



Adopting? P.L.A.N. S.M.A.R.T.

Congratulations on adopting your new dog! This is a life-changing event and we hope you'll be very happy with your new companion. Having a plan during this time can help keep everyone safe and happy; below you'll find useful information to make the transition smooth for all involved. We want your new relationship to be successful, so if at any time you have questions, please contact us.

Welcoming Home Your New Dog

Prepare for Your Dog's Arrival with Necessary Items:

Crate/Baby Gates	Flat Adjustable Collar
Blankets & Beds	Identification Tags
Food & Water Bowls	Car Restraint
4-6 ft. Non-Retractable Leash	Toys (chew, puzzles, etc.)
Body Harness	Training Treats



Limit Access to Things Dangerous Things.

Restrict access to things that can be harmful or overwhelming to your new pet (or you simply want off-limits!). Baby gates and crates should be in place before your new pet arrives so existing pets can be kept at a distance and your new pet has a safe, quiet place of their own to retreat. Your dog has experienced a lot of change recently so take it slow and be patient. Let them get familiar to you and the home before introducing them to strangers and make sure children understand how to approach and interact with a new dog without overwhelming them.

Adjust as Necessary.

It may be difficult to anticipate your new pet's needs since neither of you know each other very well yet. Their needs will also likely change in the first few months, so be prepared for unexpected things to present challenges and adjust accordingly! Know the **Rule of Threes**:

- **First 3 Days:** dog is confused, possibly scared, and very unfamiliar with everything. They will most likely be quiet, reserved and need extra rest.
- **First 3 Weeks:** dog begins to acclimate to people, sounds, and smells in the home and starts to understand their routine. You'll begin to see their personality emerge in this stage.
- **First 3 Months:** by the end of the first 3 months, they are truly settling into the new life and their true personality starts shining through!

Remember, we're always a phone call or email away if you need help during this transition!



Normalize Things with a Routine.

Creating routines and boundaries will help a dog understand what to expect and when (feedings, potty breaks, etc.). Change is stressful for all animals so the more consistent you can keep their daily routine, the easier it will be for your pet to acclimate to their new life.

Supervise Everything.

Time in the yard, interactions with children or other pets, and all of the pet's activity in the house when they are free to roam, should be monitored as your new pet transitions. It only takes a moment for your new pet to sneak off and have an accident or jump the fence and run away, so don't turn your back—even for an instant—until your new pet has proven trustworthy.

Manage Your Pet Proactively.

Rather than waiting for a problem, get ahead of the game. This may mean having your pet crated when new visitors enter the home so that they don't dash out the door, jump on guests, or try to deter them from coming inside the home. Leashes, crates, and baby gates are very helpful here!

Accclimate Your Pet to Extended Family & Friends.

Gradually, starting with just one or two new people, introduce your pet to humans they will be seeing regularly. Watch for signs that your new pet is stressed or afraid and remove them from situations where they are uncomfortable before they get too upset. You want their experiences with new people, places, or things to be good ones!

Recognize Early Signs of Stress.

Dogs communicate through body language so recognizing common signals helps you understand how your dog might be feeling. Generally, a loose and relaxed posture indicates your dog is comfortable. Stiff or frozen positions indicate they may be feeling threatened and don't want to interact. Most dogs give tons of warning that they are uncomfortable long before they growl, snarl, or bite...be sure you are paying attention to what your new friend is saying!



Training is Essential.

Training helps your pet gain confidence and learn how to navigate this new world. For a relaxed, happy dog, aim for a total of 45-60 minutes of activity per day including walks, obedience work, and games like fetch. Incorporating physical and mental stimulation into the routine can eliminate unwanted behaviors, open up the lines of communication, and provide fun for both of you! If you're interested in a consultation with our in-house behaviorist, let us know! You can also search for professional trainers in your area through ccpdt.org or apdt.com or ask your local veterinarian for a reference.