



## RSPCA School for Dogs Information Sheet

# Bringing Home your Shelter Dog

Congratulations on adopting your new family member. We hope you have many happy years and fond memories with your new pet.

To help you get started on the right foot and to set your dog up for success, please have a read through these useful tips.

**PLEASE REMEMBER MOST PUPPIES AND EVEN SOME ADULT DOGS WILL TAKE LONGER TO ADJUST SO BE PATIENT.**

1. As a shelter environment can be stressful for many dogs, it is advisable to take your new dog straight home and allow plenty of calm settling in time. Avoid dog parks and other novel environments at this stage.
2. Don't allow your dog free run of the entire house right away, or else your new friend may learn all sorts of bad habits. First take the time to teach him good habits.
3. When arriving home, show your dog to his/her appropriate toilet area right away
4. Take your dog to the designated toilet area once an hour, every hour, on leash (except overnight). Allow supervised free time only after he relieves himself in the appropriate area. If your dog does not go to the bathroom on one of these trips, confine him to his "doggie den" OR keep him supervised, until the next scheduled toilet break.
5. Confine your dog to a "doggie den" whenever you are physically (or mentally!) absent. Such as when you are at work, paying bills, making dinner, sleeping, etc.
6. Crate training is highly recommended! Refer to our info sheets on crate training to see benefits.
7. Throw away your dog's food bowl! Instead, feed your dog out of a Kong or other chew toy stuffed with kibble and snacks throughout the day, especially when she is in her "doggie den" or when you are busy. Also use part of your dog's daily ration while on walks, during training and when meeting new people.
8. Provide plenty of appropriate chew toys to keep your dog busy and prevent chewing "casualties" in your home and yard. Redirect any chewing "mistakes" by directing your dog to an acceptable alternative. This will also help establish an appropriate chewing habit for the lifetime of your dog.
9. Introduce your dog to new people and other pets gradually so as not to overwhelm him. Use kibble and treats to help form a positive association with new people. Be sure he has access to his "den" in case he needs a break from all the activity.
10. Enrol in our Foundation training class right away! This will help you to understand how to better communicate with your dog in a way she will understand.

Don't take your dog off-leash in public until you have successfully completed an obedience class and have built a strong positive relationship with him.

Remember, all dogs deserve a second chance at a first class life.



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### **References and Further Reading:**

Gorman, K (2002) Open Paws Guide to the First Two Weeks With Your New Dog, Dog Star Daily (used with permission)

Miller, Pat (2010) Do Over Dogs, Dogwise Publishing, Washington

McConnell Patricia B, London Karen B (2011) Love Has No Age Limit, Welcoming an Adopted Dog into Your Home, McConnell Publishing, Ltd

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