



Dog Adoption Packet

August 2025

Thank you for choosing to adopt! We're so excited for you and your newly adopted family member, and we hope your life together will be happy, healthy, and full of love. With this packet, we hope to provide you with all the information you need to get your new relationship off on the right paw. By adopting, you have joined the HSHC family as well. Please consider us a resource, and feel free to reach out to us with any questions you may have.



Below are some important contacts to keep on hand.

Humane Society of Harford County

410-836-1090

adopt@harfordshelter.org

Animal Emergency Hospital

410-420-7297

Animal Poison Control Center

888-426-4435

PET INFO

Name _____

Microchip # _____

Vet Name and # _____

10 Tips for Welcoming a New Dog Into Your Home

Welcoming a new pet into your family is both exciting and challenging. Practicing these basic guidelines can help make the transition smoother and support a successful adoption.

1. Be Patient

- Being in a new home, around new people, can be overwhelming to your new dog.
- Give them time to adjust slowly.
- Exposure to new places, people, and other animals should be avoided for several weeks, and should be positive, not forced.

2. Establish a Routine

- A consistent and reliable routine is essential for creating a calm and organized environment.
- This includes feeding and walking schedules, potty times, crate/bed-time, etc.
- Disorganization can be stressful and may lead to anxiety and unwanted behaviors in your pet.

3. Gradually Introduce New Pup to Resident Pup

Introducing your new dog to your resident dog should be a deliberate, step-by-step process, not a one-time event. Be mindful of the dogs' safety during the interactions, their histories with other animals, their personalities, and their body language. In general, consider the following dos and don'ts:

DO: Use positive reinforcement

DO: Stop interactions if either dog is showing signs of fear or aggression, and try again once they are calm

DO: Have the first interaction on neutral territory, such as going on a walk together

DO: Take breaks between interactions and always end on a positive note

DON'T: Force the interactions

DON'T: Allow play with toys or have high value treats together during the first few weeks.

DON'T: Ignore signs of a poor encounter and continue with the interaction

4. Establish Crate Training as Soon as Possible

Crate training can offer many benefits, such as keeping your dog safe when traveling or unattended, as well as making house-training easier. It is important to set up crate training early so that it becomes a part of their routine. The crate should be a safe and comfortable place. (Crate training instructions in this packet!)

5. Provide Necessary Enrichment

- Environmental enrichment is an essential part of animal health and welfare.
- This includes appropriate bedding, toys, and interactions that increase your dog's comfort.
- Watch your dog with new toys to ensure safety. The best options are durable toys that are unlikely to be swallowed, break teeth, or become stuck in the mouth.

6. Find a Positive-Enrichment Dog Trainer

Dog training is more than just teaching a dog to be obedient; it offers physical and mental stimulation, increases your dog's confidence, develops the human-animal bond, and can improve overall behavior. Training methods should not be painful or aggressive, as these methods can lead to more problematic behaviors and to poor animal welfare. Choose a trainer or training class wisely and consider interviewing the trainer or watching a class before selecting one.

7. Potty Train with Positive Reinforcement

- Even dogs that have been housebroken may have accidents at first when introduced to a new environment.
- Positive reinforcement and consistent commands such as "go potty" can make house-training easier.
- Supervise your dog closely when not confined; make frequent trips outside.
- Interrupt (don't punish) an accident; take them outside immediately.
- Rewarding your dog immediately after eliminating outside

8. Transition to New Food or Diet

If your new dog is doing well on his current diet, it may be best to continue with that diet until you can discuss food options with your vet. If a new diet is needed or recommended, it is important to transition your pet slowly by gradually mixing in the new food over 1-2 weeks. A slow transition will reduce the chances of an upset stomach or diarrhea.

9. Physical and Mental Exercise Are Key

- Physical and mental exercise are key for a healthy and content dog.
- Walking your dog is good physical exercise, but it also provides mental stimulation.
- Puzzle toys are great for mental exercise when your dog is indoors.

10. Establish a Veterinarian Partnership ASAP

A veterinarian is the best resource for your new dog's health and well-being, so setting up the relationship early will be especially helpful during your dog's transition to your home.

- Remember to bring any previous history, medical records, and vaccine records to your first appointment.

Take is SLOOOOWWW....

You just rescued a dog from a loud, stressful, sometimes scary environment. Although your intention is to love them and give them the best life, they don't know that yet. All they know is they are in another unfamiliar place, and it is scary, too. They need patience and time to adjust and learn about their new surroundings.

How the Acclimation Period Works:

To the dog, you are a stranger. The acclimation period is the time for the dog to be in a calm atmosphere, decompressing from shelter life, while getting to know their new person and new home.



- **Crate** the dog when asleep or not home. The dog needs a safe space of their own. Make it comfy. Give them something to occupy themselves while in the crate like a bone. This keeps the dog and your home safe.
- **Leashing** is a great option. You can leash them onto your belt or under a piece of furniture. This also stops them from reacting if you must get them off something like the couch. You are not reaching in and grabbing onto them, just tug gently on the leash, say “come” and there you go. No conflict.
- **Fun Exercise** is crucial to their decompression. No intense obedience training should be done for the first few weeks. Games of fetch, always trading the ball or toy for a treat or another toy. Don't try to grab it out of their mouth. Long walks, offering treats when they pay attention to you. Puzzles or snuffle mats engage the brain, which is just as important as physical exercise.
- **DO NOT** introduce your dog to new people, animals, or experiences for a while. **NO** dog parks, pet stores, family cookouts, holiday parties, etc. Your dog is already dealing with enough newness; they do not need more. Too much, too soon can be overwhelming and cause undesirable behavior due to fear and stress. Once your dog is settled into your home, introduce new people, animals, and/or situations one at a time.
- **TEACH** the dog by giving them time and space to adjust that **YOU** are the one to look to; that you are now here for the dog! They can trust you and look to you for security.
- **Ignore** bad behavior. Ignore crying and/or barking. If you run to the dog each time they bark, whine, or cry, you are teaching the dog that doing those things gets your attention. The dog must learn to be secure when you are not there. Use the leash to correct jumping, exploring counters, etc.

- **Praise** good behavior gently. For example, the dog is sitting nicely next to you. Touch or softly pet the dog “good boy/girl.” Let them know you appreciate GOOD behavior. Give them attention for the good behaviors you want to continue.



- **Time.** Soon you will see a change in the dog, and they will begin to see their honest and true personality. Give them time to learn you just as you are learning them. It will be worth it!
- **Patience.** They will look to you for guidance. You will gain their trust. They will relax and feel safe. There is no need to force the point that we are their leader.

- **Guardian, not master.** Slow, easy guidance, patience, and positive reinforcement for good behavior is the best way to show them what is expected and help them adjust to your home.

SO PLEASE, for the sake of the dog, slow down – WAY down! Give them a chance to show you who they can really be!



Easy Does It

Take it slow when bringing a new dog into your home. Successful introductions can take weeks. Be patient & take things one step at a time. Don't rush and start by introducing one dog at a time. Your reward will be a happy, harmonious pack.

FB&N
French Bulldog Behaviour
French Bulldog Rescue Network
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1 BE PREPARED

Have a quiet place ready for the newcomer to unwind, away from the resident dogs. Give the dog plenty of time to get familiar with the smells, sounds and daily routine of the new home before you start making introductions.



2

START ON NEUTRAL

Always introduce dogs outside of the home. Leash up and start with a walk. Keep dogs moving with no direct contact.



3

THE GREETING

If both dogs are relaxed, allow them to greet each other. If there is ANY tension, keep moving. It may take several walks before dogs are ready to interact.



4

LEASH UP

Once your new dog is ready for interaction inside the home, keep a short leash on at all times for the first few weeks. Use the leash as tool to keep control of the situation until the dog learns the rules.



5

CRATE FOR SAFETY

Never leave your new dog alone with resident dogs, even for a few minutes. Separate or crate the newcomer when unsupervised. Keeping your dog safe helps build trust.



6

INVITATION ONLY

Establish rules and expectations for your new dog by sticking to a policy of affection and treats by invitation only, never by demand.



7

MAINTAIN BALANCE

Remember that it can take several months for a dog to feel truly at home. Be patient and stick to a routine that includes exercise, affection and discipline.



*Illustrations and design by Patsy@BlackChow.com

IT DOESN'T HAPPEN OVERNIGHT

THE 3/3/3 RULE IS A GENERAL GUIDELINE FOR THE ADJUSTMENT PERIOD OF A DOG AFTER ADOPTION. EVERY DOG IS UNIQUE AND WILL ADJUST DIFFERENTLY.

		
3 DAYS	3 WEEKS	3 MONTHS
TO DECOMPRESS	TO LEARN YOUR ROUTINE	TO START TO FEEL AT HOME
● FEELING OVERWHELMED ● MAY FEEL SCARED/UNSURE OF WHAT'S GOING ON ● NOT COMFORTABLE ENOUGH TO BE "HIMSELF" ● MAY NOT WANT TO EAT OR DRINK ● SHUTS DOWN AND/OR HIDES UNDER FURNITURE ● TESTS THE BOUNDARIES	● STARTS SETTLING IN ● FEELS MORE COMFORTABLE ● REALIZES THIS COULD BE HIS FOREVER HOME ● FIGURES OUT HIS ENVIRONMENT ● GETS INTO A ROUTINE ● LETS HIS GUARD DOWN, MAY BEGIN TO SHOW HIS TRUE PERSONALITY ● BEHAVIOR ISSUES MAY START TO APPEAR	● FINALLY FEELS COMPLETELY COMFORTABLE IN HIS HOME ● BEGINS TO BUILD TRUST AND A TRUE BOND ● GAINS A COMPLETE SENSE OF SECURITY WITH HIS NEW FAMILY ● SETS INTO A ROUTINE

GIVE THEM A CHANCE

Setting Your New Dog or Puppy Up for **Successful ALONE Time**

Getting used to a new home and family is a big transition for any dog and it may take your furry friend some time to acclimate to a new environment. Part of this new routine will probably include you leaving your pup at home alone from time to time. Many dogs experience some degree of stress when left alone and it's not always easy to determine if this is the case when a dog first joins the family.

DOs

DO Start with Short absences and build up gradually as long as your dog is not showing signs of stress.



DO Exercise with your dog and provide daily enrichment. Providing affection and attention does not cause separation anxiety.



DO Utilize an expert daycare or pet sitter until your dog is comfortable alone at home.



DO Contact your veterinarian and a professional trainer.



DO NOTs

DO NOT Scold or punish your dog. They are not misbehaving or acting out of spite.



DO NOT Use Equipment that might be painful or scary. These will only mask symptoms of anxiety and can actually increase your dog's fear of being alone.



DO NOT leave your dog in a crate if they haven't learned to relax while left alone in confinement.



DO NOT Leave your dog alone for any longer than they are comfortable. They will not just "get over it".



If your dog appears stressed when left alone and is not able to tolerate the short absences you are practicing, there are experts who can help! Contact your veterinarian and a professional dog trainer who is certified to work with separation anxiety cases for more information.

By Tina Flores Illustrated by Lili Chin


DOGGY EINSTEIN'S TRAINING
YOUR DOG'S HOME ALONE HELPLINE
doggyeinsteintesting.com

How to Crate Train

Why crate train?

Used properly, a crate is an effective tool for managing, transporting, and training your dog. Crate training is the best way to prevent your dog from misbehaving, injury, developing bad habits, and having accidents. It also provides them with a sense of security; dogs are den animals. When choosing a crate, it should be big enough for your dog to stand up, turn around, and lie down comfortably.

Introduction

- Let your dog explore the new crate on their own.
- Place high value treats and toys in the crate throughout the day.
- Make a positive association by feeding meals in the crate.
- Leave the door open while in the introductory period.

Closing the door

- After your dog is willingly entering the crate, you can close the door while they eat; open it when they are finished.
- Slowly increase the amount of time the door is closed but you stay in the home.
- Once your dog is settled in the crate with you there, begin leaving the house for brief periods of time; slowly increase the amount of time you are gone.
- Always provide a frozen Kong, or safe/durable toy when you leave for long periods.
- Praise your dog A LOT for going in the crate – every time.

Things to avoid

- Using the crate to punish your dog - Your dog will not do well in the crate if there is a negative association
- Making it exciting to come OUT of the crate - when you let your dog out of the crate, be calm and they will be calm.
- Crating a dog for more than 10 hours in any day -If your schedule requires you to be away from your dog for long days, consider alternatives such as doggy g company, or a pet sitter.

Initial isolation distress is common in the form of some whining and barking, take it slowly and don't get discouraged!

Establishing A House-Training Routine

Tips To Potty Train An Older Dog

1. Take them outside at the same time, every day
2. Use a specific phrase when your dog is going to the bathroom
3. Play with them after they go to the bathroom
4. Create a consistent feeding schedule



1. Take them outside at the same time, every day

The first step in your house-training routine is to take your dog outside at the same time every single day. Even if they don't have to go. For example, you can take them outside first thing in the morning, when you come home from work, and right before you go to bed.

2. Use a specific phrase when your dog is going to the bathroom

When your dog goes to the bathroom, pick a phrase to say and stick with it. This can be “go potty.” “Use the bathroom.” Or anything that works for you. You can use this phrase before they go to the bathroom to remind them of what they're supposed to be doing.

3. Play with them after they go to the bathroom

Once your dog has successfully gone to the bathroom outside, it's important to play with them for a little bit after. This is a way to reward them for their good behavior and create a positive reinforcement with going to the bathroom. They'll begin to learn that going to the bathroom outside means they get some play time, and they'll be more likely to go to the bathroom only when they're outside.

In addition to playing with your dog after they go to the bathroom, you should also praise them and give them a treat. Don't wait until after you've gone inside to give them a treat. Give them the treat as soon as they finish going to the bathroom so that they can associate the act with a reward.

4. Create a consistent feeding schedule

It's just as important to create a consistent feeding schedule as it is to create a bathroom schedule. Feeding your dog at the same time every day will help them get into a more consistent routine with having to go to the bathroom. Make sure to not leave food in their bowls throughout the day. Only give them food at the designated times. If they do not finish their entire food bowl, save the leftovers and give them it for their next meal.

How Kids SHOULD NOT Interact with Dogs

It's common sense. Just imagine how people should interact with each other.

Avoid taking people's food



Avoid bothering dogs when they are eating

Avoid stealing other people's toys



Avoid taking a dog's bones or toys

Avoid putting your face right up to someone else's face



Avoid putting your face right up to a dog's face

Avoid bothering when asleep



Avoid bothering animals when they are resting. Let sleeping dogs lie.

Avoid pestering



Avoid grabbing tail/ears

Avoid climbing on or trampling



Avoid climbing on or trampling

Avoid pinching



Avoid hugging. Most dogs dislike it.

Avoid screaming around



Avoid hollering and shouting. Use your "inside" voice instead.

Dr. Sophia Yin, DVM, MS
The Art and Science of Animal Behavior

For additional free dog bite prevention resources and more dog behavior books and products, visit www.drsophiayin.com.

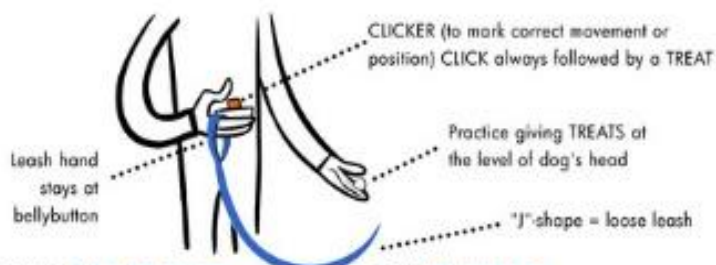


TEACHING YOUR DOG TO WALK POLITELY ON LEASH

PART ONE: Start in a small, boring space. Go at your dog's pace.

The most important step in teaching your dog to walk politely on leash is showing your dog where you want him to be while he is on leash.

To make things easier for your dog, start practicing in a small, boring space. This improves the odds that your dog will stay close to you.



PRACTICE WITH NO DOG

Practice clicking and feeding a treat at your pant seam, at the level of your dog's head.

PRACTICE WITH DOG

Practice holding the leash at your bellybutton as you click and feed.

1



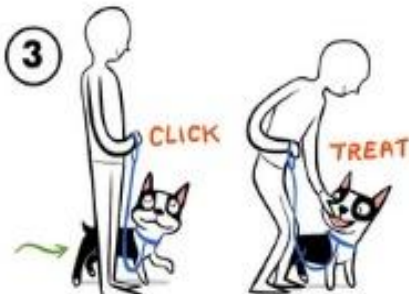
Click and treat rapidly a few times in the correct position.

2



Move slightly out of heel position and wait for your dog to move closer to you.

3



As soon as your dog moves even the tiniest step closer to you, click and feed at the "ideal" head position.

4



Repeat until your dog moves into heel position every time you move out of it.

5



Gradually take more and more steps between clicks and treats. If your dog gets confused, go back to just one step and then increase the number of steps more slowly to help him understand.

6



Then start changing direction and speed.



7

Next, move to a larger or more interesting space, and start over from STEP 1. When your dog can handle STEP 6 in the new space, move to another new space, starting over from STEP 1 again.

TEACHING YOUR DOG TO WALK POLITELY ON LEASH

PART TWO: Help! My Dog Is Pulling!



If pulling on the leash gets your dog where he wants to go, he'll keep pulling. To avoid teaching your dog that pulling is a good strategy, use one of the techniques described below.

TECHNIQUE 1: "I AM A ROCK"



When your dog pulls, stop in your tracks. Wait. As you wait, pretend you have no dog.



When your dog backs up or turns to you, click and feed a treat at your pant seam.



Then move forward again.

TECHNIQUE 2: "BACK & FORTH"



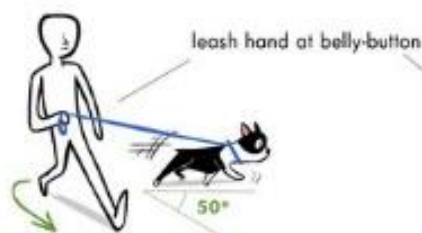
When your dog pulls, turn around and walk purposefully in the opposite direction. When your dog catches up to heel position...



Click and treat. Then turn around and continue in your original direction.



TECHNIQUE 3: "OFF AT AN ANGLE"



This is a great technique for dogs who are very strong. When your dog pulls, simply move away at a random angle that isn't 180 degrees.



Wait for your dog to catch up to heel position.



Click and treat. Then turn around and continue in your original direction again.



If your dog keeps pulling, the environment is probably too exciting. Go back to teaching your dog polite leash walking in a less exciting place. Then build up gradually to walking on leash in the exciting environment again.

Remember to go back to PART ONE every time you practice in a new place.

Introducing Dogs and Cats: Steps for Successful Cohabitation

STEP 1: **Separate the Animals.**

- Across the first few days, keep the animals separate and do not allow direct contact.
- You can rotate which animal has freedom and which is confined to allow each animal plenty of time to investigate the other one's scent.
- When no one is home, the dog or cat should always be securely confined so unsupervised interactions are not possible.
- Be sure both animals are calm, eating and using the litterbox normally before you move onto the next step.

STEP 2: **Make Leashed Introductions.**

- Allow both animals to be in the same room at the same time, but keep the dog securely leashed.
- Continue with this type of introduction until the dog is calm and ignores the cat, and the cat is calm, eating and using the litter box normally.
- When this happens, you can drop the leash but should leave it attached to the dog's harness for quick restraint, if needed.
- Continue indefinitely until both the dog and cat seem happy and relaxed around each other.
- When no one is home, the dog or cat should still be securely confined to separate areas so unsupervised interactions are not possible.

STEP 3: **Allow Unsupervised Interactions.**

- Unsupervised time together can occur after the cat and dog have been supervised around each other for a significant period of time (multiple days or even weeks) and you are positive they will not hurt each other.

Training Tip:

If the dog stares at the cat or the door separating the cat, try to distract him and get him to look away with treats, a happy voice or by gently guiding the dog away on a leash. Once the dog is away from the cat, try offering a treat. If he takes it, repeat this process until he is no longer focused on the cat or door.

Warning Signs:

- If the dog remains—overly focused, does not take his eyes off the cat or the door, completely ignores you or lunges suddenly as soon as the cat moves, this likely is not a match.
- If at any time the dog lunges toward, growls, snaps at or shows any aggression toward a calm, quiet, still cat, this match will probably not work out. The same holds true if a cat attacks a calm, quiet dog.
- If the cat stops eating, drinking, using the litter box or visiting with family members, she is not happy. You might want to consider finding a better match or try contacting a professional animal behaviorist for advice.





Dog Training Referrals

**HSHC does not recommend any trainers or training schools that use shock collars, e-collars, stim collars, prong collars or the use of force, pain, or fear.*

Private Trainers Using Positive, Science-based, & Fear Free Methods Only

- **Kathy Forthman:** CPDT-KA www.politepooches.com
Harford & Northern Baltimore County
(private and group classes)
- **Tanzi Leary:** CPDT-KA www.dogcrazylady.com
Baltimore County
(private training)
- **Aimee Glasgow:** CPDT-KA www.oscarwinningbehavior.com
Baltimore County
(private and group classes)
- **Maria Montgomery:** CPDT-KSA www.plumpointpooch.com
plumpointpooch@gmail.com
Harford & Baltimore Counties
(private training)
- **Deb Winkler:** CPDT-KSA www.humanedomain.net
Baltimore County
(Private and group classes)
- **Laurie Corak:** www.adventuredogsacademy.com
Baltimore County
(private)

Local Trainers with Special Experience in Behavior Cases (incl. aggression)

- **Maria Montgomery:** CPDT-KSA www.plumpointpooch.com
- **Tanzi Leary:** CPDT-KA www.dogcrazylady.com/fear-and-aggression-training
- **Alexandra Dille:** www.homealonecanine.com/services
(Separation Distress/Separation Anxiety)
- **Rachel Ash:** www.pawbehaviorsolutions.com/rachel-ash

Service Dog Trainers (completely different skill set than manners trainers)

- **Deb Winkler:** Humane Domain/Our Future Hope www.ourfuturehope.com
info@futurehope.org; 410-984-9047
- **Sophie Lawson:** Hero Hounds Academy www.herohoundsacademy.com

For More Resources and Trainers In Other Areas...



Animal Positive Coalition is a group of trainers and other animal care professionals in the Mid-Atlantic region (MD, VA, DC, PA, WV, DE) who are committed to the use of positive, reward-based training and handling methods. Animal Positive Coalition members teach, handle and motivate animal companions and their people through science-based training and handling, utilizing the principles of learning theory. Members pledge to use force-free, non-aversive, animal-friendly methods without intimidation, force or coercion and do not use or condone the use of shock collars, choke, pinch or prong collars, leash correction, physical correction or harsh verbal correction.



Other Ways to Help the Shelter...

Volunteer! Our volunteers are indispensable! We truly could not do the work we do without them. The shelter is always looking for help in a variety of areas. Some volunteer opportunities include dog walking, cat socializing, off-site events, doing laundry, etc.

Foster! This is one of our most rewarding programs! Foster families open their hearts and homes to provide temporary care for pets who are too young to be adopted, sick, injured, not socialized, or if space becomes an issue here at the shelter. As a foster parent, you provide tender loving care, and HSHC provides for the pets' medical needs. When the pet is ready to be adopted, you bring the pet back to the shelter.

Donate! There are so many ways you can donate to make a difference in the lives of shelter animals and workers. You can make a monetary donation, a vehicle donation, tribute donations in honor of friends and loved ones, or supplies. Some of the most common items we need are:

- Dry and canned food for dogs, cats, puppies, and kittens
- Dog and cat treats
- Kitten Milk Replacer (KMR)
- Copy Paper
- Laundry Detergent
- Non-latex gloves
- Timothy hay
- Oxbow small animal food
- Petco, PetSmart, and Walmart gift cards
- Paper towels

The Humane Society of Harford County

2208 Connolly Rd. Fallston, MD 21047

410-836-1090

www.harfordshelter.org