



Always & Furever's Guide to Adopting/ Fostering a Rescue Dog:

This is a general guideline; every dog is unique and will adjust differently. Give your dog space to allow him/her to adjust at their own pace. Remember patience is key!

- **First 3 days**

Feeling overwhelmed

Maybe nervous/scared, unsure of what is going on

Not comfortable enough to be "him/herself"

May not want to eat/drink

Emotional shut down, hiding under something or in kennel

- **After 3 weeks**

Starting to settle in

Feeling more comfortable

Realizing this could possibly be his/her forever home

Figured out the environment

Getting into a routine

Will let his/her guard down and may start showing their true personality

Will start testing boundaries, behavior issues may start showing up

- **After 3 months**

Finally completely comfortable in the home

Building trust and a true bond

Gained a complete sense of security with their family

Set in a routine

Decompression Tips

It takes anywhere from 2-4 weeks for a dog to fully decompress.

- This must mean the dog needs time to unwind from all the changes that are happening in their life.
- To help them feel at home, give them their own space-whether that is a kennel or their own room.
- You never know how a dog is going to act in an environment so remaining a calm presence for them is going to be key.
- Dogs feed off of your energy so try to just make these first couple of weeks relaxing for you and for them.
- With any new dog, keep them on a leash and supervised at all times. Even if the dog isn't a puppy.
 - In a new environment they are going to test their boundaries. Keeping them on a leash will prevent them from getting away with unwanted behaviors.
 - The completion of the action is the reward, so prevention is key!

Kennel Training Tips:

Kennel training takes advantage of your dog's natural instincts to seek out a comfortable, quiet, and safe spot when the environment around them becomes too loud or overwhelming. It's also helps from preventing dogs chewing on items in the home or causing other accidents in the home. The completion of the action is a reward!

Kennel training can take days or weeks, depending on your dog's age, temperament, and past experiences. Always remember to keep the training sessions short and positive!

- Place the kennel in an area of your house where the family spends a lot of time, such as the living room. Let the dog explore the kennel at their leisure.

Some dogs will be naturally curious and start feeling comfortable in the kennel pretty quickly.

- If your dog isn't interested in the kennel: put them on a leash and bring them over to the kennel. Give them treats and praise them for going near it! Drop some treats around the kennel and in it and let your dog explore.
- When your dog is comfortable, start putting a treat in the back of the kennel, and when your dog enters you can put a word with it like "kennel" repeat this several times. Eventually your dog will start going in with just the verbal command!
- Once they go into the kennel comfortably, you can start to shut the kennel door when your dog goes in, and then open it right back up and release your dog to come out with the "okay" command. Practice this several times until your dog is comfortable.
- From there, gradually increase the time you leave your dog in the kennel. Make sure they stay calm while they are in it!
 - If they are not calm, you may need to regress a step and take some more time.
- After your dog can spend about 30 minutes in the kennel without becoming anxious or afraid, you can begin leaving them kenneled for short periods when you leave the house.
- Here's some additional helpful tips:
 - Vary the moment during your "getting ready to leave" routine that you put your dog in the kennel. You can kennel them anywhere from 1-20 minutes prior to leaving.
 - Make the exciting part, them going into the kennel, rather than them getting out of the kennel.
 - Don't make your departures emotional and prolonged (don't get really excited, say goodbye, etc.). Praise your dog briefly, give them a treat for entering the kennel, then leave quietly.

Potty Training Tips:

In the home they should be supervised or in a kennel when you can't supervise them. This is so that your dog doesn't have the chance to make a mistake. Every

time they do have an accident it is reinforcing that it is okay to go potty in the house. Prevention is key!

- Making a schedule for when your dog eats, goes potty, and exercises will help them learn what's coming next, and their body will start to get on a set schedule.
 - A dog can reasonably control their bladder for the number of hours corresponding with their age, all the way up to 10-11 hours. So for example, if a puppy is 6 months old, they should be able to hold it for around 6 hours. Keep in mind that when they eat, sleep, play hard, they are probably going to have to go potty.
- When taking them outside, we recommend taking out on a leash. However, we understand that sometimes that isn't always possible.
 - Keeping them on a leash allows you to easily supervise and keep them focused on going potty, rather than all the other exciting things outside.
 - When she finishes going potty, praise her! Rewarding is always verbal praise—"good job go potty outside", physical praise (petting them) and a small treat. We like to pair all three rewards at first until the dog has fully learned. When they fully understand to go potty outside, we phase out the treats and just use our verbal and physical praise.
- If you catch them going in the house, stop them and immediately take them outside.
 - Do not correct your dog after they have gone potty in the house. Dogs don't understand why you are getting mad at them for a random spot on the carpet.
 - If you can correct them while they are going potty they will understand that is why you are upset with them.
 - If your dog keeps peeing in the same spot it could be because the odor is still there from the last time they had an accident. Try cleaning with hydrogen peroxide, vinegar, or nature's miracle.

Dog Introductions:

When you adopt a new dog, they need time to decompress. It's best to wait 3-7 days (depending on the dog) to let your dog get used to their new environment. Once they are comfortable, then try introducing them to new friends! Some dogs need more time to decompress than others. The longer you wait, the better you will set them up for success!

- It helps to let all the dogs sniff where the other dog has been hanging out so they can get to know each other's scent. After a few days, we would suggest taking both of them on a walk. This really helps promote bonding between dogs. It is best to have at least two people on the walk, so that one person can hold one dog, and the other person can hold the other dog. Start out on a neutral ground, like a park (NOT a house or back yard). Begin by walking parallel with each other, starting out at least 20 feet away. When the dogs are comfortable, then slowly get closer while continuing to walk parallel.
 - Dogs do not do well with head to head meetings so try to avoid that, if possible!
- If the dogs will allow you to walk next to each other, that's great! Then, have one dog and person walk right in front of the other dog and person. This is so that the dog in the back can smell the other dogs butt. It sounds silly, but that's how dogs introduce themselves!
- After you walk like that for awhile, switch the dogs position and repeat.
- If all these meetings go well, try to go into your back yard and see if their energy stays the same. Keep dogs on leash until you feel comfortable and remember to keep away high value items at first (toys, treats, etc).

- Going into the house is the next step! When bringing them in the house, remember to keep them on leash until they are fully adjusted to your routines and expectations. It is important to set your boundaries early to prevent future problems.
- Take it slow, and remember every dog is different and needs time to adjust. If something goes wrong, and that's completely normal, that doesn't mean you have failed, or the dog is bad. Take a few steps back and retry in a few days.
- If you need more help, please don't hesitate to reach out to us!

Resource Guarding:

How resource guarding starts:

Typically, resource guarding starts by being pushed out of the way at the food bowl when puppies are still with their littermates. This teaches them from an early age that they need to protect high value items (food, toys, treats, bones, people, etc). However, resource guarding can sometimes be a learned behavior. It is especially common in rescue dogs that come from abuse situations. These dogs have learned that people can come into their lives and take what they want, so now they must protect whatever they have. This tells us that normally dogs who are resource guarding are insecure, rather than trying to be dominant over you or another dog.

Signs of resource guarding:

- Early warning signs:
 - Covering the object with their paws or their head, leaning their body into the object, or placing themselves between you and the object.
 - Increasing the speed that they are eating when people or another dog come near them.
 - Taking the item and hiding with it (under the couch, table, etc.)
 - When they have the item, the eyes are becoming harder, the body becomes rigid, and the ears typically go back.

- Escalated behavior:
 - Growling, lip snarls, lunging, biting, or not letting you near the object in general.
 - *In this escalated state – DO NOT approach the dog. They are giving you clear warning signs not to come near them.

Tips:

- With resource guarders normally being insecure, fear will only hurt the situation. Your dog needs to feel safe and secure in their environment, not to be “shown who’s boss”.
- If you have a resource guarder, try to prevent the situation from happening (put up all high value items) and please reach out to us. This is a very common, but tricky issue to deal with. We will be able to figure out the best method to help your dog, in a safe manner.