



Adoption Guide for Rescue Dogs

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Congratulations on the addition of your new dog to your family! Adding a dog to your household is truly a time of joy as you watch your new dog relax as he gets used to his new life. It can also be a stressful time as you get to know one another, and both get used to a new daily routine. All of us at Our Companions are here for you as you have questions or concerns. We also LOVE to hear the good stories! Never hesitate to contact us throughout the life of your dog and beyond.

10 STEPS TO DOGGIE HAPPINESS

1. Expect your dog to act like a dog and exhibit typical dog behavior. He is not being “bad” he is just being a dog. Dogs do not retaliate on their owners; behaviors that you interpret as serving to “get back at you” are simply rooted in the stress that the dog is feeling at the time. Supply your dog with acceptable outlets for his doggie behavior, and with anxiety reducing products rather than punishing him. Most importantly, reward him for all of the good things that he does!
2. No free lunch. Dogs are happiest when they’re exercising their skills. Have your dog work for his food. For example, stuff the food inside chew toys, hide it in the house for him to find, toss it on the kitchen floor so he has to run around and pick it up, and use the food during training for sits, downs, stays and recalls.
3. Take the leash off only in the safety of a fenced in yard. Dogs that spend most of their time on a leash or chained in a yard are at a high risk of developing behavior problems. Ask us about lower cost fencing options if your yard isn’t fenced.
4. If appropriate, make sure that your dog has plenty of opportunities to play with other dogs. Check out your local Doggie Daycare for playgroups and classes that offer socialization.
5. **NEVER** hit or strike your dog. Use reward-based training instead.
6. Play with your dog through such games as fetch, hide and go seek, agility and trick training.
7. Allow your dog to live and sleep inside of the house like the rest of the family. Provide a variety of social interactions every day. Remember dogs are social animals, too! There is no such thing as an “outside dog.”
8. If you have a puppy, handle him endlessly, and make it a pleasant experience so he’ll associate being handled with good feelings.
9. Spay or neuter your dog. He will be friendlier, healthier, and more focused on hanging out with the family than marking his territory, mating roaming, or reproducing.
10. **Enroll in a positive reinforcement, reward-based training course.** Formal training is fun for your dog, teaches him how to behave, and will encourage him to bond with you. All dogs adopted through Our Companions come with an opportunity to attend an 8 week reduced cost Family Companion 1 obedience training course. Please take advantage of this while you are getting to know your new friend. An informational handout is included in your adoption folder.

BRINGING YOUR NEW DOG HOME

It's important to give your new dog structure and guidance. Dogs feel better when they have a leader. It's also important to let them settle into their new home without being fussed over. In the beginning, just take care of their basic needs while letting the dog become acquainted with their new surroundings.

- Give your new dog a schedule so he learns when feeding, play, exercise and rest time will be.
- Let your dog know what behaviors please you (give a treat & lots of praise for being good).
- Teach your dog to "sit" and ask him to sit before he gets anything — food, attention, play, going outside. This simple practice teaches your new dog to look to you for guidance.
- Rehomed dogs often bond rapidly, closely, and deeply with their new owners. This can cause a problem when you have to leave him alone or have guests over. You must teach your new dog that you are not going to abandon him/her when you leave the house, and that visitors are a good thing.
 - Do not make a big deal out of your departures and arrivals. Just come and go without saying anything to the dog.
 - Begin to leave the dog the second day you are together. Just go in and out of the house at random times for a few seconds and then a few minutes.
 - Ignore your dog completely for a few minutes before you leave, and then head outdoors immediately after you come home.
 - Leave your dog with a few toys to keep him busy for a while after you leave. Stuffed Kong toys work really well at giving your dog something to do while you are gone. Get him used to licking them while you are home and then give him one just before you leave. Once he is hooked on them, you can freeze them so that they take longer to empty.
 - When you leave, manage your dog i.e. put him in a crate or baby gated room so the dog doesn't learn to get into things and destroy household items. Practice this while you are home so that the dog doesn't panic when he is separated from you.

It is likely that the dog may have a few accidents in the house the first few days, even if he is housebroken.

- Please note: If your dog is not completely housebroken, begin housebreaking immediately (see the [Housebreaking](#) section of this guide). If your dog has a few accidents, it does not mean he is not housebroken. Nerves and excitement can cause uncharacteristic accidents. Once he begins to familiarize himself with the routine in your home, and he learns what you deem acceptable behavior, he will relax and settle in.
- A transition tip: For the first few days, leave a leash attached to the dog's buckle collar or harness while indoors with you, so you can stop any unwanted behavior immediately. You will be able to easily redirect him if he starts doing something you don't want -- such as lifting his leg, chewing on a chair leg, or showing any aggressive signs towards you, your children, or other pets (in case of the latter, contact us at Our Companions immediately for advice on how to deal with the issue!). A lightweight cotton or nylon leash works well for this. If you wish, you can cut the handle off of the leash to prevent it from getting snagged on things around the house.
 - **Warning:** Don't leave the leash attached when you're not there; the leash could get caught on something, or be chewed on. Never leave a choke collar on a dog when indoors or out in the yard. There is a high risk of strangulation with these collars. Contact us at Our Companions for other safer alternatives to using choke chains such as harnesses and martingale collars.

Coming Home

- When you bring your new dog home, be prepared to leash-walk outside at least 10-15 minutes or until he relieves himself. Let him sniff and get acquainted with the smells of the turf. Pick a special place and encourage him to potty in that area. Always praise him warmly when he does.
- Next, take him into the house and show him around. Remember that the excitement of a new family and home may cause him to have to relieve himself more often. Any dog, especially a male who was recently neutered, will be likely to mark his new territory especially if other dogs have lived there.
- Keep him on the leash when first bringing him inside. If he starts to lift his leg, make a noise to startle him and take him outside immediately. Then praise him for eliminating outside.
- Take him to his crate (see the [Crate Training](#) section of this guide). Encourage him to go in and sniff around; give him small treats to reward him for entering and staying in the crate. (Keep soft bedding and a few safe chew toys in the crate; rotate the toys for variety.)
- Then, take him outside to potty again and take him to the same spot in the yard.
- Your dog may be excited and anxious about his new home. This stress might be expressed through panting and pacing; housebreaking accidents; excessive chewing; and/or gastric upset in the form of vomiting, diarrhea or loose stools.
- Keep watch to see if your new dog is afraid of common household items such as flashlights, slippery floors, appliances that are noisy such as the vacuum, or stairways. Contact us if you need advice on how to help your dog conquer his fear of such items.
- Tell every member of your family and guests in your home to **resist the temptation to over-handle a new dog**. Give him a few days to get settled in.

HOUSE BREAKING TIPS

The most effective way to housebreak a dog is to **limit the area in the house that the dog can roam on his own**. Keep the dog in your line of vision. Most, if not all, accidents can be prevented. When trying to limit the dog's ability to wander in the house, **crate training** is best (please see the [Crate Training](#) section of this guide). Put the dog in the crate at night to sleep, when you cannot watch the dog, or when he is left alone. In the beginning, feed your new dog in the crate, and put him in there when you are having your family meals to prevent begging. The crate should be large enough for the dog to stand up, turn around and sleep comfortably. The first step in housebreaking is to teach the dog to keep his "den" clean. The dog will begin to see the crate as his den.

You can also **use baby gates** to limit the dog's access to certain rooms. You will have to determine how long your dog can hold it during the day. Some dogs need to go out every hour in the beginning; others are fine if left all day. Dog walkers and Doggie Daycare are great options to use while your dog is settling into your home.

It is generally okay to confine an adult dog overnight because his metabolism slows down and most dogs are able to hold it all night. It is a good idea to crate the dog in your bedroom. This gives the dog 6-9 additional hours with you. Dogs crated in the bedroom where you are sleeping tend to be calmer, less needy, and less demanding.

If you adopt an older dog expect a transition period. This period lasts about a few weeks and during this time the dog's territory should be limited as if he/she was a puppy. This transition affects housebreaking. Rehoming a pet is quite stressful and may cause a dog to have accidents. This includes any pets you may already have at home—they will also feel the stress of your new addition to the family. Be aware of any behavior changes in all of the pets in your home.

The secret to housebreaking is to establish a schedule and help the dog adjust to it.

Bring the dog outside when he is most likely to have housebreaking accidents. For example, let the dog out:

- Upon waking up
- Prior to and after confinement
- After playing
- After the arrival of someone
- After walks, and before going inside if your dog only potties in a particular spot in your yard.
- Before and after car rides
- After accidents
- If the dog is restless, trying to leave room, whiny, etc
- After eating and drinking
 - Young pups under 3 months within 15 minutes
 - 3 to 6 months-within 30 minutes
 - Over 6 months within 40 to 60 minutes

If you catch the dog starting to mess in the house, interrupt him by making a noise (clapping your hands) and take the dog outside. Do not stop to ask him/her if they did it or stick their nose in it. Punishing or yelling at a dog is ineffective. Do not correct the dog after the fact for it may cause the dog to fear you or at the very least create stress and confusion. When an accident occurs, think about better managing the environment so that the dog is not in a position where he can repeat that mistake.

When accidents occur, it is important to neutralize the odor with an enzyme type cleaner. Nature's Miracle is highly effective and sold in pet stores. Do not clean pet messes with ammonia because it has the same properties as urine.

Dogs should have a bowel movement after every meal. Make sure there is a calm environment where he/she can go. Some dogs are excitable and tense up when they see other dogs or people. Take him to an area where he has little visual distractions. You can train a dog to go to the bathroom in a certain spot in the yard, and to eliminate on cue. By bringing your dog to the appropriate spot and repeating the word you have chosen for elimination, the dog will learn to associate the word with the action. By following these steps, you and your dog will have a clean and happy environment.

COMMON DOG BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

EXERCISE NEEDS: Dogs need attention and exercise. Some dogs require more exercise than others. This is usually age and breed dependant, but it will vary by the individual also. When dogs don't receive adequate exercise they often will act out in the home, become destructive, and are very hard to live with. In general, dogs should receive 1 to 1 ½ hours of exercise a day, preferably off leash, where they can get their heart rate up. This can be done in a fenced in yard, on a long line in an unfenced area, by playing fetch or another activity that provides them with enough exercise. A daily on-leash walk may not be enough exercise for a young or adolescent dog. Dog walkers (joggers) and Doggie Daycare can be considered for social dogs as a way to meet their social and exercise needs when their owners work.

CHEWING, JUMPING & BARKING: Many "bad habits" (chewing, mouthing, digging, jumping, and barking) are natural behaviors for a dog. Keep the activity at an appropriate level while you are playing so that the dog doesn't get too excited. If your dog is doing something you don't want him to do, give him an opportunity to do something else that you can reward.

CHEWING IS NORMAL. Young dogs need to chew while they are teething. Adult dogs enjoy chewing—it is often a calming activity for a dog. Make sure that your dog has a variety of safe chew toys that don't share similarities to your shoes or fringed rugs. Some things to try are tennis and rubber balls, fleece toys, dental chew bones and chew strips. If you find that your dog destroys toys (even the indestructible ones!), contact us for a list of tough toys to try.

- Give your dog **plenty of exercise** and interaction to prevent boredom and loneliness.
- Before removing a forbidden object from your puppy's mouth have an acceptable item to replace it with. With an adult dog, offer a trade for toys or treats. Teach a "Drop" or "Give" with lots of praise and happy voice so that your dog is eager to play the Trade Me game with you. If you see signs of your dog guarding their resources, please contact us immediately.
- Until you're sure you can trust your dog with free run of the house, confine him in a safe place, such as a crate or baby-gated kitchen, whenever you cannot supervise him. Leave him with safe toys and food filled Kongs to chew on in your absence.
- Remove trash cans or secure trash can lids in the area in which your pet is unattended.
- Do not excite your dog to the point that he jumps up, bites, or barks. Games such as tug and fetch need to have rules including that you (and not the dog) decide when the game starts and when the game ends.
- Never leave children unsupervised with your dog so that you can be sure that the interactions between your children and your new dog are safe and appropriate.

JUMPING—dogs want to jump up on us in order to have a face to face greeting or to get our attention. The best cure for jumping is to walk away and not touch the dog when he jumps on you. The only time you can give your new dog attention is when all four paws are on the floor. If the dog gets no reward for jumping (even being pushed away is a reward if you are a dog), then the dog is less likely to want to repeat the behavior. At the same time, teach your dog an alternate behavior such as sitting. A dog cannot jump and sit at the same time. If this is coupled with ample exercise, you should see a decrease in the jumping. If you do not see a decrease in the jumping, feel free to contact us and we will help you work on the issue. Some dogs have practiced jumping in their previous homes, and it has become a habit. Like any habit, it can take time to learn new ways.

BARKING—Dogs bark for a variety of reasons. It is important to know why your dog is barking in order to stop it. One of the leading causes for barking in a recently rehomed dog is when they are left alone. (See the crate training section for help in training your dog to lick a Kong toy in your absence). Dogs also bark when they are excited, see or hear activity around your home, and when they want something. Contact us if you need help working on your barking problem before you get complaints from your neighbors and a visit from the Animal Control Officer. We are happy to help!

SUPERVISE YOUR DOG! Never leave a dog outside unattended, or overnight. Not only is this practice dangerous to the dog and opens you up to legal liability, but it also can lead to a poorly adjusted, undersocialized dog. Also, if you leave your dog outside alone, don't be surprised if he barks, digs holes or finds a way under, over, or through the fence. Dogs are pack animals and get lonely, bored and in trouble when alone.

CHANGING A DOG'S NAME--It is perfectly okay to change your dog's name after adoption. A dog usually learns his new name quickly. Some people believe that changing the dog's name will help the dog build a deeper bond with his new family, and leave the past behind. We do many training exercises that use the dog's name. By doing them it will help the dog to learn its new name, or to gain new value to the

original name. Ask us about our Attention Exercises, and how to use these to your advantage while changing your dog's name.

You can change your dog's bad behaviors with humane, positive reward-based training methods. And always remember: it is harder to break your dog of bad habits than it is to train him the right way the first time.

CRATE TRAINING ADULT DOGS AND PUPPIES: Crate Training 101

This method of Crate Training is for dogs who were not previously crate trained or who are suspicious or frightened of the crate.

Step 1: Set up the crate and make it a cozy place for the dog to hang out in. Start by tossing treats in the crate and have the dog walk in and out of the crate—DO NOT CLOSE THE CRATE DOOR!!!

Step 2: Hook your dog on Kong toys:

In order to hook the dog on the Kong toys, stuff them with something that the dog can't resist, and make it easy for the dog to get the food out of the Kong. Low fat Liverwurst, solid pack canned dog food, cream cheese, peanut butter, and cheese whiz etc are good things to try. As the dog gets hooked on getting the food out of the Kong, you can get more creative and start stuffing them with things that are harder to get out such as biscuits or bully sticks. You can also freeze the Kongs before I give them to the dogs. This makes the dog work harder at getting the food out, and gives you more time to do training. Do this phase separately from the crate training; you want them to get hooked on the Kong without them being associated with the crate.

Step 3: When crate training we recommend the large size Dental Kongs. They can be purchased from www.chewy.com, item:

<https://www.chewy.com/kong-classic-dental-dog-toy-large/dp/44155>

These can be tied inside the crate to entice and encourage your dog to work on them while he is in the crate. A rawhide bone with a knot on the end would also work well for this.

Tie the Kong (or bone) along the floor of the crate by making a simple loop over one end with a piece of rope (a kennel lead works well for this). Make it as long or short as needed to make your dog comfortable lying in front of or in the crate—which ever your dog needs. Shorten the rope gradually so that the dog is forced to be in the crate in order to lick the Kong. The goal is to mold your dog into lying down and licking the Kong when he or she is put in the crate. Once again, DON'T CLOSE THE CRATE DOOR YET!!!

Step 4: Once the dog is comfortable settling down and licking the Kong until it is empty, then you can start swinging the door closed and immediately opening it back up again. Do this over time so that the dog doesn't even notice that the door is closed. You will eventually start leaving the door closed for longer periods, but always open the door back up before the dog has finished the Kong. You can remove the rope at this point.

Step 5: At this point the only time the dog gets a Kong should be when he is put in the crate. You can practice going in the crate several times a day by tossing in a stuffed Kong and closing the crate door. Opening the door can be delayed slightly longer and longer after the Kong is finished--at first for only a

matter of seconds; later opened up only for a sleeping dog. NEVER OPEN UP THE DOOR IF THE DOG IS FUSSING. Panic is different, but if this program is followed, the dog should not be put in a situation where he would panic. If you see the dog start to fuss, you can very matter of fact remind him that he needs to lie down and be quiet. During this time, you can feed your dog in the crate; crate him during your own mealtimes and when either of you needs quiet time.

For a dog with separation anxiety, you may begin to wander around in the house and very briefly, go in and out of sight. Gradually, you can go farther and begin to go in and out of doors. Be sure to go only as fast (or slow) as the dog can handle without outwardly stressing. At this point, you can walk up to a dog that is behaving well in its crate and drop in some treats, rewarding him for good behavior. Pretty soon he will learn that quiet behavior brings good things, and fussing gets him nowhere!!!

The last step in the crate training process is to leave the house while your dog is happily licking his Kong, and listen or use a video camera to make sure he remains calm and quiet in the crate. If he doesn't, then it's time to back up a little, and go back to reinforcing good behavior by rewarding him for remaining quiet in his crate while you are at home.

INTRODUCING YOUR NEW DOG TO VISITORS

It is often a very confusing time for your new dog when visitors come to your home. He may be afraid of them, or jump up in excitement on your guests. A helpful way to introduce your dog to visitors is to go outside and have him greet visitors in your yard or driveway. You can also put the dog away in his safe place, such as a crate or room that they are comfortable in, and have them greet the visitor once they are settled in your home and the dog has relaxed. By keeping introductions very calm, you will help your dog to relax when people come over. Since rehomed dogs bond so deeply and quickly it's best if your new dog meets your close friends and relatives as soon as possible after adoption.

Some Helpful Hints:

- Have the visitor ignore the dog at first, and then wait until the dog approaches and sniffs the visitor. Do not have the visitor pay attention or reach for the dog until the dog approaches them first and is relaxed and well mannered.
- Have the visitor drop treats on the floor for the dog to eat from a distance. Keep the dog under your supervision and use the dragging leash as needed to keep the dog in control. Don't leave your new dog unattended with a visitor until they are well acquainted, as the dog may still become scared while he adjusts to having visitors moving throughout your home.
- When the visitor needs to get up and move throughout your home, call your dog to you so there is distance between the dog and the visitor. Fearful dogs often don't realize that the person is the same person when they change from a sitting to a standing position and vice-versa.
- While the visitor is at your home practice keeping your dog's attention on you (especially if there are children visiting), and reward them for good behavior. Doorways and hallways are very stressful areas for dogs; they often feel crowded and stressed, so avoid having the dog meet your visitors there.

INTRODUCING YOUR NEW DOG TO CHILDREN

The child should be standing still or sitting when the dog is first introduced. Let the dog approach the child instead of the child approaching the dog.

- In the beginning, keep all interactions between your dog and child closely supervised, calm and quiet. Loud/high pitch voices and quick movements frighten dogs.

- Let the dog smell the child and become comfortable with them while they are sitting or standing still. Do not have the child interact with the dog during this step.
- Once the dog is feeling comfortable with the child, he or she can give the dog a small treat with their hand held flat.
- As long as the dog is comfortable with this, the child can attempt to pet the dog underneath the chin or on the side of the neck. Do not let the child pet the dog on the top of his head. Most dogs find this to be unpleasant and will back away, or sniff the child's hand. The child may then jump back or withdraw their hand quickly and frighten the dog.
- Do not let the child hug or kiss the dog until the dog is relaxed and comfortable with the child. This can take several weeks to months or never depending on the dog.
- Never allow the child to approach a dog while the dog is lying down or while on a dog bed. The dog's bed should be considered to be his special quiet place, and should not be intruded upon. This also applies to the dog's crate; your dog should be left alone when he's in his crate, and fingers should never be stuck inside the crate.
- Do not allow children to follow after a dog that is moving away from them; allow the dog to choose a quiet spot away from them, and help children understand that the dog needs to have some quiet time and a place where he won't be disturbed.
- **DO NOT leave the dog and child unsupervised!**
- **Most importantly, help children understand that animals have their own needs and feelings, and teach them how to behave appropriately around all family pets.**

INTRODUCING A NEW DOG TO A RESIDENT DOG

Introduce the dogs in a neutral location (at a park, etc). If you have more than one resident dog, introduce them one at a time, and remove each before bringing in the next dog. The best first step in introducing them is to go for a walk and let them get used to each other while sharing the smells of the environment.

- When the dogs greet and sniff each other, talk to them in low and even tone of voice.
- Introduce the dogs only for brief amounts of time, always end on a good note.
- If one dog acts submissively to the other (rolls over and shows the other dog their belly), walk away and have the dog get up and walk away with you.
- Try to keep the leashes loose at all times. A tight leash transmits your anxiety about the situation to the dogs and increases their tension.
- Watch for any body postures that tell you that the dogs are getting tense (freezing baring teeth, growling, stiff-legged gait, prolonged stare). If you see these behaviors, interrupt them by calling the dogs away from each other and have them do something else.
- Do not use food while introducing the dogs. Some dogs are dog/dog resource guarders and will become aggressive toward the other dog in the presence of food or high value bones or toys. In your home, put all bones and toys away, and at first, only offer them in controlled settings when you can manage each dog's behavior.
- Watch for dominant body postures (one dog putting his chin or neck on the shoulders of the other or placing a front foot over the others shoulders). If you see these behaviors, interrupt

them by calling the dogs away from each other and have them do something else.

- DO NOT hold one dog while the other is loose if the dog you are holding is straining to get loose—remove them from the situation instead. Never let two dogs greet if one dog is straining at the leash and is pulling to get to the other dog. Walk around until the dogs are calm and then let them sniff.
- Until the dogs are comfortable with each other do not let them together in a small space like a car or hallway, and do not leave them alone unsupervised.
- Allow a natural dominance hierarchy to develop. Whenever the dogs approach each other, speak in a happy encouraging voice. Practice group obedience exercises with both dogs. Introduce treats, toys and high value chew toys to your home slowly, making sure that neither dog is a resource guarder.
- Go slowly, if they don't do well at first, separate them except during managed interactions. Make sure all interactions are positive using a happy voice and treats.

INTRODUCING A NEW DOG TO A RESIDENT CAT

- When you bring your new dog home have a safe place for your cat available where the dog cannot enter using baby gates. Let your cat investigate this newcomer at her own pace from this room. She will most likely be curious take a quick peek and then back off and hide. Eventually she will become brave enough to go up to the baby gate for a closer look. When she does, praise her and give her a treat for her boldness. Keep the baby gate in place until the cat is comfortably coming out of the room and moving about the house and approaching the dog to investigate. Keep a leash on the dog on a leash to prevent him from rushing your cat.
- Next you will set up some controlled meetings. Put the dog on lead and walk him into the room where the cat is sitting. Walk him around the room on a loose lead (a tight lead will transmit your anxiety about the situation to the dog). Use food to ensure the leash remains loose.
- Do not allow the dog to act inappropriately toward the cat (barking, lunging, chasing). Reward calm behavior from the dog using praise and food treats. If he becomes too interested in the cat call his name and reward him when he looks at you. In addition, give an extra special treat to the cat (tuna works well) when the dog is in the room to help make a positive association in her mind about the presence of the dog.
- Expect a certain amount of hissing, swatting, and growling from your cat. Do not punish her for this or she will associate the dog with the punishment. Be patient; let her get used to the idea of sharing her home with the new dog.
- Repeat these controlled meetings several times a day until both animals remain calm and relaxed with each other. Don't let the dog and cat have free run of the house unless you are present or until you are sure they are fine together. This could take weeks to months. Don't expect too much too soon.

PET SAFETY

Even if your adopted dog is already spayed or neutered and is up to date on vaccinations, it is a good idea to take him to your vet for a get acquainted visit the sometime during the first week or two after his adoption. This will give your vet an opportunity to get to know your new pet in case any health issues arrive before their annual visit is due. It is also a life saving idea to know where the closest 24 hour Vet Clinic is. Keep their phone number handy so that you can quickly access it in an emergency. There is no time to waste in a true emergency, and it is imperative that you call ahead to let them know you are coming. Entering the number into your cell phone is the quickest way to make sure the number is accessible to you when needed. Also keep the number of a poison control center handy (such as the ASPCA Poison Control Center **(888) 426-4435**). A \$65 consultation fee may be applied to your credit card for using their services (Home Again microchip registered pets have this included free with the first year of membership).

- Never leave your pet unattended inside a car - especially in hot weather. Even with the windows open, a car can heat up like an oven in minutes. Hundreds of animals die in cars every year.
- Some plants are poisonous to your pet. Identify toxic plants and make them inaccessible. Be aware that some human foods are toxic to dogs. Even a small amount of dark chocolate can poison and kill your dog. The same goes for human medications like aspirin, unless prescribed by your vet. We have a guide on toxic plants and foods that can be used to pet proof your home.
- Make sure to choose appropriate chew toys for the size and strength of your dog. We can help to recommend suitable toys if your dog is a hard chewer or is fussy with toys.
- Do not transport your dog in the back of a pickup truck. Hundreds of dogs are killed or injured each year from falling out of trucks. When you transport your dog inside your car, secure them in a crate or use a pet seat belt in the back seat.
- When you let your dog outside in the yard, make sure the fence and gates are secure, and keep watch! Don't leave pets outside unattended. Be cautious when opening and closing doors so that your new dog doesn't escape—many dogs will attempt to search for their previous owner when they are newly rehomed. Always walk your dog on a leash for his own safety, it's the law.
- NEVER chain or tie up a dog and leave them unsupervised. Chains and ropes can cause injuries, and a chained dog cannot protect himself from animals that stray into your yard. Chaining also creates frustration that leads to behavior problems like excessive barking.

The relationship between you and your canine companion has the potential to be one of the most loving and rewarding relationships in your life. Just remember the keys to good training: Patience, Consistency and Generous rewards. As you get to know one another, the effort that you put into training and understanding your dog will be returned to you again and again.

Thank you for adopting your new family member. Please contact us at Our Companions if you ever need further advice or assistance.