



Fido's New Home

Life changes are hard for all of us: moving to new cities, gaining new employment, adding new family members, attending new schools, etc. Dogs, too, experience stress when they are subjected to change. Keep this in mind when you are considering adding a new dog to your family or fostering a dog for a shelter or rescue group. Your new furry friend needs all the help he can get to gradually acclimate to his new home.

When Fido is first brought home, he will need plenty of time to sniff around and explore his new place. Dogs experience the world through their noses so allow him as much time as he needs to explore and orient himself. Be sure to keep all the other pets and people away during this time so that he doesn't get overwhelmed. When he is done exploring it's time to begin teaching him his new confinement area is a happy and peaceful place for him to relax. Take him into the area and if he seems unsure you can coax him with those high value treats you have ready. When he is in the room or exercise pen give him a stuffed kong or marrow bone to chew on while you read a book, surf the web, or just take a nap. The goal is for him to learn that his new relaxation area is safe, happy, and quiet. Also, you are teaching him going to this area does NOT predict being alone. Eventually as he acclimates to his new routine you can leave him alone for longer and longer periods of time, especially when he is well exercised and has an enticing chew bone. If you want to really up the ante you can leave on relaxing classical music to help dampen any exciting sounds that could keep him from settling down for a doggie snooze. If you have children this part is similar to preparing them for a nap.

Allowing Fido to adjust gradually to your home while he learns the rules and routine will set him and you up for success. Keep in mind that for many shelter dogs it can take up to a week for stress hormones to break down in the body allowing them to finally relax, so be patient with Fido.

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO GET YOUR CANINE COMPANION SETUP FOR SUCCESS:

1. Gather all necessary supplies before bringing the dog home (crate, leash, kong, collar, etc.)
2. Create a realistic routine for meals, exercise, and social time for Fido.
3. Establish a safe confinement area that is quiet and welcoming (bathroom or exercise pen for open floor plans)
4. The resident dog's resting places, feeding areas, and toys should all be kept separate from the new dog.
5. If possible, put up secure baby gates and other barriers between the new dog and the existing pets.
6. For cats, be sure they have hiding places, cat trees, and other rooms for a quick retreat if they feel uncomfortable. Do NOT force them to interact with the new dog.
7. For the resident dogs keep them completely separate inside the house for at least 3-4 days.
8. If at any point the new dog growls, lunges, and or attempts to bite any pets or people please consult an experienced reward based trainer.