

# Bringing Home Your New Dog

## Preparing And First Steps



The first week you and your new dog spend together is exhilarating, certainly, but it's also likely to be unnerving.

Moving to a new home with a new family can cause stress for dogs, and it can certainly cause stress for you, too. You can make the transition easier on both of you by doing a little advanced planning.

Here are a few things you should do before you bring home your new dog and some first steps you should take as they join your family.

## 1. Before Your New Dog Arrives...



Even before your new dog first sets its paw in your home, you'll need to make some preparations. These steps will ensure that your dog gets the best start possible in their new life.

## 1. Have A Family Meeting

A dog is a big commitment, so before you take the plunge, make sure you're all together wanting this newest member of the family.

Then decide who's going to be the primary caretaker—otherwise you'll spend lots of time arguing while your new dog stares at their empty food bowl.

To avoid confusing the pup, hammer out the house rules ahead of time — will the dog be allowed on the bed? On the couch? Where will the dog sleep? Are any rooms of the house permanently off-limits? Include your family on the decisions so everyone is on the same page.

## 2. Stock Up On Supplies

Buy some of the basics ahead of time, so you both and your dog can settle in without too many mad dashes to the store.

Here's what you'll need to get started:

- Crate
- Food and water bowls
- Food, including treats for training — *talk to your vet about an appropriate diet*
- Collar and leash
- Bed
- Toys, especially chew toys
- Stain and odor-removing cleaners
- Possibly some baby or dog gates to block off sections of your house

### 3. Prepare Your Home



This requires a little more work if you're getting a puppy, since they can be champion chewers and have a knack for getting into things they shouldn't. But no matter what your dog's age, you'll want to do some organizing ahead of time.

- **Create a temporary**, gated-off living space for your dog or puppy where they can't damage your belongings or eat something that will make them sick. They'll stay in this area whenever you're not with them to prevent them from having house training accidents.

Pick a room that's a center of activity in your household, so your dog won't feel isolated, and be sure it's one with easy-to-clean floors. The kitchen is often a good choice; you can block it off with baby gates if needed. Make sure you remove anything that you don't want chewed on or soiled.

What's in your dog's area will vary a bit depending on their age and how you're house training.

**Puppy-proof** to make sure anything that could hurt your dog — medicines, chemicals, certain plants — is out of reach.

## 4. Arrange For Home Care

Ideally, you can take a few days to a week off work to get your new dog or puppy settled in and to start house training. It'll also help the two of you bond, which in itself can make training easier.

But even if you can take some time off, you'll need a back-up team in place pretty quickly. Shop around for dog walkers, pet sitters, or doggy daycare in your area. Rely on friends and family for word of mouth recommendations.

## 5. Find A Good Trainer Or Class

Group obedience classes are great for bonding with your new dog and for learning how to communicate with and train them. These classes are especially recommended for young puppies, since they give pups a chance to get comfortable being around other canines and people — a key part of raising a safe, friendly dog.

Dog training is unregulated, and pretty much anyone can call themselves a dog trainer, so you'll want to do a little research to make sure you've found the right class and teacher.

## 6. Plan The Trip Home

Find a helper to come along when you go to pick up your dog. Young puppies who've never been on a car ride before may get rattled. Even adult dogs can get nervous — and a terror-filled car ride can turn into a long-lasting phobia of car travel.

Ask someone to sit next to your dog on the ride home, soothing them and keeping them from hopping into your lap while you're driving.

If your dog is used to a crate, you can place them in the crate for the ride home. Just make sure it's secure; sliding around the backseat will make the drive more stressful.

## 2. Once Your Dog Is Home...



Now that you've made the first car ride and walked through the front door with your new pooch, you'll both start an adjustment period. This time is important, as it will be your dog's first impression of their new home — so make it a good one! Here are a few tips.

### 1. Keep It Pleasant But Low-key At First

For a shy puppy or dog, being taken to a new place and then deluged with lots of loud, lively strangers can be really overwhelming.

The first day or two, keep the mood mellow and calm. Hold off on inviting guests over until your pup settles in.

## 2. Introduce Your Dog To Their Crate

Crates are the best way to house train, but most dogs need a little time to warm up to them.

This isn't hard to do; you just need to know how to introduce your dog or puppy to their crate.

## 3. Start Your Training

The earlier you start, the faster and easier it will be to teach good manners, and the better the lessons will stick.

The two most important things to teach your dog are house training and socialization — getting them comfortable around other people and pets.

## 4. Set Up A Routine



A routine helps with house training and is reassuring to your dog.

Figure out a schedule for walks, meals, bathroom breaks, and exercise — and try to stick to it.

A lot of this will involve observing your dog and working with their schedule to respond to their needs.

## 5. Get Your Dog License

Getting a dog license is a legal requirement in most places in the United States, but local requirements vary. However, this is an important step, and your dog's tag will be used to get them back to you if they ever get loose.

You may also want to get your dog microchipped for extra insurance. Check with your local animal care and control to find out how to get your dog licensed. You may be able to apply online.

## 6. Find A Good Vet

It's especially important for a puppy's first vet visit to be a pleasant experience so that your dog learns to take trips to the vet in stride.

Ask around for referrals, and schedule your first appointment. Your dog will need a check-up and possibly some vaccinations.

Word of mouth is a great way to find a trusted vet near you.

# And there you have it!

We hope this information has been helpful to you!

Brining home a new dog or puppy is so much fun. Just remember... your dog's first few weeks home will likely be a period of huge adjustment for both of you!

You can make the transition much easier all around if you prepare your home in advance, gather a team — vets, dog walkers, and doggy day care — and set up a routine right away.

**Have you ever brought a new dog home?**

**Do you have any tips for making things go smoothly?**

**Let us know! We'd love to hear from you.**

If you are interested in a puppy from Riverside Retrievers, visit our website below... [www.riversideretrievers.com](http://www.riversideretrievers.com)

