

## GETTING TO KNOW YOUR NEW PET

**Congratulations!** You've adopted an adult pet from a rescue group or shelter. This is the beginning of a great adventure for you and your new pet. Here are some tips to help you navigate the first days, weeks, and months of your life with your pet.

**Right now, you're probably excited** and hopeful as you bring your pet home. And you should be! No one will love you more than your rescued pet.

**Keep in mind**, though, that all new pets - especially fully grown pets that have been in a shelter or foster care - need time to adjust. The pet won't automatically know that he/she now has a forever home with you, so he may be anxious, frightened or over-excited. The pet won't grasp the rules and habits of your home until he/she has been there a while and benefited from your direction. The pet may have been house-trained in a previous home but may not generalize this behavior to a new place.

**All pets - just like people** - need time and coaching to be their best. **IT WILL GET BETTER!** Be patient, think long-term, and remember the 3s.

### THE 3s OF ADOPTING AN ADULT DOG: What to expect

#### - **THREE DAYS: Your pet should start warming up to you.**

During the first three days, provide a quiet environment. Don't introduce your pet to all your friends and family at once. Keep a regular schedule for eating, sleeping and walks. Offer a small treat when the pet does something desirable. Ignore bad behavior: yelling or touching may simply reinforce it. Coach any children in your home to be gentle and respectful with the pet; emphasize that the pet is not a toy but a living being. If you have rescued a dog, ask him/her to 'sit' before giving the food bowl, opening doors and leashing up.

#### - **THREE WEEKS: Your pet is beginning to fit in.**

The pet is learning the daily routine. This is when to reinforce good behaviors on a regular basis. Consistency and repetition are key. Don't worry if you feel frustrated or worried. Problems are bound to come up with new pets that are in situations they've never experienced before. Ask a training expert if you have specific concerns. You may want to sign up for a basic obedience class with a certified dog trainer.

#### - **THREE MONTHS: The pet is at home in your household.**

By this time, most pets know they are "home". With a good behavior plan, the right training, patience, and - important! - a sense of humor, you and your pet are on your way to a rewarding and loving life together.

**REMEMBER: You are never done developing a relationship with your pet!**

#### **Sources:**

Handsome Dan's Rescue

Dr. Patricia McConnell: [www.patriciamcconnell.com](http://www.patriciamcconnell.com)

Petfinder.com: "Tips for the first 30 Days of Dog Adoption"

DogOutLoud.com: "So you've brought home a new dog... now what?"