



Decompress for Success!

Adopting a new dog can be stressful for both you and the dog. Use this guide for the first three weeks with your new dog. Once your dog is secure, you can slowly start introducing new things and changing his environment. If you follow these steps, you will build a lasting relationship and bond.

Routine:

Dogs crave predictability. Stick to the same time of day when feeding, walking, training, and leaving your home.

Privacy:

Dogs (like people), need time to themselves. Create a spot with a crate and mat. Ask or wait for your dog to leave their space, rather than invading theirs.

Train With Food:

Shift calories out of the food bowl and use in multiple short positive reinforcement training sessions. You can use their dry kibble or small training treats as a reward. Include reinforcing wanted behaviors.

Let Your Dog Initiate Contact:

Let your dog initiate contact with people. Never force an interaction. You can ask your dog if they would like to be pet by showing them your hand to smell, if your dog moves towards your hand they would like to be pet. If they move away, they prefer to be left alone. If your dog solicits attention, pet on the chest, not on top of the head.

Have Fun with Your Dog:

Playing, feeding, walking, training, and any positively interacting with your new dog builds a lasting bond. Take it easy the first month and get to know each other before widening the circle.

After all, you have a lifetime together!

Positive Socialization:

Limit interactions with new people, places, and things. Let your dog explore gradually in short sessions. Build positive associations with new things. Avoid dog parks they are too unpredictable.

Train At Home:

Start positive reinforcement training at home for a comfortable and distraction-free setting. This is the fastest, clearest way to establish communication.

Observe Your Dog:

When your dog is relaxed. What do their ears, mouth, tail position, and entire body look like? Cross reference their body language to the Canine Communications handout. Learn your dog's body language to know when yours is concerned and to identify triggers.

Leah Greetings:

Meeting other dogs can be stressful. Dogs don't always like each other. Even the friendliest dogs may not like others. Avoid greetings until you learn more about how your dog shows they are uncomfortable. Once you feel you understand your dog, only socialize with trusted dogs or dogs you know your dog gets along with. Break the greeting into small 3-second on-leash introductions to get a feel of what the dogs are thinking.