



The 3 Day, 3 Week, 3 Month Rule When Welcoming a New Family Member

The 3-3-3 Rule is a general guideline used to help newly adopted dogs adjust to their new forever homes, every dog is unique and will adjust differently. Most dogs transition quickly. Some dogs come from different backgrounds and will need more time to adjust, give your dog space, and allow him to grow on his timeline. As you maintain a positive approach you will help your dog flourish in his new environment. This is a very stressful transition for these dogs. By introducing new things too early you can inadvertently create more stress and less bonding.



3 DAYS (CALM)

In the first 3 days, the new family member will show signs of feeling overwhelmed or fearful. They may be scared or unsure about what is going on. This newly adopted dog will not feel comfortable enough to express his natural behavior. The dog may have a reduction in eating or drinking, he may shut down and want to hide in a crate or under a table. He may also test his limits or cry when you, another family member, or another dog, make a sudden or unexpected movement towards him. You'll want to keep dogs restricted to one or two rooms. Without a lot of traffic, with the bed and toys they came with. On a leash take them to the same spot to eliminate each time. Let them come to you for affection.



3 WEEKS (ROUTINE)

After 3 weeks, the newly adopted dog, or puppy usually starts to settle in during this time, getting comfortable in his routine, figuring out his environment, and feeling more comfortable to show his personality. He is realizing that this is his new forever home and will begin to let his guard down. This is when you can start SLOWLY introducing training, moving at the dog's speed. This is when some new behavior issues will start to show themselves. SLOWLY introduce new areas of the house and local streets. You can start introducing new pets slowly and with positive reinforcement. Keep your dog's comfort in mind, even if progress looks slower than you expected, it's still progress.



3 MONTHS (STABILITY)

By the 3-month mark your new family member typically feels notably comfortable in his home, strengthening his trust and bond with his family, and is now completely set in his routine and day-to-day life. He is now thoroughly secure with his new family. This is NOT the finish line. SLOWLY introduce more areas that you would like to visit with your dog like quiet parks and rivers. Be sure to continue to observe your dog's body language to ensure your dog doesn't get too overwhelmed and remove them from the situation if they do.