

First Day at Home

This is a big move for your dog! So do ensure you have all the time you can spare to be with your new family member! Spend time showing your puppy around, feeding her, and playing with her. For a dog that's lived in a different home and a rescue center this can be more stressful than usual – so take things gently.

- 1** When you arrive home, take your dog straight to the area where you will be happy for him or her to go to the toilet. Keep them there until they go, praise them afterwards then take them back into the house. Dogs are creatures of habit and will return to the same place to go to the toilet. For further advice, read our articles on toilet training and what to do if your puppy has an accident.
- 2** Keep your daily routine the same from day one. It may be tempting to shower your rescue dog with relaxed rules and spontaneous gestures, but you will end up with an unsettled dog.
- 3** In the same vein, don't fall into the trap of feeding your dog on demand. His or her appetite may be erratic initially, but it will settle faster with a regular routine.
- 4** Or the first few days, stick to the diet given to you by the rescue home. You can change it slowly over time by gradually weaning from old food to new food over 5-7 days.
- 5** Don't let your dog off the lead in any open spaces until you've had a chance to practice recall in secure areas. Recall is an important part of the bonding process. For further information, read our article on recall.
- 6** Your dog will need a few days to get used to your household so don't introduce any new people until they're ready.
- 7** Consistency will be very important to your new dog so decide on house rules, such as where the dog is and isn't allowed and make sure everyone sticks to them.
- 8** For the same reason, if you have a cat, do not introduce them immediately. Try swapping their scents so that both your cat and dog are familiar with each other before they're fully introduced.
- 9** After seven days or so, take your dog along to your local vet to register them and discuss any future veterinary treatment. Remember to take your vaccination certificate with you.