



General behavioural advice on adopting a rescue dog from shelter

When collecting your dog and travelling by car at any time, please secure their lead on a hook/clip attached to the vehicle. It is important that your dog is kept on a secure lead, ideally with a head collar such as a Halti/Dogmatic that is clipped on twice (once to the head collar and the neck collar) with a training lead. They must not be let off the lead when out walking for at least 6-8 weeks until you have established recall and know your dog's behaviour towards other people and animals. They may bolt from your home or car until trust is developed and will have run from danger before. When in close proximity to other dogs eg a visit to the vets or walking in crowded areas please keep your dog on a close lead. If we have had feedback about aggression, we will advise you to muzzle your dog.

Please remember that most of our dogs will have been travelling for over 48 hours in a van filled with other frightened dogs. They will be very tired and thirsty even though water and food is provided at stops enroute. We recommend that you do not introduce any strangers outside of the household for at least the first week. It is tempting to have friends and family round to see your new dog but this may cause more anxiety. Walks should be short and kept to one familiar area. Prepare an area for your dog to sleep in a corner or a quiet area where they will not feel trapped. They will have not been used to having a bed or blanket. They may never have been in a home before. We suggest that you avoid putting them on carpets/rugs until you have established a toilet routine.

If your dog has arrived with an EU passport, you will need to change the registered address to your own with the help of your vet if you intend to travel abroad. The microchip will also need re-registered to your new address. If your dog has come from outside the UK, the easiest way to change the chip is through Pet Log. <https://www.petlog.org.uk/recording-a-pet-with-an-overseas-microchip/>

APHA may ring to make an appointment to check the papers and chip number related to your dog and this is normal practice if a dog arrives from abroad.

When introducing your new dog to an existing dog, please try to do this on neutral territory such as a walk close by, with both animals on leads letting them sniff each other. Your existing pet may also become jealous of a new dog so please do not leave them alone

together in the introduction period. Sharing attention and treats with all pets is important and letting your existing pet have their normal space/bed/feeding time.

Our rescues are highly intelligent dogs and often adept at escaping through windows and opening doors so all areas need to be double checked for security. They can often open doors using handles and can climb/jump to heights beyond what you may imagine. This is how they have survived.

Due to their size and often unknown history, your rescue dog should not be left alone with anyone other than their adult owners and never within close proximity of a child or vulnerable adult unless secured on a lead for a reasonable introduction period. Please never leave a dog alone with a child or vulnerable adult however long they have been with you.

Many of our dogs are food protective as they have been starved or taunted with food. We recommend that you feed your dog separately from other pets to avoid conflict. They may snap if fed treats from the hand and we do not recommend this until they are confident that food is plentiful. Many dogs have had a diet of bread and bones so a high protein content food can cause stomach upsets for a few days. Feeding a food like Chappie can ease them into higher protein content food which can be introduced gradually. We recommend feeding them more frequently than you may normally do ie 3 times per day. This is to stop them binging on food and reduce the risk of sickness/bloat and also let them know that food is readily available now. They may also try to hide and bury food as they have done this before to survive. If doing this in a garden with other dogs, this may cause conflict if one of your other pets finds it.

Some of our dogs view other smaller animals as food. Household pets such as rabbits, gerbils, hamsters should be kept securely. We will have had your dog tested for tolerance to cats if possible in shelter although depending on the shelter they cannot always do this. If we do not say your dog is cat tolerant, please take this as it isn't and keep your cat separate until slow and safe introductions can be made over a period of time. Many of our younger dogs become cat tolerant if trained properly

Your dog may smell on arrival and your automatic reaction may be to bath it or take to the groomers. Please do not do this in the first few days until you have established some trust. They may have had water or hosepipes used as abuse; may view brushes as something to hit them with. They will almost certainly have never been to a groomers.

Common anxiety triggers are bangs, slamming of doors, hoovers, garden equipment, brushes, walking sticks, TV.

We are here to help and guide you through the process of integrating your dog into their new life. Patience and tolerance are key. When dealing with difficult behaviour, please view this as anxiety driven. Think of your dog as suffering from trauma. Often we find Bachs emergency rescue remedy added to their drinking water helps with heightened anxiety.

We recommend reading the book: The Rescue Dog: A Guide to Successful Rehoming by Vanessa and Ann Stead. If we are rehoming a traumatised dog, A Guide to Living with and Training a Fearful Dog by Debbie Jacobs is recommended.

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