



Helping Your Dog Adjust to a New Home

Your new dog might need a few weeks to months to completely adjust to their new home, depending on the new environment and the dog's personality. Common problems that you might experience are: shyness, barking, excitable behavior, clingy behavior, and attempts to escape. These behaviors are all normal - it's important for you to respond appropriately and help your new dog adjust. If your dog snaps or bites, call the shelter/rescue group, foster coordinator, a positive reinforcement trainer or veterinary behaviorist or veterinarian for advice. Creating a consistent, structured environment with clear rules, such as the [Say Please Program](#), may be helpful.

Shy and Nervous Dogs

- Help your new dog feel safe. Shy and nervous dogs benefit from a quiet place that they can retreat to and relax.
- A fearful dog is better off hanging around the house for a few days than going on walks.
- Some dogs do not eliminate for 24 hours in a new environment. If your new dog has not eliminated in more than a day, call the shelter/rescue group, foster coordinator or a veterinarian for advice.
- Your dog might need more time than you think to get comfortable. Be patient and avoid stress.
- Keep a leash attached to your dog. Fearful dogs might shy away when they get scared. The leash will help you manage the dog without touching them.
- If your new dog likes to be handled, gentle strokes might help them to relax.

Clingy Dogs

- It is pretty common for new dogs to stick to you like glue. Teach your dog that it's OK to be separated from you. Set up a gate or a comfortable crate – with something for them to chew on like a food-stuffed Kong® toy. Several times per day, after some exercise, separate them for you for a short time. Approach the confinement area only when your new dog is quiet and sits.

Barking Dogs

- Your new dog might react to all kinds of unfamiliar noises, might seem scared, and/or might bark to alert others. Help your dog adjust to these noises by pairing the noise with a treat. Teaching them that the sounds are nothing to be concerned over.



- If your new dog is easily startled by family members, they might bark or growl. Everyone should carry treats with them and offer to your new dog whenever they see them to condition the dog to accepting multiple people in the home.
- Dogs who are barking for attention should be ignored. Giving any type (this includes scolding or yelling at the dog) of attention to a dog who's barking for attention rewards the behavior and encourages them to bark next time they want something.
- If your dog barks when left alone, play music and leave them with something to occupy their time alone, such as a food-stuffed [Kong® toy](#)

Excitable Dogs

- Your new dog might be a happy ball of energy but might not possess good manners. An excitable dog will benefit from structured interactions. Teach your new dog how to [sit for everything that they want](#).
- Don't yell at or scold your dog for being unruly. They may interpret your behavior as joining in the excitement, escalating their behavior.
- Teach your new dog the rules of your house and make sure that you follow through as well. If you are consistent, your new dog will learn how to behave appropriately.
- [Play sessions](#) with you or other dogs (if the dog likes other dogs) often help.
- Physical exercise is always good to expel energy and stress; several walks a day will help.
- Mental stimulation is vital, such as working on a [food puzzle](#) or training can help to keep an excitable dog content.

Escaping Dogs

- Your new dog might try to escape from your home. Place a barrier or gate in front of the door.
- Your new dog might try to escape from your yard. Cover all the possible escape routes, and always supervise them when outside.