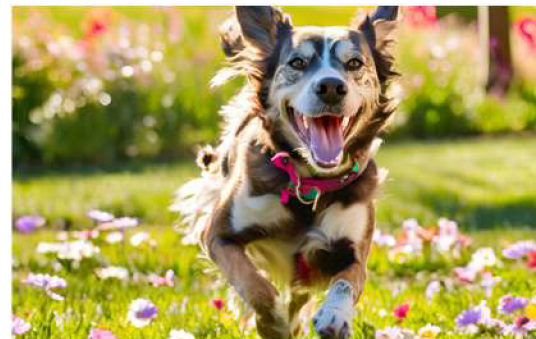
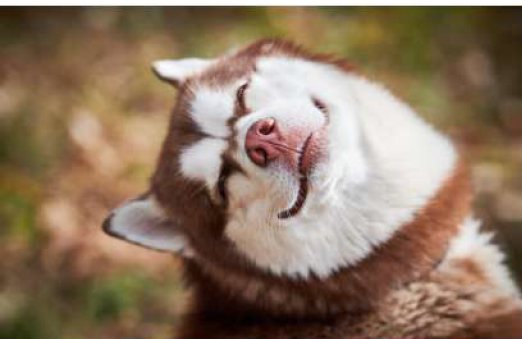


Welcome Home Guide



**GULF COAST
HUMANE
SOCIETY**
Completing Families Since 1945

Congratulations on the New Addition!



Bringing a new pet into your home is a joyous occasion, and we're thrilled that you've chosen to adopt from our organization. As you embark on this new adventure, remember that patience, understanding, and love are key to building a strong bond with your dog. Every dog is unique, and it may take some time for them to adjust to their new environment. Don't worry—this is normal, and with a bit of time and care, your dog will soon feel right at home.


Over the coming weeks, we'll be sending more detailed information to help smooth the transition to home. For now, here are some essentials to get you started.



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Packet Overview

- 
- 4 Transition to Home
 - 8 Shopping List for Your New Dog
 - 9 The "Rule of 3"
 - 11 House Training Tips
 - 13 How to Crate Train Your Dog or Puppy
 - 16 Socializing Puppies
 - 20 The Do's and Don'ts of Introducing Your Dog to Kids
 - 21 The Do's and Don'ts of Introducing Your Dog to Other Dogs and Cats
 - 24 Tips for Preventing Pet Loss
 - 25 Establish a Relationship with a Vet



Transition to Home

Bringing a new dog home can be both exciting and challenging. During the initial transition period, it's normal for your dog to exhibit a range of behaviors as they adjust to their new surroundings. Here are some common behaviors you might observe and tips to help smooth the transition.

Common Behaviors

- **Exploration and Marking:** Your dog will likely want to explore their new environment. Sniffing around and even marking territory is a natural way for them to familiarize themselves with new smells and spaces.
- **Anxiety and Fear:** Some dogs may exhibit signs of anxiety or fear, such as hiding, trembling, or excessive barking.
- **Lack of Appetite:** It's not uncommon for dogs to eat less or skip meals during the first few days. This should resolve as they become more comfortable.
- **House Training Accidents:** Even if your dog is house-trained, expect a few accidents. Stress and new surroundings can temporarily disrupt their routine.



Tips for a Smooth Transition



- **Create a Safe Space:** Set up a quiet, comfortable area where your dog can retreat and feel safe. Include their bed, toys, and water.
- **Establish a Routine:** Dogs thrive on routine. Establish a consistent schedule for feeding, walks, and bathroom breaks from day one.
- **Use Positive Reinforcement:** Reward your dog with treats, praise, and affection when they exhibit desirable behaviors. Never use training techniques that involve punishment.
- **Patience and Understanding:** Give your dog time to adjust at their own pace. Avoid overwhelming them with too much attention or new experiences in the first few days.
- **Gradual Introduction:** Introduce your dog to new areas of the house gradually and under supervision. This will help prevent accidents and give them time to acclimate to different spaces.
- **Monitor and Limit Alone Time:** Initially, try to minimize the amount of time your dog is left alone. Gradually increase alone time as they become more comfortable with their new environment.



Remember

The key to a successful transition is patience and positive reinforcement. By providing a stable, loving environment, you'll help your new dog feel secure and begin to build a strong bond that will last a lifetime.

Shopping List

For Your New Dog

Welcoming a new dog into your home requires preparation to ensure they have everything they need for a comfortable and happy life. Here's a list to get started:

- Food and Water Bowls:** Sturdy, non-slip bowls for food and water.
- Dog Food:** High-quality dog food appropriate for your dog's age, size, and dietary needs. Consult your vet for recommendations.
- Collar and ID Tags:** A comfortable, adjustable collar with an ID tag that includes your contact information.
- Leash:** A strong leash for walks and outings. Consider both a standard leash and a retractable leash for different situations.
- Crate:** A crate that is the right size for your dog, providing a safe and secure space.
- Bedding:** A comfortable bed or crate mat for your dog to sleep on.
- Toys:** A variety of toys to keep your dog entertained and mentally stimulated. Include chew toys, interactive toys, and plush toys.
- Treats:** For rewarding good behavior and forming positive associations.
- Brush and Comb:** Grooming tools suitable for your dog's coat type to keep their fur healthy and clean.
- Nail Clippers:** Dog-specific nail clippers or a nail grinder to keep their nails trimmed.
- Shampoo and Conditioner:** Dog-friendly shampoo and conditioner for bath time.
- Toothbrush and Toothpaste:** Canine toothbrush and toothpaste to maintain oral health.

The “Rule of 3”

What to Expect

The "Rule of 3" is a helpful guideline for understanding the key milestones your new dog may reach at different stages of their adjustment period. It provides a general timeline for what to expect as your dog acclimates to their new home and family.

3 Days: Initial Adjustment

In the first three days, your dog is likely to feel overwhelmed. They might be anxious, scared, or unsure about their new environment. It's common for them to be cautious, shy, or even withdrawn.

3 Weeks: Settling In

By the three-week mark, your dog will start to settle in and become more familiar with their new home and family. They may begin to show their true personality, and you might notice changes in behavior as they become more comfortable.

3 Months: Fully Adjusted

After three months, your dog should be fully settled into their new home. They will have formed a bond with you and your family, and their behavior will reflect their comfort and trust.



The “Rule of 3”

Tips for Support



3D



In the first 3 days

Provide Comfort: Ensure your dog has a quiet, comfortable place to retreat to where they can feel safe.

Maintain Routine: Start establishing a consistent routine for feeding, walking, and bathroom breaks.

Establish a Positive Approach: Reinforce good behavior with treats, praise, and attention. *Never use punishment-based training methods*

Be Patient: Give your dog time to explore their new surroundings at their own pace without forcing interactions.

3W



After 3 weeks

Continue Positive Reinforcement: Reinforce good behavior with treats, praise, and affection.

Increase Socialization: Gradually introduce your dog to new people, pets, and environments to build their confidence.

Training: Begin basic training sessions to encourage positive behavior and keep your dog mentally stimulated.

3M



After 3 months

Strengthen Bonding: Engage in regular play, exercise, and bonding activities to strengthen your relationship.

Advanced Training: Consider enrolling in training classes or activities like agility or obedience to keep your dog mentally and physically stimulated.

Monitor Health: Continue regular veterinary check-ups and maintain a healthy diet and exercise routine.

House Training Tips

House training is a crucial part of helping your new dog adjust to their home and developing a harmonious living environment. Here are some tips to make the process as smooth and successful as possible:

1. Establish a Routine

Feed your dog at the same times each day. Consistent feeding times lead to predictable bathroom times. Take your dog outside frequently, especially after meals, naps, and playtime. Young puppies may need to go out every hour.

2. Designate a Bathroom Spot

Choose one area; take your dog to the same spot each time to do their business. The familiar scent will prompt them to go.

3. Positive Reinforcement

The moment your dog finishes eliminating outside, praise them enthusiastically and offer a treat. This helps them understand that going outside is a positive behavior.

4. Supervision and Confinement

Keep a close eye on your dog when they are indoors. Use baby gates or keep them in a room with you to monitor for signs that they need to go out. Crate training can be very helpful; dogs are less likely to eliminate in their sleeping area. Make sure the crate is the right size—not too large, so they don't have room to eliminate in one end and sleep in the other.

5. Watch for Signs

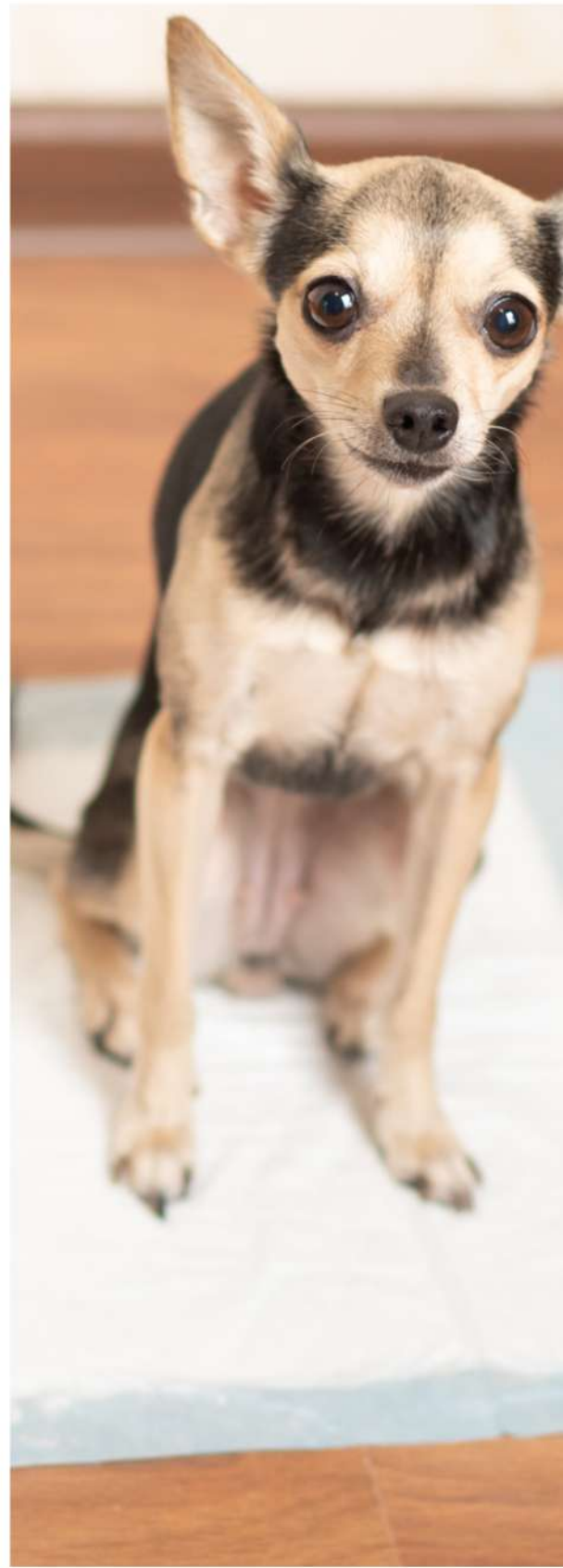
Learn to recognize signs that your dog needs to go out, such as sniffing, circling, whining, or going to the door. If you notice these signs, take your dog outside immediately.

6. Handle Accidents Calmly

Never punish! If your dog has an accident indoors, clean it up without fuss. Punishing your dog for accidents can create fear and anxiety, making house training harder. Use an enzymatic cleaner to remove any lingering odors. This prevents your dog from being drawn back to the same spot by the scent.

7. Be Patient and Consistent

House training can take time, and every dog learns at their own pace. Stay calm and patient throughout the process. Consistency in your approach, routine, and rewards will help your dog learn faster and more reliably.



How to Crate Train Your Dog or Puppy



Crate training can provide your dog with a safe and comfortable space they can call their own. It also aids in house training and can prevent destructive behaviors when you're not able to supervise.

Crate Training: Step-by-Step

1. Choose the Right Crate

Opt for a wire crate; they enable your dog to see their surroundings. The crate should be large enough for your dog to stand up, turn around, and lie down comfortably but not so large that they can eliminate in one corner and sleep in another.

2. Make the Crate Inviting

Place soft bedding or a blanket inside to make it cozy. Put some favorite toys and a few treats inside to create positive associations.

3. Introduce the Crate Gradually

Start by leaving the crate door open and allowing your dog to explore it on their own. Encourage them to go inside by placing treats or toys near and inside the crate. Praise and reward your dog when they enter the crate voluntarily.

4. Associate the Crate with Positive Experiences

Feed your dog their meals inside the crate. This helps create a positive association. Put high-value treats in, like a peanut-butter-filled Kong toy.





5. Practice Patience and Gradual Steps

Initially, close the crate door for short periods while your dog is inside, gradually increasing the time they spend inside with the door closed. Next, move to short absences from the room while your dog is crated. Return before they become anxious. Slowly increase the duration they spend in the crate, especially when you're not at home. Always ensure your dog is calm and relaxed before extending the time.

6. Create a Crate Routine

Use the crate consistently as part of your dog's daily routine, not just when you leave the house. This prevents them from associating the crate solely with being left alone. Encourage your dog to sleep in the crate at night. Place the crate in your bedroom initially to help them feel more secure.

7. Respond Appropriately to Crate Behavior

If your dog whines or cries in the crate, it's important not to let them out immediately, as this reinforces the behavior. Wait for a pause in the whining, then let them out calmly. Always let your dog out of the crate when they are calm and quiet to reinforce positive behavior.

8. Never Use the Crate for Punishment

The crate should always be a positive, safe space for your dog. Never use it as a place for punishment, as this will create negative associations and hinder the training process.

Socializing Puppies



Socialization is a crucial part of raising a well-adjusted and confident puppy. Proper socialization helps puppies develop into friendly, well-behaved adult dogs who can handle new experiences and environments without fear or aggression. Early socialization is essential because it shapes a puppy's behavior and attitude toward the world around them.

Socialization Checklist

People

- Adults:** Expose your puppy to men and women of different ages, sizes, and ethnic backgrounds.
- Children:** Supervise interactions with children of various ages to ensure positive experiences.
- Different Appearances:** Introduce people wearing hats, sunglasses, uniforms, or carrying bags.

Other Animals

- Dogs:** Arrange playdates with dogs of various breeds, sizes, and ages. Ensure interactions are supervised and positive.
- Cats:** If possible, introduce your puppy to calm and friendly cats. Monitor interactions and be sure the cat can leave when they want to.

Different Environments

- Homes:** Visit friends' homes and allow your puppy to explore different living spaces.
- Public Places:** Take your puppy to parks, pet-friendly stores, outdoor cafes, and other public areas.
- Vehicles:** Accustom your puppy to car rides to reduce any travel anxiety.
- Vet Visits:** Make positive visits to the veterinary clinic without medical procedures to create a positive association.

Sounds

- **Household Noises:** Expose your puppy to vacuum cleaners, blenders, washing machines, and other household sounds.
- **Outdoor Noises:** Let your puppy hear traffic, sirens, fireworks, and thunderstorms from a safe distance to gradually reduce fear.
- **People Noises:** Allow your puppy to hear different voices, laughter, crying, and loud conversations.

Surfaces

- **Flooring:** Let your puppy walk on various surfaces such as carpet, tile, wood, concrete, and gravel.
- **Outdoor Terrain:** Expose your puppy to grass, dirt, sand, water and any other outdoor terrain.

Objects and Obstacles

- **Everyday Objects:** Introduce your puppy to umbrellas, bicycles, strollers, and other everyday items.
- **Moving Objects:** Get your puppy used to moving objects like skateboards, scooters, and remote-controlled toys.
- **Obstacles:** Let your puppy navigate stairs, ramps, and different types of doors (sliding, revolving, automatic).

Body Handling

- Paws:** Regularly touch and handle your puppy's paws. Gently press each toe and spread the toes apart. This helps them get used to having their paws handled for nail trims and cleaning.
- Ears:** Gently touch and look inside your puppy's ears. This can prevent fear of ear cleanings and vet inspections.
- Mouth:** Lift your puppy's lips and gently touch their teeth and gums. This gets them accustomed to tooth brushing and oral exams.
- Tail:** Lightly hold and gently move your puppy's tail. This prepares them for grooming and medical exams.
- Body:** Pet and handle your puppy's entire body, including their belly, legs, and back to help them feel comfortable being touched all over.
- Positive Reinforcement:** Always use treats and praise while handling different body parts to create a positive association.

The Do's and Don'ts of

Introducing your dog to kids



Do's

- ✔ **Supervise:** Always supervise interactions between your dog and children to ensure safety for both.
- ✔ **Teach Gentle Handling:** Show kids how to pet the dog gently and to not pull ears or tail.
- ✔ **Positive Reinforcement:** Reward your dog with treats and praise for calm behavior around children.
- ✔ **Encourage Calm Behavior:** Teach kids to be calm and quiet around the dog, avoiding sudden movements and loud noises.
- ✔ **Allow Space:** Give your dog a safe space where they can retreat if they feel overwhelmed.
- ✔ **Introduce Gradually:** Allow your dog and children to get to know each other slowly and at their own pace. Introduce only one child at a time, initially



Don'ts

- ✘ **Leave Kids Unsupervised with the Dog**
- ✘ **Force Interactions:** Don't force a dog to interact with kids if they're scared or anxious.
- ✘ **Don't Allow Rough Play**
- ✘ **Don't Ignore Body Language:** Pay attention to your dog's body language. Remove the dog from the situation if they show signs of stress, such as growling, lip licking, or attempting to move away.
- ✘ **Don't Let Kids Disturb the Dog:** Teach children not to disturb the dog while they are eating, sleeping, or in their crate.





The Do's and Don'ts of Introducing your dog to other dogs

Do's

- ✔ **Choose Neutral Territory:** Introduce dogs in a neutral location to avoid territorial behavior.
- ✔ **Use Leashes:** Keep both dogs on leashes during the initial introduction to maintain control.
- ✔ **Reward Positive Behavior:** Use treats and praise to reward calm and friendly interactions.
- ✔ **Take It Slow:** Allow the dogs to approach each other gradually and at their own pace.
- ✔ **Short Meetings:** Keep initial meetings brief and positive, gradually increasing the duration.
- ✔ **Monitor Body Language:** Watch for positive signs like relaxed postures, wagging tails, and play bows. Pay attention to signs of discomfort, such as growling, stiff body, raised hackles, or intense staring. Separate the dogs if these behaviors occur.
- ✔ **Allow Sniffing:** Let the dogs sniff each other to get acquainted, but keep the leashes loose to avoid tension.



Don'ts

- ✘ **Force Interaction**
- ✘ **Allow Rough Play**
- ✘ **Introduce in Tight, Confined Spaces**
- ✘ **Don't Rush the Process**
- ✘ **Don't Punish:** If dogs show signs of discomfort or aggression, separate the dogs calmly.
- ✘ **Don't Leave Unsupervised:** Never leave newly introduced dogs alone together until you are confident they can interact safely.

By following these do's and don'ts, you can help ensure a safe and positive experience when introducing your dog to other dogs. Patience and careful management are key to fostering good relationships between dogs.

The Do's and Don'ts of

Introducing your dog to cats

Do's

- ✔ **Take It Slow:** Introduce your dog and cat gradually, allowing them to get used to each other over time.
- ✔ **Use Barriers:** Start introductions with a barrier, such as a baby gate, to allow them to see and smell each other without direct contact.
- ✔ **Keep Dog on Leash:** Keep your dog on a leash during the first few face-to-face meetings to maintain control.
- ✔ **Provide Safe Spaces:** Ensure your cat has high perches and escape routes where they can retreat if they feel scared.
- ✔ **Reward Calm Behavior:** Use treats and praise to reward your dog and cat for calm behavior around each other.
- ✔ **Monitor Body Language:** Watch both your dog and cat for signs of stress or aggression and be ready to separate them if needed.
- ✔ **Short Meetings:** Keep initial interactions brief and positive, gradually increasing the duration as they become more comfortable.



Don'ts

- ✘ **Force Interaction**
- ✘ **Allow Chasing**
- ✘ **Ignore Stress Signs:** Pay attention to signs of stress in both pets. For cats, this might include hissing, swatting, or hiding; for dogs, it could be whining, barking, or lunging.
- ✘ **Don't Leave Unsupervised**
- ✘ **Don't Punish Fearful Behavior:** Punishment can increase anxiety and hinder the introduction process.



5

TIPS FOR PREVENTING PET LOSS

Microchipping

Microchipping is a simple and effective way to ensure your dog can be identified if they get lost. Be sure that the chip is registered with a national registry and ensure your contact information is always up to date so you can be contacted if your dog is found.

Petco Love Lost:

Petco Love Lost is a free online service using facial recognition to reunite lost pets with their owners. Users can upload a photo for added security and share alerts through Petco Love Lost and local platforms if their dog goes missing. To register your dog, visit [this link](#).

Identification Tags

Ensure your dog wears a collar with an ID tag at all times. The tag should include your pet's name, your phone number, and any other relevant contact info

GPS Collars

Invest in a GPS collar. These devices allow you to track your dog's location in real-time using your smartphone.

Secure your Home and Yard

Ensure your yard is securely fenced to prevent your dog from escaping. Regularly check for gaps or weak spots in the fence. Keep gates closed and locked. Use self-closing hinges or latches for added security. Be mindful of open doors and windows. Train your dog to wait at doors and to not bolt outside without permission.

*ESTABLISH A
RELATIONSHIP
WITH A*

Vet

First Visit

Schedule Your First Visit: Schedule your dog's first vet visit within the first week of bringing them home. This initial check-up will ensure they are healthy and address any immediate concerns.



Create a Health Plan

Your vet will provide a vaccination schedule to protect your dog from common diseases. Follow this schedule closely to keep your dog's immunizations up to date.



Establish a Wellness Routine

Schedule regular wellness exams to monitor your dog's health and catch any potential problems early. Annual or bi-annual visits are standard for adult dogs. Discuss dental hygiene and schedule regular teeth cleanings to prevent dental disease.



Emergency Preparedness

Emergency Preparedness: Know the location and contact information of the nearest emergency veterinary clinic. In case of an emergency, quick access to veterinary care is crucial. Ask your vet what items should be included in a pet first aid kit for minor injuries and emergencies.



A strong relationship with your vet ensures that your dog will receive the best possible care throughout their life. Regular vet visits are key to responsible pet ownership and contribute significantly to your dog's long-term health and happiness.

