

Congratulations on adopting your new dog! There are few things greater than the joy of saving an animal's life, and we know you recognize that adopting a dog is a serious commitment. To help your dog succeed in their new home, we recommend giving your pet time to decompress; life has been very stressful for your new pet prior to moving in with you. Moving into a new home can also be very stressful, therefore we recommend allowing a two week adjustment period.

We hope that you will be able to provide your dog a safe and predictable environment as they begin a new journey in life. While we understand that you may want to take your new dog on adventures and to introduce them to other people and their animals, please remember that it can be confusing and stressful during the first few months for your new pet. By offering a controlled environment and limiting exposure to outside stressors, you will allow your new dog the time needed to adjust to their new life in a slow, but most importantly, safe way. By restricting your new dog's interactions to immediate family, they will have an opportunity to really learn about their new home, the relationships that exist within it, and where they fit in. In time, your new dog will begin to look to you for guidance: this means you will have a dog that is less nervous and more confident!

### **Best Practices:**

The following are our suggestions on how to implement a two-week acclimation period so that your dog has a smooth transition and the best chance of succeeding in their new home:

Have a crate set up in a room by itself (if possible) so that when it is time to put your dog in the crate, you are ready. The crate is your dog's safe place to sleep and decompress.

Making the crate a positive experience must begin on the first day.

During the acclimation period, if your dog is not in a crate, they should have a leash on (including when inside). This is a great way to guide your dog while you are working on

basic training and behavior in their new home. You can either hold the leash or have the leash drag on the ground so that you can quickly pick it up if necessary. If you keep your dog on a leash for the two-week acclimation period, you can teach the rules of their new home (no jumping on guests or counters, for example).

When your dog is out of the crate, their time should be spent on exercising, training, and relaxing with you - all essential parts of building your bond. You can teach your dog to sit, stay, lie down, and to come when called. Don't forget- after each training session, give your dog some time to rest so he can process all the exciting new things they have learned.

Be sure to praise your dog when displaying positive behaviors and showing comprehension of learning house rules such as: no jumping when someone approaches. Getting praise for good behavior will make your dog want to repeat the good behavior! Another way to reinforce good behavior and begin building your bond is to let your dog come to you instead of forcing affection when they may not be ready.

If you have another dog, and are able to separate them, please do not introduce them until the two-week acclimation is over. This gives both dogs time to get used to new sounds and smells in the home (making the introduction easier) and also is a good practice for quarantining your new dog to ensure he is healthy before introducing him to your other dog(s).

Think of the two-week acclimation period as a way to create a new beginning for your dog. If done properly, it will allow your pet time to get accustomed to their new family and home at their own pace. It will also establish you as the leader and will lower your pet's stress and anxiety. It is one of the best things you can do for your new dog's current and future well-being. When you are tempted to give in, remember that the acclimation period is temporary, but the results will be a long lasting positive relationship between you and your new dog!