend most of their time inside with their family.
5. **Take** your dog to the veterinarian for regular check-ups. If you already have dogs or cats at home, make sure they are up-to-date on their shots and in good general health before introducing your new dog. Dogstar works with Dr. Laura Chang, she makes house calls & is our personal vet. She can be reached at: 503.757.6124, www.vettopet.net.
6. **Give** your pooch a nutritionally balanced diet, including constant access to fresh water. Ask Dogstar staff for advice on what and how often to feed your pet. We have a large selection of high quality food & treats.
7. **Enroll** your dog in a training class. Dogs need order. Remember, they are pack animals, so make yourself the "pack leader." Let your pet know from the start who is the boss. When you catch him doing something he shouldn't, don't lose your cool. Stay calm, and let him know immediately, in a loud and disapproving voice, that he has misbehaved. Reward him with praise when he does well, too! Positive training will allow you to control your companion's behavior safely and humanely, and the experience offers a terrific opportunity to enhance the bond you share with your dog. Check out our favorite trainers: Behave Canine Solutions, 503.488.5555, www.behavetraining.com. You receive a discount with your adoption!
8. **Give** your dog enough exercise to keep him physically fit (but not exhausted). Most dog owners find that playing with their canine companion, along with walking him twice a day, provides sufficient exercise. If you have questions about the level of exercise appropriate for your dog, consult your veterinarian. If your dog isn't getting the exercise they need, drop them off at Dogstar for a play date! Your first half day is free!
9. **Be loyal** to and patient with your faithful companion. Make sure the expectations you have of your dog are reasonable and remember that the vast majority of behavior problems can be solved. If you are struggling with your pet's behavior, contact Dogstar and review our resources link on our website.
10. **Prepare** the things your dog will need in advance. You'll need a collar and leash, food and water bowls, food, and, of course, some toys. And don't forget to order an

identification tag right away. Dogstar would like to help outfit you and will give you a generous coupon with your adoption!

11. **House Rules** Work out your dog-care regimen in advance among the human members of your household. Who will walk the dog first thing in the morning? Who will feed him at night? Will Fido be allowed on the couch, or won't he? Where will he rest at night? Are there any rooms in the house that are off-limits?
12. **Housetraining** Assume your new dog is not housetrained, and work from there. Read over the housetraining information given to you at the time of adoption and check out our housetraining tips. Be consistent, and maintain a routine. A little extra effort on your part to come home straight from work each day will pay off in easier, faster housetraining.
13. **Crating** A crate may look to you like the canine equivalent of a jail cell, but to your dog, who instinctively likes to den, it's a room of his own. It makes housetraining and obedience-training easier and saves your dog from the headache of being yelled at unnecessarily for problem behavior. Of course, you won't want to crate your dog all day or all night, or he *will* consider it a jail cell. Just a few, regular hours a day (but no more than four hours at a time) should be sufficient. The crate should not contain wire where his collar or paws can get caught, and should be roomy enough to allow your dog to stand up, turn around, and sit comfortably in normal posture. *If you still can't face the idea of a crate, at the very least consider some sort of confinement to a dog-proofed part of your home. A portion of the kitchen or family room can serve the purpose very well. (A baby gate works perfectly.)
14. **A Friend for Life** Finally *be reasonable in your expectations*. Life with you is a different experience for your new companion, so give him time to adjust. You'll soon find out that you've made a friend for life. No one will ever greet you with as much enthusiasm or provide you with as much unqualified love and loyalty as your dog will. Be patient, and you will be amply rewarded.

Your dog gives you a lifetime of unconditional love, loyalty, and friendship. In return, she counts on you to provide her with food, water, safe shelter, regular veterinary care, exercise, companionship, and more. Take care of these essentials, and you'll be guaranteed to develop a rewarding relationship with your canine companion.

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