



Animal Humane  
NEW MEXICO

# Your New Senior Dog Adoption Packet



## Bringing Your Dog Home

### Leaving the Shelter

Some dogs are not used to riding in cars, so it's a good idea to cover the seat with an old blanket or towel in case your dog gets carsick. If you have purchased a crate, your dog can ride in the crate for extra safety. Before walking out the door, make sure that your new dog's collar is not too loose. You should just be able to slip two fingers under the collar if it's fitted correctly. From the moment you leave the shelter until you are inside your house, someone should be holding your dog's leash at all times. If you adopted a puppy, carry it until you get safely inside.

Before you enter your home, walk your dog around outside to the place you would like him to start using as a "potty" place. Most dogs will begin investigating their new surroundings right

#### THE FIRST FEW DAYS YOU WILL NEED:

- a collar and leash
- dog food and bowls for food and water
- a safe chew toy such as a Kong™
- a crate

The Animal Outfitters at AHA is a great place to find all the supplies you need at a great price. Counselors are available to answer any questions you may have on proper collar adjustment, types of leashes, and toys that your new dog may enjoy. There are a lot of great new products on the market that make training easy and fun for both you and your new dog.

away, and some will want to mark by urinating in several locations. Let your dog explore the outdoor areas first to make it more likely that he will go to the bathroom outdoors instead of in your house. Don't be too concerned if your dog doesn't go to the bathroom much during the first day. Just make sure you give him ample opportunity outside and keep a close eye on him when indoors.

### Arriving Home

When you bring your dog indoors, keep him on leash. Walk him through the house and show him important places such as the

The first few days can be full of questions. This portion of the packet is designed to walk you through the first 48 hours with your new dog and address most of your concerns. Please feel free to call the **Behavior Helpline** at **938-7900** for extra support.

location of the water bowl, his crate, dog beds and any toys that he is allowed to chew. Watch for things that he may get into, such as electric cords, waste baskets, and cabinet doors that are easy to nudge open. Now is the time to note and fix issues prior to your dog getting into trouble.

After he's completed the tour of the house, take your dog back outside for another bathroom break. If your dog is going to be spending any time in the yard unsupervised, look for any holes in the fence that may need to be repaired, any gaps underneath that might encourage digging out, or outdoor furniture or stacks of wood near the fence that might invite your dog to hop over the fence.

### At Night

It's best if your dog sleeps in a crate or dog-proof room (See "Crate or Dog-Proof Room?"). It gives him a secure place to rest and ensures that he won't get into trouble while you're asleep.

Hold off on introducing your dog to non-household members for the first few days to avoid overwhelming him. The sudden transition from shelter to home can be overwhelming, and many dogs are much more subdued than normal for the first few days.



The counselor who assisted you at AHANM will call in a few days to follow up, so it may be helpful to write down any questions you have during this first 24-hour period. Of course, you are always welcome to call Animal Human if you have a question about your new pet's health or behavior.

Right before bed, give your dog a final opportunity to go to the bathroom, then place him in his crate and close the door for the night. Placing a safe chew toy such as a stuffed Kong™ in your dog's crate will give him something to do as he settles in. Some dogs will cry or whine at first. If you are sure your dog has recently eliminated and is not whining to signal you that he needs to go to the bathroom, ignoring these noises will help your dog learn to settle in his crate.

### **Day Two**

As soon as you get up in the morning, let your dog out of the crate, leash him up and walk him out to his designated potty area to go to the bathroom. Place your dog back in his crate or dog proof room at any time during your morning activities when you can't directly supervise him. When you are ready, let your dog out of the crate and offer him breakfast. Give him about 15 minutes to show interest in the food. If he doesn't eat, take the food away until dinner.

If you're going to be gone for most of the day, your new dog will need some exercise before you go. For an older or mellow dog this may mean a walk around the neighborhood. A younger and more energetic dog will need something active to do such as a jog or game of fetch in a fenced outdoor area. Make sure your dog eliminates after he eats breakfast. Before you leave, place your dog back in his crate or dog proof room with a chew toy. If you work for more than 5 or 6 hours a day, you may need to come home at lunch or arrange for someone to let your adult dog out during the day for a bathroom break.

### **Coming Home**

When you return home, the first thing you should do is leash up your dog and take him outside to go potty. Keep your arrivals calm. The more excited you get, the more worked up your dog will get about you returning. If you are only home for lunch, let your dog stretch his legs and offer him a toy. Again, make sure he eliminates before putting him back in his crate or dog-proof room. When you come home at the end of the day, make sure to plan time to give your dog another full exercise session.

If you don't leave home to work, it's still important to exercise your dog in the morning. If there are periods during your regular day when you will not be able to spend time with your dog, begin crating him during those times. Get your dog used to your usual routine from day one so he is not frustrated by getting less attention once things settle back to normal. Ensuring that your dog gets adequate exercise, has scheduled bathroom breaks, and has a comfortable crate or dog-proof room equipped with chew toys he likes is the best way to train him to accept spending time alone.

Adding a new canine companion to your home can be a great experience and offer extra companionship for both your current animals and your family. It's important to be aware that it takes time for two pets to build a relationship. The following tips are suggestions for safely getting the relationship off to a great start.



Animal Humane's  
Behavior Helpline  
938-7900

## Introductions



Some dogs become best friends with cats. Other dogs and cats co-exist but ignore each other. Some animals split the house, the cat living upstairs and the dog living downstairs (or the cat taking countertops, the dog taking the floor). Some dogs and cats will always have to be managed closely, and will not be able to share a space safely.

Whether you plan on introducing your newly adopted dog to resident dogs, cats, or both, the very first step is to purchase a crate or create a separate dog-proof room for her so that you are able to keep your pets separated when unsupervised. If you currently have cats this is especially important, because they will need at least a week to get accustomed to a new dog in the house before they should have to share space with the new dog. You will use this area to safely confine your new dog when you are not at home or when you are not able to supervise her interactions with your resident pets, and to feed her separately. Please see "Crate or Dog-Proof Room?" on setting up this room.

### Meet the Cat

Do not introduce your new dog to your cat right away, but take time to let them get accustomed to each other through scent-swapping. Switching out their bedding is a good way to familiarize them with each other's smell. You can also confine one pet and let the other pet roam and then switch them so they can explore each other's scent.

Even if your new dog has cat experience and your cat has lived with a dog before, proceed cautiously during the first introductions. When you first allow your dog and your cat to meet face to face, keep your dog on a loose leash. Allow the dog to view the cat briefly, and then get the dog to focus on something else, like practicing commands. Praise your dog for being calm and relaxed and focusing on you while the cat is present.

## Animal Humane's Behavior Helpline 938-7900

Continue to give your dog short viewings of the cat throughout the day. Never allow her to stare or fixate on the cat. It's important to move at your smaller pet's pace and not force interaction. Use treats or praise to reward your new dog for being calm and also reward your cat for exploring. As your pets become relaxed around each other, begin to let go of your dog's leash, but leave it on her to grab if necessary. Be prepared for full introductions to take weeks or even months.

When you're out of the house, crate your dog or keep your cat in a separate room. When they begin sharing the same rooms, place furniture, cat trees and perches throughout the house so that your cat is able to move to a higher location to escape from the dog if necessary. Make sure your cat's food and litter box are in areas inaccessible to your dog.

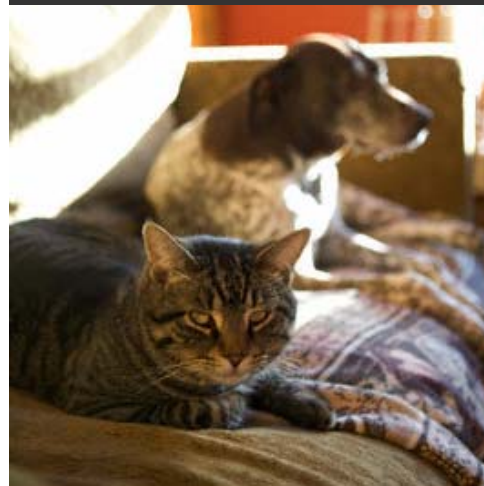
### Meet the Dog

As you head home with your new dog, keep your two dogs separated in the car. Once you are home, let the dogs get to know each other in a neutral area where neither dog is likely to feel territorial. Take a short leash walk in the neighborhood or at a park nearby, with an adult handler for each dog. Keep both dogs' leashes loose, since pulling on the leash might communicate to the dogs that you are fearful or anxious about their meeting.

As the dogs approach each other, watch their body language closely. If they are showing signs that they want to play such as a relaxed posture, prancing around or bowing with their legs stretched out in front of them, allow them to sniff each other. Give praise for a nice greeting, then continue walking them together, stopping occasionally to allow them to sniff and investigate each other. Use a happy, praising voice when the dogs are having positive interactions. Interrupt any growling or bully-type behavior with a strong, gruff voice and separate the dogs before trying again.

Before you enter your home with your dogs pick up all toys, chews, bones, food bowls, and the resident dog's favorite items. Set up multiple water bowls and an additional resting place or two to avoid sources of conflict. When dogs are creating a relationship valued items may cause rivalry, so for the next few weeks the dogs should enjoy toys and bones only when they are physically separated and should also be fed separately. When you do re-introduce these items make sure to double the supply you have available.

If the two dogs stiffen their bodies, growl, or stare into each other's eyes with their hackles up and their teeth bared, separate them and refrain from further introductions until calling Animal Humane's Behavior Helpline.



Supervise the dogs at all times! If you are unable to supervise them put the new dog in her crate or dog proof room. Keep your two dogs' play and social interactions positive and brief. This will help avoid over-stimulation or quarrels which may erupt with overly rough or extended play

Recognize that your resident dog will take time to adjust to having a new companion, and may exhibit changes in behavior or signs that he is stressed. It is not unexpected for this to occur in the first few weeks. Make sure to spend time with each dog individually and give the dogs plenty of quiet time apart.

Call Animal Humane's Behavior Helpline if you have any questions or concerns about either pet's behavior during this time.



## Crate or Dog-Proof Room?

### Crate training

Animal Humane highly recommends using a crate to get your new dog accustomed to her new home. Some people are reluctant to use a crate because they feel that it is cruel. Like any training tool a crate can be abused, but a crate used properly can aid in house training, contribute to a dog's sense of security, and prevent many behavior problems. Proper crate training is a kind and effective part of training your new puppy or dog.

If your new dog has a behavior problem or needs some training, the crate may be the only way the dog can remain a member of your family. You owe it to your new family member to try a method that is safe for your dog and works!

For your convenience, crates can be purchased from Animal Humane's Animal Outfitters so you can have a crate to use in the car and immediately when you get home with your new dog.

### What size crate?

Make sure the crate is large enough that your dog can stand up, turn around and lay flat on her side comfortably, but small enough that there isn't enough room for her to sleep at one end and eliminate at the other.

If you are training a growing puppy, you can buy a larger crate with a divider so you can adjust the crate as she grows.

No dog, young or old, should be living in a crate full-time. If your dog is crated all day while you are at work, allow her to sleep at night outside of the crate in another dog-proof location.

Most adult dogs can stay in a crate for the entire night without a trip outside. However, young puppies and some older dogs cannot physically hold their bladders and bowels that long and will need to be let out during the night.

### Why use a crate?

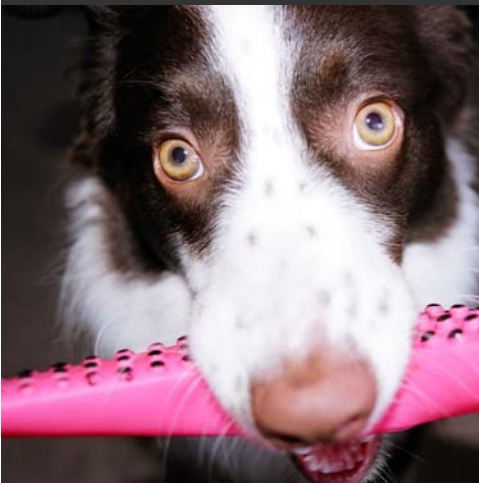
To **house train** a dog. Dogs should be monitored closely as they learn to relieve themselves outdoors and not in the house. If you cannot keep an eye on your dog, put her in her crate.

To **prevent behaviors** such as destructive chewing. Safe chew toys provided in the crate help satisfy the chewing urge and train good chew habits.

To keep your dog **safe and secure in the car**. Make sure that the crate is placed on a stable surface so it does not bounce or tip over during travel.

To allow your dog to rest or have "**down time**". This is especially important in a home with young children or other animals. When your dog is in her crate it should be a safe place and children should be instructed to leave her alone.

A crate should not be used as a form of punishment or if your dog has been identified as having separation anxiety and could injure herself trying to break out of the crate. A dog should never be left in a crate for excessive periods of time



Crate training can take days or week, depending on your dog's age, temperament and past experiences. Keep two things in mind while crate training:

- The crate should always be associated with something pleasant
- Training should take place in a series of small steps – don't go too fast

If you have multiple dogs, **feeding** in the crate can help prevent arguments over food.

At some point, it may be necessary to use a crate when your dog is **recuperating from an injury**. Such potentially traumatic situations will be much less stressful if your dog is already familiar with and comfortable in a crate.

### **Introducing Your Dog to the Crate**

You can prevent problems with crate training by setting your dog up for success. Your dog should only associate good things with the crate, so start by putting treats in the crate and encouraging her to go in. Once she is happily entering the crate, you can begin to close the door for short periods. Try to let your dog out when she is quiet and settled, not if she barks or fusses. Practice putting your dog in the crate for short periods when you are home so she does not think going in the crate always means you are leaving. Make sure to give your dog a favorite toy or chew treat like a stuffed Kong™ when leaving her in the crate. Feeding your dog in the crate can also help her associate the crate with positive experiences.

### **Dog-Proof Room**

If you choose not to use a crate, you still need a dog-proof room where your dog will stay when you can't supervise her. The ideal dog-proof room should be easy to clean and easy to close off with a door or baby gate (for small dogs or non-jumpers). It should be mostly free of furniture and non-dog related objects. The best place for a dog-proof room is the kitchen or laundry room.

Furnish the room with a dog bed or a crate with a blanket, a water bowl and several toys. This area should be the only place your dog gets to chew on her favorite toy. Introduce your dog to her room for short periods of time at first. Give her a chew bone or a stuffed Kong™ and leave her alone for no longer than a few minutes. If your dog begins to howl, whine or bark, wait until she is quiet before you respond. Leave your dog in her room while you spend time in another part of the house. Gradually increase the length of time you leave her as she gets more comfortable staying quietly in her room.

Most dogs will not need a crate or dog-proof room forever and can gradually be given more freedom over time. Your new dog just needs a place to call her own as she makes the transition to her new home. Giving a new dog complete freedom right away almost guarantees that she will have an accident or chew something inappropriate. Training your dog to stay in a crate or dog-proof room sets her up for success in the process of housetraining and alone-time training.

Many adult dogs adopted from animal shelters were housetrained in their previous homes, but staying at the shelter may have weakened their housetraining habits. Additionally, scents and odors from other pets in the new home may stimulate some initial urine marking. You and your new dog also need some time to learn each other's signals and routines. If you do not recognize your new dog's "bathroom" signal, you might miss his request to go out, causing him to eliminate indoors.



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## Housetraining

You should expect accidents, as they are a normal part of your dog's adjustment to his new home. If you catch your dog in the act of eliminating in the house, clap your hands or make a noise to distract him and quietly take him to his bathroom spot. Be sure to praise your dog well – you can even give him a treat! – when he finishes relieving himself outside.

Do not punish your dog for eliminating in the house. If you find a soiled area, simply clean it thoroughly with an enzyme-based cleaner such as Nature's Miracle™. Ignore your dog if he approaches you while you are cleaning.

For the first few weeks after you bring your new dog home, you should assume he is not housetrained and start from scratch. Even if he was housetrained in his previous home, the process will be much smoother if you take steps to prevent accidents and remind him where he's supposed to eliminate.

### **Supervise**

Do not give your dog an opportunity to soil in the house. Until your dog is fully housetrained, he must be watched at all times when he is indoors unless he is in his crate or dog-proof room. Watch for signs that he needs to eliminate, like sniffing around or circling.

### **Establish a Routine**

Take your dog out on leash frequently. Start by walking him at half-hour intervals. Some dogs will feel more comfortable going potty off leash in the beginning, so if you have a securely fenced yard you can stand in the yard with him until he goes. Praise your dog immediately every time he eliminates outdoors, and follow with a walk or play session. Praising your dog for going to the bathroom outside is just as important to housetraining as preventing accidents inside, so make sure you go out with your dog for the first week even if you have a yard.

Take your dog out at the same times every day. For example, first thing in the morning when he wakes up, before you leave for work, when you arrive home from work, after he eats dinner, and before you go to bed. Always take your dog directly to his bathroom spot. If nothing happens take him back inside to his dog-proof room, wait 15 minutes, and try again. Feeding your dog on a set schedule twice a day will help make his elimination more regular.

### Confinement

When you're unable to watch your dog closely, he should stay in his crate or dog-proof room. Dogs will go to great lengths to avoid soiling near where they eat and/or sleep. If your dog has spent several hours in his crate, take him directly to his bathroom spot when you take him out. If you find that your dog is soiling his crate, it may be that the crate is too large. You can use a crate divider if you have a wire crate or get an appropriate size crate for your dog so he can't sleep at one end and potty at the other.

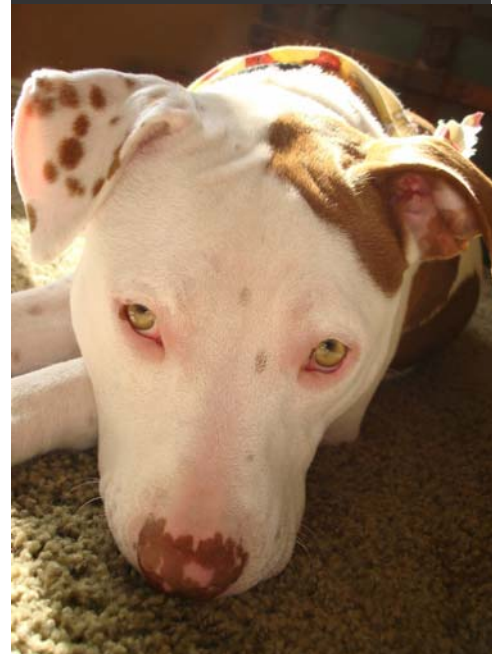
### Oops!

Most dogs, at some point, will have an accident in the house. You should expect this, as it is a normal part of your dog's adjustment to his new home. If you catch your dog in the act of eliminating in the house, clap your hands or make a noise to distract him and quietly take him to his bathroom spot. Be sure to praise your dog well when he finishes relieving himself outside.

Rubbing your dog's nose in a mess, taking him to the spot and scolding him, or any other type of punishment will only make your new dog afraid of you or afraid to eliminate in your presence. Animals do not understand punishment after the fact even if it is only seconds later, so these corrections will do more harm than good.

Do not punish your dog for eliminating in the house. If you find a soiled area, simply clean it up with an enzyme-based cleaner such as Nature's Miracle™. Cleaning the soiled area is very important because dogs are highly motivated to continue soiling in areas that smell like urine or feces. Ignore your dog if he approaches you while you are cleaning. It is sometimes beneficial to leave the soiled rags or paper towels in the outdoor bathroom spot you have chosen for your dog to help your dog recognize this area as the place where he is supposed to eliminate.

Do not give your dog an opportunity to soil in the house. **He should be supervised at all times when he is indoors.** You can tether him to you with a six-foot leash, or use baby gates to keep him in the room with you. Watch for signs that he needs to eliminate, like sniffing around or circling.



If you have consistently followed the houstraining procedures and your dog continues to eliminate in the house, there may be a medical reason or another reason for his behavior, such as submissive urination or territorial marking.

Now is the time to call Animal Humane's Behavior Helpline for assistance with finding the underlying cause for your dog's house-soiling.

You probably imagined what your dream dog would act like, and maybe you are disappointed because your new dog doesn't quite fit that description. Your adopted dog **CAN** fulfill your expectations, but not without some effort on your part.

You are responsible for what your dog will become. No matter what age, dogs are very trainable and are waiting for you to guide them. Expect an adjustment period. Both your new dog and your family need to take time to learn about each other.



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## The Adjustment Period

There will be more chores for you to do, another mouth to feed, walks to schedule in your busy day. Your dog is also going to have a few surprises for you. No matter how carefully you screened your new dog, there are going to be some things you didn't know.

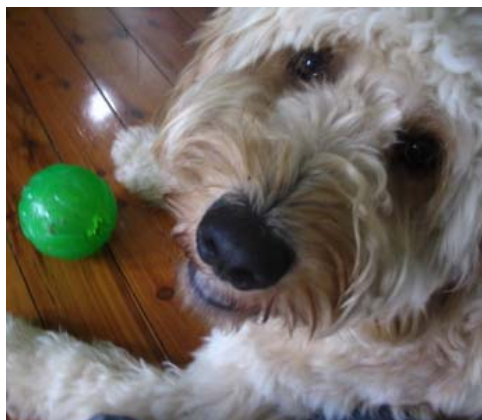
Sit down with your family and discuss what you are looking forward to enjoying with your dog, and make a plan for how you will work toward those goals. For example, if you would like for your dog to be able to sit quietly beside you while you attend your child's soccer game, you will have to enroll in obedience classes and begin exposing him to these locations and activities slowly, keeping the experiences positive and fun for both you and the dog.

### **The First Week: Preventing Problems From Day One**

The first week is the time to get your new dog used to his new home, his yard, the neighborhood and your routine. Give him time to get accustomed to these things before taking him to busy public places.

### **Assume Nothing**

Every home has different rules. Your dog is not going to know what to do or not do. His previous owners may have had a different idea about what is acceptable and what is not. And even if he's never sat on a sofa before coming to live with you, he may try anyway, just to see if you'll let him. The same goes for begging for food, or sleeping on the bed.



Animal Humane's Behavior Exchange Policy allows you to bring your adopted dog back to the shelter within the first 30 days for an exchange for another pet. In order to return your adopted dog, you must call Animal Humane's Behavior Department at 938-7900 to make an appointment at least 24 hours in advance.

Don't punish your dog for trying these behaviors, but give him a firm "no" or "off" and get him to do something else, like go outside or lie on a dog bed, so you can establish the house rules from the beginning of your life together.

It's smart to assume that your new dog may not know the difference between food you offer to him in a bowl and food that is in the trash, or that the antique needlepoint pillow on your couch is not the same as the plush toy you bought him. You will need to show him what is allowed and be consistent about what is off limits. And keep your best shoes in the closet for a few weeks, just in case. Even if your new dog is housetrained, you may find a few "accidents" on the floor while he is still getting used to a new routine. And he may show you a place or two in the fence that needs to be mended.

### **Consistency**

In addition to rules the dog has to follow, you're also going to have to establish rules and boundaries for your family to follow. This is especially important if you have children of any age living in the home. Everyone who interacts with your new dog will need to be consistent in order for him to adjust to his new environment as smoothly as possible.

### **Introducing New Things**

Your new dog may never have been bathed or groomed. You will have to proceed slowly and with patience. Start out with a warm wet washcloth and rub in short lick-like strokes until your dog relaxes, then stop. Repeat this and eventually introduce a short bit of brushing, until he relaxes, always ending on a positive note. Eventually your dog will accept being brushed. You can use the same technique of small building blocks for other grooming tasks also, such as cleaning his ears and clipping his nails.

If your adopted dog reacts strongly to something or someone in your household, he may be afraid. Initially remove that person or thing from his environment, then gradually introduce it again, one step at a time. Feed a few delicious treats to the dog as you show him the new object, or have the person ignore the dog while tossing a few treats in his direction. Avoid forcing your dog into situations where he is afraid, or he may become aggressive as a defense mechanism. Build up the time you expose your dog to things he is fearful of in small increments, and only introduce one "scary" thing at a time to reduce stress on your dog. This will help build up your new dog's self-confidence and his trust in you, too.

### **House Rules:**

1. Stick to a routine to help your dog settle in more quickly
2. Encourage and reward good behavior from day one
3. Limit the space your new pet has access to initially
4. Place your dog in his crate or dog-proof room any time you can't directly supervise him
5. Keep your new dog on leash outside unless in a fenced-in area
6. Schedule time for vigorous daily exercise



### **First Days Home with a Shy Dog**

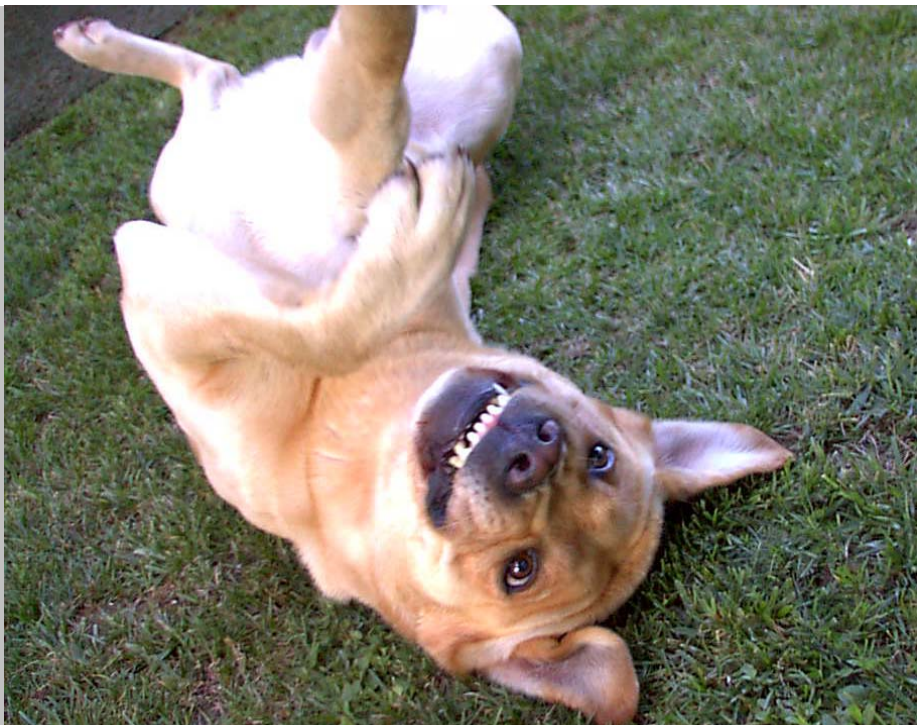
- Be patient.

The best way to win his trust is not to rush him.

- Let him explore his immediate surroundings, waiting for him to come to you when he is ready.
- Hand feed him treats and/or meals.
- Carry treats for people to toss to him.

In the early days with your shy dog, don't become frustrated. Never rush your dog. Create positive associations, and you will start to see results. In the hands of a patient and caring owner, a shy dog can be a great companion and will make gains in confidence over time.

Engaging in activities with your dog provides exercise in a fun way that boosts your relationship. Having fun with your dog enhances both of your lives - the interaction provides exercise, stress relief, and usually comic relief! A dog that receives both physical exercise and mental stimulation is a more relaxed and enjoyable companion.



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## Make Time for Fun

A dog who would play well at the dog park must be very respectful of other dogs and be okay with being approached by multiple dogs at once. Start by bringing your dog during off-peak hours. Bring some treats with you and reward your dog for checking in with you.

**Coronado Park** | 301 McKnight Ave NW

**Los Altos Park** | 821 Eubank Blvd NE

**Montessa Park** | 3615 Los Picaros Rd SE

**North Domingo Baca** | 7520 Corona Ave NW

**Rio Grande Triangle Park** | 1451 Kit carson Ave SE

**Roosevelt Park** | 500 Spruce Street SE

**Santa Fe Village Dog Park** | 5700 Bogart St NW

**Tom Bolack Urban Forest Park** | 2000 Dakota St NE

**USS Bullhead Park** | 1606 San Pedro SE

**Westgate Community Park** | Valley View & El Patron Rd

**Obedience training** is fun for dogs and their owners. It helps burn off both physical and mental energy as well as socializing your dog to new people, dogs and places.

**Canine Sports** such as Agility and Flyball are great for a young, high energy dog. **Animal Assisted Therapy** may be a suitable activity for a friendly, well-behaved dog.

**Hiking and Backpacking** Don't forget to pack water for your dog also. Carry a first aid kit and familiarize yourself with basic pet first aid. If you are planning a longer trip, start building up your dog's endurance weeks prior.

**Day Trips** Most dogs love to ride in the car. Take your dog along when visiting friends or family if she's welcome where you're going and won't have to be left in the car.

**Dog Time** Dogs need social time with their own kind. Young, active dogs may enjoy the dog park; older or more timid dogs might prefer a leisurely stroll with a friend's dog. Unless you know your dog does not get along with other dogs, don't keep her in solitary confinement.

**Chew Toys** In between your trips to the dog park or training sessions, make sure you have a variety of toys for your dog to chew. Dogs who have their own toys are less likely to use household items - such as the garden hose, children's toys, or your favorite shoes - to chew.

Dogs are generally considered geriatric around 8 years of age, although extra large breeds will begin slowing down earlier and small breeds later. During these years your dog will benefit from visits to your veterinarian every six months. Your veterinarian may recommend additional tests for your senior dog to increase the chances of early detection if your dog develops a health problem.

Dogs are living increasingly longer lives due to better veterinary care, nutrition and being kept indoors as part of the family. Your senior dog may experience a variety of changes in behavior as she ages.



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## Senior Dogs



Have you noticed that it is more difficult for your dog to jump up on the bed or into the car? Is she stiff after your daily walks? Your dog may be developing arthritis, which is a part of the natural process of aging. Feed your dog glucosamine supplements to slow down further deterioration of her joints. If your dog seems to be in pain, have your veterinarian examine her, and discuss the different options available to relieve arthritis pain. Do not give human pain relievers as some are poisonous to dogs.

Senior dogs are wonderful. They are usually calm and mature. They often have previous training and may fit seamlessly into a new home with very little additional effort on your part. However, a dog who used to play all day in the yard with children may now prefer to watch from the sidelines. Your older dog may have trouble holding her bladder for the 8 hours you are at work each day. Being sensitive to these changes will help you enjoy time with your mature companion.

### Slowing Down

Older animals tend to be less active and have slower metabolisms, which can lead to weight gain. Excess body weight increases the chance that your dog will develop diabetes and cardiovascular, respiratory, and orthopedic diseases. Be sure to feed your senior smaller, more frequent meals, keep fresh water available at all times, and keep up the daily exercise. The days of jogging are behind you, but a 15 to 30 minute walk twice a day will keep her sleek and trim. You can also help your dog stay slim by cutting back on the number of treats you feed her.

### Health

Small bumps on the skin's surface are common, but if you detect any lumps beneath the skin, have a veterinarian examine them. These can be signs of something more serious than just old age.

## Animal Humane's Behavior Helpline 938-7900

You may notice your dog bumping into things, or not hearing you when you call. Changes in her sight and hearing can cause your senior dog to become disoriented or easily startled. As dogs age, they often develop a bluish transparent "haze" in the pupil area. If you notice that your dog's eyes are becoming an opaque white consult your veterinarian, as your dog may be developing cataracts. If your dog does experience hearing loss, take care to protect her from hazards such as cars, and instruct kids to move slowly with her.

Make your dog's environment as comfortable and predictable as possible by keeping the physical arrangement of your household the same. Your dog's sleeping areas should be comfortable and easy to access. An older dog may be more sensitive to cold and might benefit from a heated pet bed or donut shaped bed that helps contain her body heat. Food and water bowls should also be easily accessible. Dog doors are great for those senior dogs who are unable to hold their bladder for as long as they used to. If arthritis is a problem, you may want to build a ramp to the outside so your dog does not need to maneuver on stairs. Slick floor surfaces should be covered with non-slip area rugs or other material.

### Senior Dogs and Kids

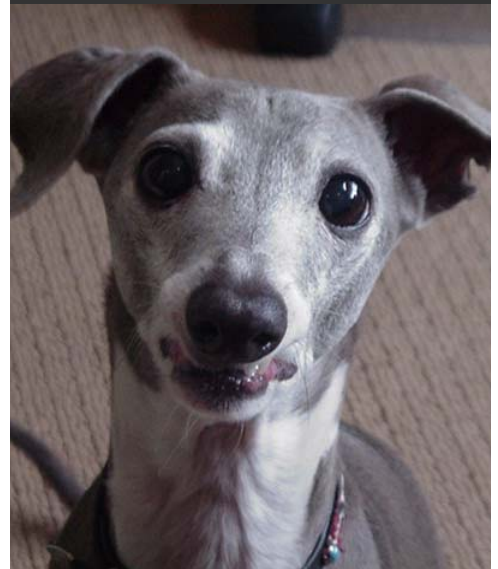
If you have young children in the home remember to create a quiet area for your senior dog away from the busiest parts of the house. Educate kids about the changes your dog is experiencing. Arthritis may cause your dog to be less tolerant of physical touch, and she may not be able to move away quickly if she is being bothered. If your senior dog is not given the space to avoid situations that make her uncomfortable, she may resort to giving warning signs that she is unhappy, such as growling or snapping. This does not mean that your dog has suddenly become aggressive. She is communicating her discomfort. If you see any of these signs you need to take action and make changes to your household routine to give your senior dog the respect she deserves.

### Canine Cognitive Dysfunction

CCD is similar to Alzheimer's Disease and is a serious form of brain deterioration. If you suspect that your dog's behavior changes are not just part of the normal aging process, talk to your veterinarian. Dietary changes and/or medication may help slow the progression of CCD.

Be patient with your newly adopted senior dog as she learns how to fit into her new home. Don't hesitate to call Animal Humane's Behavior Helpline for extra support during this time.

Periodontal disease can cause infection to spread to your dog's vital organs, so it's important to brush your dog's teeth regularly and also to take her in for professional dental cleanings with your veterinarian.



Your newly adopted senior dog may have lived with one person and had a well-established routine her entire life.

It may take a bit longer for her to adjust to her new surroundings and routine.