



SETTLING IN YOUR NEW DOG

Bringing home a new dog is a very exciting prospect! However, it can be a little daunting for a new dog when moving into a new home environment with so many new and stimulating aspects. It's natural to be excited about having a new dog, however it is important to give your new dog time to settle in and adjust to all this new change. There are things we can do to help your new dog feel safe and comfortable and start to assist the settling in process.

1) Don't Pressure Them

The first few days are an important time for your new dog. It is important to give them space to wind down from the stress of being in shelter, and to start to build a trusting relationship with you. Allow your dog the choice to interact with you, or retreat to a space where they feel more comfortable if need be. Avoid having visitors while your dog is settling in.

2) Provide Safe Spaces

Provide a comfortable area that your dog is able to retreat to when they feel in need of some quiet time. This can be a wire dog crate that is in a low foot-traffic area of the home with a blanket draped over it for some extra privacy, or even just a soft bed in a quiet area. If using a crate, leave the crate door open so the dog has the freedom to come and go from this space. Provide some soft bedding inside and a couple toys to encourage use of this space. Make sure all household members know not to approach the dog in this space.

3) Be Consistent!

It is important that your structures and rules be established and consistent from day one as it is much harder to break a bad habit once it has started. For example, if you do not wish for your dog to be on a specific piece of furniture, it is important that you be consistent in redirecting that behavior and reinforcing appropriate alternative behaviors instead such as rewarding them for settling on their own bed. If there are rooms or areas you do not want your dog to have access to, baby gates/x-pens as barriers should be in place to ensure consistent restriction to these areas.

4) Go At Their Pace

Some dogs may take longer to feel comfortable in new spaces. If your dog is shyer, try hand feeding meals in order to start relationship-building. Make sure you are not pressuring the dog into interacting and if your dog wishes to retreat or move away or is showing signs of stress from this interaction, hand feeding may be still too big a step for them, and they may need more time to warm up.



5) Be Patient!

First impressions are long-lasting, when you first bring your dog home make sure the dog isn't forced into potentially scary or stressful situations. Instruct all household members to allow the dog to choose to interact, not to pet or handle the dog unless the dog is initiating the interaction, and know that your patience, in the beginning, will go a long way towards building long-lasting trust between you and your new dog.

If you find you are struggling to help your dog settle in using these tips you can always call our Help Line at 403-723-6019 or book a consultation via our website at

<https://www.calgaryhumane.ca/what-we-do/animal-training/private-consultations/>

Also, check out our 'Rule of Threes' handout.