

## Tips for a New Dog

**Slowly introduce the pet to existing pets.** Keep them on a leash (keep your end of the leash loose, or let the dogs drag leashes around for easy control) when introducing. Neutral territory would be highly recommended, this is why introductions at The Pet Connection can be helpful. It can take a few weeks before they adjust. Walk them on a leash around the home (inside and out); show them the areas where they will be sleeping, eating, playing, etc... Separate at this time from other pets. It may not be necessary to introduce the new dog to the cat right away. They will be able to tell that each other is around by scent.

**Do not STRESS** the pet by overdoing situations. Keep things calm and limit such activities such as dog parks, visitors, car rides, bathing, jogging, etc... Allow the pet time to adjust first, allowing the dog to get comfortable with the new home and family. Go slowly. If you push a situation, it can have adverse effects on behavior.

**Do not leave the dog alone in the house;** make sure it has a secure area to stay or is crated, it actually helps the dog to adjust. By this you will avoid chewing and destruction of property. Reasons for inappropriate chewing might be: teething, boredom or stress. Appropriate chew toys are always recommended. You can not train a dog if you aren't there. Remember, this animal has been in different homes and needs time to feel safe and secure and to adjust to your schedules. It takes time. Often we find people expecting too much from the pet and then are baffled when behavior problems occur.

**Obedience classes:** Are excellent ideas, even if you have trained or had dogs in the past. Training has changed drastically in recent years. It teaches the human how to give clear messages so training is easier, socializes, and addresses areas of concern in behavior. Consistency, praise and more praise when training. All adopters have free dog training at The Pet Connection for the lifetime of the pet.

**Housebreaking:** Take your pet out frequently, on a regular schedule and be consistent on times. The dog needs to adjust to **your** schedule and that takes time. Don't expect your pet to know your schedule. Spanking a dog for having an accident will only encourage fear of you and bad behavior. Instead praise when they do eliminate outside. Feeding schedule should allow for the dog to digest the food (around 2-4 hours) and be let outside before containment. It's best to have no accidents, so keep an eye on your new visitor at first. The younger the dog the less the containment time should be.

**Socializing:** Socializing your pet is very important, but realize a dog park has its good and bad points. Taking a new dog to an area too soon will add stress to the pet. Start slow with one visitor, rides, walks, etc...and increase

over time. Pushing the pet can make it fearful of situations for the rest of its life and/or could stress the pet and create other behavior problems.

**Food:** Is extremely important. Buy a good quality of food. Pay now or pay later in vet bills, ill health, and possibly behavior problems. A name brand with large advertising budgets does not always insure the best food. Be an ingredient reader. Look for meat-based products (lamb, beef, etc... versus by-products or meal products), and look for food with no or few additives and preservatives. Poor quality of foods could affect your pet physically and mentally. The Pet Connection feeds Nutura Products. We get assistance with our food from Empire Pets in Mission. We highly recommend Brookside Barkery and Bath as a resource for other nutritional needs that your pet may have.

**Children:** Even if the pet is use to children, allow them time to adjust to yours. Do not ever leave a child alone without supervision. Never allow them to have food around a new pet. Feed the children separately than the pet and supervise feedings of both. Do not allow a child to ever tease or be rough with a pet.

Avoid any type of aggressive behavior: rough housing, spanking, hand wrestling, etc... Positive training is what we recommend, this means praise good behavior, and correct bad by showing them what you want. This will take efforts on your part. Example: if the dog is chewing on a child's toy, remove the toy and give an appropriate chew toy.

Helpful hints:

1. Make sure everyone in the family is using the same command words, this is very important for consistency.
2. Rule of thumb is: you have 1.7 seconds to correct bad behavior, after that it will not have the desired outcome.
3. Set aside 'fun time' for your dog, and then a short training session daily.
4. If you can't attend an obedience class, at least buy an updated training book on positive training.

Westwood Animal Hospital has an excellent reading list on their website at [HYPERLINK "http://www.westwoodanimalhospital.com"](http://www.westwoodanimalhospital.com) [www.westwoodanimalhospital.com](http://www.westwoodanimalhospital.com). They also carry a highly respected collection of books by renowned behaviorist and trainers.

5. Correct bad behavior immediately, but with kindness and by showing them what you do want: Positive training.
6. Praise, praise, more praise and consistency is our motto.