

Living With A Rescue Dog: 4 Tips For First Time Adopters

Rescuing a dog to add to your family is one of the most exciting decisions a person can make. There are lots of details to consider, and choices to make once you bring your new best friend home. Here are four tips for first-time adopters that'll make the first few weeks of living together so much easier!

Choose the Right Dog

While you may hope to walk into the shelter and have a dog pick you, don't forget to consider what breed of dog you're getting before you bring them home. Your new dog is going to be living in your house so choosing one that is appropriately sized with comparable activity to yours is imperative.

For example, if you live in a one-bedroom apartment, a Great Dane probably doesn't make sense because they are simply too large for the space. If you want a more independent, less playful dog, don't adopt a Labrador Retriever because they love their humans, and want to play all the time. If you work fourteen-hour days, don't adopt a Border Collie because their energy level is too high to spend that much time alone.

If you choose to bring home a dog that isn't comparable to your lifestyle it can make living with them truly a nightmare. The fact there are so many different dog breeds is incredible, because there is a dog for everyone! However, do your research and choose your dog wisely when you adopt because you're setting yourself and your new pet up for success!

Have the Dog Meet Your Family First

When you're adopting a dog into a family, it is important to introduce all of your family members to the dog before bringing them home. While this may not seem like a necessity at first, think about what would happen if you brought a dog home that hated your significant other. Or if you adopted a dog that wasn't child friendly, and brought it home to your six and eight year old.

[Robert Thomas](#) says "Shelters do an excellent job of profiling each dog the best they can so each adoption is set up for success, however, there are just some things even they cannot predict". When you're in the adoption process for a dog, let them meet your whole family so when you get home you can all live together harmoniously from the start.

Prepare, Prepare, Prepare!

Adopting a dog isn't a choice that should be entered into lightly without proper planning. Preparing for a life together starts with your home and it is never early to start the process!

Within your home, pick up and dispose of any toxic chemicals such as rodent poison and insect baits. Purchase pet-friendly cleaners and disinfectants. If there are things of sentimental value going to be at the level of your dog, move them to a different or higher location. If you have children, discuss picking up their toys and keeping the special ones out of reach of the dog.

Ensure your trash is in a container with a secure lid or move it into a cabinet where the dog cannot get it.

If you have a backyard, identify, and remove poisonous plants. Pick up any trash or toys that you don't want the dog eating. Designate an area for them to use the bathroom if you are going to be taking them out on a leash. If it is unfenced, consider the dog you are adopting and consider putting up a fence for the safety of the dog.

These are simply a few of the many ways to prepare for living with a rescue dog, but in this case, preparation is everything. Rescue dogs come with unknown histories and stories and sometimes you don't know exactly what you're getting into. If you want to begin living together most successfully and avoid expensive and frightening trips to the veterinarian, planning is everything!

Start Slow

Once you've prepared your home, chosen a dog that fits your lifestyle, and loves your family it's hard not to be super excited when you bring them home. You'll want to show them their new bed and all of the toys you bought, play with them in the backyard, and take them for rides in the car! While all of these ideas are full of great intentions, consider this your reminder to start slow with your rescue dog when you bring them home.

Shelter dogs are exposed to stress every day they are in the shelter. This can be from other dogs barking, new people, or living in solidarity in a kennel and eating new food. Over time, this exhausts the dogs and overwhelms them. So while you are ready to show your dog their brand new life right away, your dog is probably not ready. Instead, have their crate or designated area ready for them and take them there when you get home. Make sure the house is quiet and calm, and be sure to keep other pets away from them until you can properly introduce them.

Giving your dog time to decompress will help you start your life together on a positive note. This may take only hours, but it could also take days or weeks for your dog to feel comfortable in your home. If you allow them to warm up at their own pace, you can reduce unwanted behaviors such as soiling in the house, getting into things they aren't supposed to, or showing signs of anxiety such as shaking, growling, or hiding.

Rescuing a dog is a wonderful, rewarding experience. Good luck to the first-time adopters preparing to bring a dog into their lives!