

Information Sheet – Settling in a New Puppy or Adult Dog

So, you've taken the plunge and brought home a new puppy, or an adult dog. Congratulations and welcome to the world of pet ownership, or for some, welcome back to having a new dog again 😊

Even if you've had pets before, each pet is different and training and management has changed over the years. Thank you for reading this info sheet to find out the latest scientifically sound and positive techniques to help settle in your new pet.

Puppy Proofing Your Home!

Put away all tempting items that a puppy may like to chew (that's pretty much everything). Don't leave anything lying around! Make sure access to chemicals, medications etc. is prevented. Get down on the floor and have a look from a puppy's point of view! This helps you to find out what puppies may find interesting (hanging/dangling cords make great chew toys!).

Setting Up a Short Term Confinement Area

Whilst your puppy doesn't have to have a short term confinement area – it sure makes puppy management a lot easier. Puppies are just like toddlers – you wouldn't leave one roaming around the house getting into whatever they want. Besides, you can't always supervise them 100% of the time.

Similarly, during the introduction period, new dogs should be separated from existing pets, especially when they can't be supervised.

When coming to a new home, dogs often feel a little lost when left alone, therefore escaping can be a common problem at this stage. A short term confinement area keeps them safe when you have to go out.

Options: Crates

Exercise Pens

Baby Gates

Denning



Refer to our info sheets on crate training and denning for more information on how to set up these areas up positively.

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Intro to Family Members

Depending on your new puppy/dog's previous experiences and exposure, they may become overwhelmed when meeting everyone in your family and extended family (children, aunts, uncles, and grandparents). Help your dog create a positive association with each family member. Allow your dog to settle into your home first, before you introduce them to too many people and environments.



Intro to Other Pets

Gradual, slow and positive introductions are crucial to set pets up for a solid relationship. You will need to keep your new puppy/dog on a lead at first so you have more control of the introductions. Don't allow puppies to 'get in the face' of adult dogs (or cats). If your adult dog is not welcoming the 'advances' of a puppy, redirect your puppy away with toys or a treat. If this doesn't work after 2-3 attempts, your puppy needs to go onto a tether or a crate, or allow your adult dog some space.

Allow existing pets to have their own space and break times.

Even if your existing dog has met the new adult dog in a 'meet and greet' and it went well, it doesn't mean that both dogs will be comfortable living together until careful, positive and controlled interactions are practised.

Walking together is a great way to help dogs build a relationship. Short street or park walks (when puppy is fully vaccinated) are ideal.

Short **supervised** play times in your yard are also great.

Training exercises involving short sessions of teaching impulse control – both dogs sitting, each dog gets a treat one after the other. Repeat 3-4 times.

It's much easier to set your dogs up for a successful relationship from



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the start, rather than repair a broken one! Therefore, a new dog to the home should not be left alone unsupervised with existing pets, until you are confident that they are happy in each's other company when left alone. Crate or confine your new puppy/dog if you have to go out.

Adaptil

Pheromone products like Adaptil can help new dogs settle into homes. Try a plug in diffuser in the puppy's area. It also comes in a collar and spray. See your vet.



Classical Music

Music can often help puppies settle in – especially classical music. One example of this is using the CD – “Through A Dog's Ear”.

Diet

Keep the same diet as the breeder or shelter had the dog on, for at least 1 week, then gradually transition if so desired.

New puppies and adult dogs should have their own feeding space and not be disturbed by other pets or humans. A crate is ideal here.

Do not allow an existing pet to 'hang around' the new pet's food area, and likewise the other way around too.

Consult a small animal nutritionist about an appropriate diet for your new pet.

Training

Enrol in a positive reinforcement based puppy or adult dog class.

Your new puppy or adult dog should learn to respond to their name, and to come to you as soon as possible!

Adult dogs still need to learn the rules of the house and where they can and cannot go. Adult dogs don't already come 'pre trained'; even if they have had previous training in another home, they have never lived in your home.

It is also a good time to refresh the training skills of your existing pets.

If you would like assistance with training, our trainers are happy to come and work with you in your home.

Refer to our website for info on training and classes. <http://www.pawsitiveconnection.com.au/>

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Enrichment

Teaching your new puppy or adult dog to engage with enrichment toys is a great way to spend time with them and keep them mentally stimulated.

Ensure food toys are kept away from other pets, or your new puppy has their own space.

Your puppy or adult dog should be supervised with all new toys until you can ensure the toy is appropriate and safe for them. Refer to our info sheet on enrichment.



Home alone

It is important for your new puppy/dog to get used to being alone for short periods. Start by teaching your puppy or adult dog to settle on a mat/bed or crate in their confinement area. You can use long lasting chews (e.g. dried tendons, lambs ears) and filled enrichment toys to encourage them to settle. Start moving away from your puppy (for example a few steps) and return. Keep returns low key (don't make a fuss!).

Extend this to moving towards a door. Only when your puppy is comfortable e.g. not trying to follow you, crying or whining), then gradually increase the distance you move away and the time you are away for. Think in seconds and minutes to start with! Don't expect a new puppy to be happy to be alone for hours or even 30 minutes until you have done this training.

If your dog is not settling well when left alone, we strongly recommend you set up a video or use a smartphone app to record your dog when they are alone. That way you can see what is really happening when you're not there.

If you are experiencing issues with leaving your puppy or new dog home alone, please contact us for assistance.

Enjoy your new family member!