

8 TIPS

FOR WELCOMING A TIMID DOG INTO YOUR FAMILY

These tips are to help your new furry friend have a smooth transition into their new home. It's important that all family members are on board because consistency is key! Be patient – it will take your dog some time to adjust to their new life, but when you see them coming out of their shell, it will be incredibly rewarding!



Prepare a **comfortable and quiet spot** for your new family member – somewhere they can decompress at their own pace (away from heavy foot traffic or loud noises).



If you already have a dog, be sure to introduce them to your new dog in **neutral territory** (like the park). Since dogs are pack animals, walking them together before taking them home can be extremely helpful.



Your new pup might have an easier time feeling comfortable if there is already another dog in the family.



3-3-3 RULE

3 DAYS OF FEELING OVERWHELMED
3 WEEKS OF SETTLING IN
3 MONTHS OF BUILDING TRUST



When petting your dog, get down to their level and **pet them under the chin** instead of on the head – hovering and reaching from above can be scary for them.




Give your dog plenty of **time and space to rest** – no friend or family gatherings for a while. Remember that they're in a brand new environment and may have just had a long and exhausting journey.



5

Be **patient** and try to get the dog to **come to you** rather than getting into their space, even if this means just sitting near the dog for a while. Try gently talking to them or quietly reading nearby until they realize you can be trusted.



 *Gentle music may help as well.*


6

If your dog won't eat or even accept treats from your hand, try **scattering enticing treats** around you. Be patient and give them time to explore the treats.

7

For particularly fearful dogs: When approaching the dog, **walk sideways and avoid direct eye contact** (facing straight-on and staring into their eyes when they don't know you yet can activate a primal prey instinct).



 *This is especially useful during the first few days.*

Once your new dog has relaxed and is feeling more comfortable, continue to build up their confidence by doing these:

ENRICHMENT EXERCISES
(toys, fetch, tug-of-war, snuffle mat, sniff-and-search, treat release puzzles, etc.)


ONE-ON-ONE TRAINING
(starting with the basics like STAY, COME, SIT, etc.)

STICK TO A ROUTINE
(familiar sleeping area, eating area, walking route, etc.)

For some great mental stimulation and entertainment for your dog, make a spot in front of a window, so they can watch cars, people or dogs passing by.

8

Since fearful dogs are a flight risk until they become fully comfortable, put measures in place that **prevent direct access to the outdoors** (ex. temporary gates). In the yard, check for gaps in the fence and ensure that all gates are always fully shut. Remember: dogs can dig if they spot an opportunity!

 *Talk to everyone in the house about the importance of keeping doors/gates closed.*



Things to remember

Quite often the dog that you're seeing in the first few days and weeks of adoption is not the dog you'll have – their true personality comes out once they have decompressed and start to feel at ease in their new home.

There are many resources online that can offer help with things like accidents in the house, pulling on the leash, finding the best dog diet, etc.

Hiring a dog trainer is always an option and often is the quickest way to get meaningful help.