

First 3 days - DECOMPRESSION

Read the full article at www.RescueSMART.net and download support materials to help you during your new dog's first 3 days/3 weeks/3 months – and beyond - in your home.

Do:

- Allow your new dog *adequate time* – a minimum of 3 days - to decompress. This allows stress hormone levels in the blood to go down.
- Use *baby gates and/or a crate to create a safe and calm area* for your new dog where he can eat, drink and get plenty of rest.
- *Allow your current dog(s) and new dog visual access to each other through pens, gates, etc.* They may choose to sniff through these barriers. If all looks good, you can do slow introductions.
- Allow your dog to *take in the new smells, sounds, and sights from his area if he prefers*. He might need to watch you for a while before joining you.
- Have your dog *drag a light leash attached to her collar* so you can gently guide him where you want him to go rather than grabbing his collar or picking him up. This also helps if he gets startled and bolts into a tight space. *Very important for shy/fearful dogs.*
- Let your dog *smell everything; this is how he's getting information*. This helps him be less stressed.
- *Supervise your new dog in your house and yard*; a new place can inspire dogs to potty indoors or escape the yard.
- *Walk your new dog to the potty spot over and over again*. Reward with a treat on the spot when he finishes.
- *Offer food, like bits of chicken or string cheese, to start building a bond with your new dog*. If he looks comfortable taking it from your hand, great! If not, toss the food away from you.
- *Gently pet your new dog low on the chest or shoulder* (vs. reaching over head). If you stop and he asks for more, go ahead. If not, give him time and don't push it. He won't keep it a secret if he wants affection from you.
- *Supervise children* and don't allow them to physically overwhelm your new dog by hugging or putting their face close to the dog's face.
- *Encourage your new dog's appetite* by adding a little warm water and/or some canned dog food to dry kibble, and feed him in his area away from noisy children or other dogs.

Don't:

- *Introduce your new dog to a bunch of people and/or non-family animals* during the first few days. Let her get to know you a little bit first.
- *Overwhelm your new dog* with outings away from home.
- *Leave stuff laying around that your resident dog and/or new dog might find valuable enough to fight over*, like food, bones, bowls, toys.
- *Handle or pet your new dog if she doesn't appear to want it*; it may take some time for her to warm up.

- *Take it personally if you try and pet your new dog and she moves away.* Toss a small treat away from your body, and if she eats it and looks back at you, toss another (do this only in her area if other dogs are around).
- *Worry if your new dog doesn't feel like eating for a day or so;* give her access to water and keep an eye on her.
- *Bother your new dog while she's eating.*

First 3 weeks – BUILDING TRUST

Do:

- *Pay close attention to how your dog acts when you walk toward her when she has a toy or a bone/chew treat. If you see her stiffen, or she growls/snarls/bites, contact a certified dog trainer or behavior consultant. Visit the Training Library at www.CompliantK9.com and read about Resource Guarding in the Red Flags section of the library.*
- *Take your dog out in the neighborhood.* Carry treats with you to create a positive association with all the new sights and sounds.
- *Use positive training methods* with your dog and consult a trainer if you're having problems.
- *Work on cat introductions* – visit www.bestfriends.org and type "Introduce a Dog to a Cat" in the search box.
- *Play with your dog to see what she "likes"* (chasing a flirt pole or a ball, finding treats in the grass). Lots of dogs don't have experience with toys, so be patient and get creative.
- *Continue to manage interactions* between your resident dog and the new dog
- *Continue using confinement/crate* with your new dog when you're not home

Don't:

- *Push your dog to do anything she is obviously uncomfortable with;* this will undermine your trust-building efforts. Work with a certified trainer or behavior consultant to learn how to help your dog overcome fears.
- *Put your current dog and new dog together with high-value items* (bones, toys, food)

First 3 months – SETTLING IN

Do:

- *Have a trainer do a home visit* if you're having problems in the home environment
- *Join a training class* for manners or fun
- *Introduce your new dog to your friends' dogs* (if each of them are friendly)
- *Have your dog assessed at a professional dog daycare facility* for socialization if you're unsure how she is with other dogs.

Don't:

- *Introduce any other new pets* into the family until you have everything nailed down with your new dog.