

Top 10 Tips for Success for Your New Puppy or Dog

1. Get ready! Dogs don't need much, but they do need: quality food, toys, collars and leashes. We recommend martingale, flat buckle or snap buckle collars and nylon/leather 6ft. leashes. We also *highly* recommend crating overnight to help your new dog adjust to a potty training routine. Lastly, even if you're fostering, it's important to use a nametag, in case your dog accidentally escapes at some point.
2. Read a book on house training and dog behavior. For puppies, we recommend Perfect Puppy in Seven Days by Dr. Sophia Yin. For adults, we recommend Love has No Age Limit: Welcoming an Adopted Dog into Your Home by Dr. Patricia McConnell and Dr. Karen B. London.
3. Consider hand feeding your dog at meal times. This is one of the many ways you can develop a special relationship with your dog and encourage the bonding process.
4. Dog-proof the house. Make sure that your dog is always supervised or in a safe, enclosed area. Provide a special area (crate or gated room) where your dog cannot hurt himself or damage anything. Remember, until your dog has a chance to learn your routine he needs close supervision.
5. Observe your dog's behavior and body language so you will be able to spot when she's relaxed, anxious, aroused - or when she wants to play!
6. Introduce your dog to other places, people, animals and situations slowly. Wait one-two weeks to invite friends and family over one at a time. Make sure no one - especially children - hug, kiss or pat the dog on the head.
7. Dogs like people who are predictable and trustworthy! Make sure everyone is on the same page - if you let your dog lay on the couch and your spouse does not, this will only confuse your dog.
8. Keep your cool! Don't punish when things go wrong - those reactions can accidentally make things worse. Reward behavior that you like, and ignore unwanted behaviors. Some unwanted behaviors may extinguish themselves if not reinforced. For example, if your dog jumps up on you, turn away ("Be a tree"), and be ready to reward her when she puts "four feet on the floor."
9. Adjusting to your home is only half the journey! After 2-3 months, find a trainer who uses force free training or go to class. An excellent way to communicate with your dog is through clicker training. Go to www.clickertraining.com to learn more about this technique.
10. Be patient with yourself and your dog. Remember, your dog's world has been turned upside down and it may take him a while to learn he is safe. With a little patience and effort, you can build a strong relationship that will be well worth the time. After all, you plan to have your dog for the rest of his life.