

TRAINING AND TRANSITIONING

Helpful Tips

Humane Society of the Delta

You might be introducing a pup to your home for the first time, or may be a seasoned pro, but here are some tips we recommend reviewing before your furry friend arrives! Please remember we are here to help you, so if you review these tips and still have questions, or issues arise, please reach out!

TIME TO DECOMPRESS

Coming into a new family, meeting new people, and learning a new environment (with all its new smells!) can be *very* overwhelming for a dog. Overstimulating an animal is a set up for failure. Please give your new dog or puppy some crate time during the day, and especially the first few days. During this time, they should be allowed to have some down time without someone trying to pet, play, or interact with it.

Keep them on a harness

New dogs and puppies are most likely to get scared and run off during the first days and weeks at their new home. Remember they don't know where "home" is, and if they get frightened, they can easily back out of a collar and run off. This has happened before, so please buy a harness that fits correctly, and *do not have your dog off leash for any reason during this transition time*. Even in a fenced in yard, a new dog can dig under or jump over a fence if left unattended. In the beginning it is important to spend time with your dog in the fenced in area to ensure something bad doesn't happen.

Crate Training – Your new best friend!

After arriving home with your new dog/puppy, give them a chance to go to the bathroom and explore their new surroundings a bit. Then, have some down time put them in their crate to decompress. Sometimes putting a blanket over the top and two sides of the crate can give it a nice, safe, home-y feel!

Going to a new place is scary (not to mention the transport) and you want to give them the ability to succeed in the new home. When putting a dog or puppy in a crate, always make it a positive experience by tossing in a small yummy treat, or something like a Kong or Nylabone (be sure it is the appropriate size!) when crating them. Do this every time! Your dog will one day “crate-up” on his own at bedtime. Even if you feel your dog doesn’t need to be crated, it can be very helpful the first couple of weeks to give the new dog some space from other animals, kids and people.

Puppies should always be crated when unaccompanied! It is for their safety, and your piece of mind.

The first couple of days try to give your new pet some “down- time” several times a day. Remember a new home is a lot to take in. A crate is also a very useful tool in housetraining your puppy or dog. Give lots of treats, bones, and toys in the crate, even if you don’t shut the crate door all the time. That is the best way to make the crate a very positive experience and get the animal comfortable with it. ***Never use the crate for punishment!!***

Nighttime

Dogs are all about routine, and the quicker you can get into a routine, the better! Get ready for bed, let the pup out, and get them situated in their crate with a treat (be sure it's not something they can rip up or ingest too much of. A Kong filled with a small bit of peanut butter will do the trick!)

If your dog or puppy cries when first crated at bedtime, and you know that they just went outside and is all set, they most likely just want your attention. Most dogs will settle down within 30 minutes. If your puppy or dog is crying when you crate them at night, do NOT reward this behavior by taking him out of the crate, especially if you know they are all set bathroom-wise. They will not do this forever (unless you teach them that being loud gets your attention).

Here's the exception: If your puppy or dog has been quietly sleeping and wakes up crying in the middle of the night, they most likely need to go outside. Take them outside but try to be as boring as possible. You want to take them outside to the bathroom, but do not play or pet them at this time. Once they've done their business, take them inside. Throw a small treat in the crate, crate them, and go back to bed. If you give too much attention and are too much fun in the middle of the night, your dog might decide they want to see you every night at 3 am and NO ONE wants that!

Housetraining

(these rules apply to adult dogs as well. Adults have more developed bladders and can hold it longer, but you still need to help them make the connection of where you want them to go).

Take your puppy outside frequently— Take them out immediately after they wake up, during and after playing, and after eating or drinking. For young puppies around 10 weeks, take them out every 30 minutes if they are awake. As they grow, extend the time to 45 minutes, then an hour etc. Remember to keep them in contained areas of the house or use baby gates to limit the area they can be in at first. *Do not* give free run of the house or you will have accidents.

Pick a bathroom spot outside, and always take your pup (on a leash) to that spot. While they are relieving themselves, use a specific word or phrase that you can eventually use before they go to remind them what to do. You can use phrases like “go pee!” “go to the bathroom!” “go potty!” to prompt them to do their business. Then, be sure to follow it with lots of praise and a treat or two!

Praise and give treats—but remember to do so immediately after they’ve finished, not after they come back inside. This step is vital, because rewarding your dog for going outdoors is the only way to teach what’s expected of them. Be sure they are finished before rewarding. Puppies are easily distracted and if you praise too soon, they may forget to finish until they’re back in the house. Don’t scold your puppy if they have an accident in the house, instead modify YOUR behavior by taking them out more, and watching them for hints they may need to go out.

Put your puppy on a regular feeding schedule

Consistency is key with EVERYTHING! You will thank yourself later! Depending on their age, puppies usually need to be fed three or four times a day. Feeding your puppy at the same times each day will make it more likely that they’ll eliminate at consistent times as well, making housetraining easier for both of you.

Pick up your puppy's water dish about two and a half hours before bedtime to reduce the likelihood that they'll need to relieve themselves during the night. Most puppies can sleep for approximately seven hours without needing a bathroom break. If your puppy does wake you up in the night, don't make a big deal of it; otherwise they will think it is time to play and won't want to go back to sleep. Turn on as few lights as possible, don't talk to or play with your puppy, take them out and then return them to bed.

The crate is a great break for you and your puppy. Just like human babies, if they are sleeping, let them sleep and enjoy the break from taking them out. However, as soon as they wake, take them out. Having a puppy is like having an infant, and it's a lot of work. They will mature and grow much faster than human babies, though, so the first few weeks will be the most work, and it will quickly get easier.

Introducing your dog/puppy to a resident dog

A good way to introduce dogs to each other is on a walk and **not** on your resident dog's territory (your home and yard). Take a walk placing people in the middle, and the dogs on leashes on the outside. Then, eventually move one dog to the inside so there is only one person between them. By the end of the walk, you usually should be able to walk with them both on the inside.

Inside the house, have both dogs leashed by two different people so that you can control the interaction between them at first. If one dog is super relaxed, sometimes you only need to put the "uptight" dog on a leash. **No toys or rawhides should be down during this time that dogs could have disagreements over.**

Toys/Bones with Multiple Dogs

These are “high-value” and can cause disagreements if you don’t go about it in the correct way. **No toys should be down at first if you have more than one dog.** When you do introduce toys, you want to make sure you can control the situation. You can give the dogs toys when you have time and can monitor the interaction between them. You cannot walk away and expect all will be well. Some of these dogs have never had a toy and they will be willing to fight for one. Sometimes, it’s your resident dog that you might need to leash, to control the first toy interactions. I have a resident dog that I know is more likely to have an issue than the foster puppy, so I put her on a leash by my side with her toy. Leashes aren’t just for the outdoors. They are a great tool for you to control the situation inside as well. When toy time is over, toys get picked up and put away.

Please don’t hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or run into any issues! We want to make sure the transition is as smooth for both our pups, and our adopters. We are here to support you! Please direct any questions to adopt@humanesocietyofthedelta.org

Congrats on your new family member!!