



Helping Your Dog *Ease Into* Your New Home



Moving into a new home can be both an exciting and stressful time for humans and pets. While we are able to understand why we have changed our dwelling, your furry companion may have a harder time adjusting to his new environment. The following are some tips to help your dog adapt to the new place you call “home.”

- Before moving day, take time to reinforce basic obedience commands with your dog. He'll be more focused on you and have an easier time settling in to his new surroundings.
- During busy packing activities, confine your dog in his area or crate. Provide him with fun toys to keep him occupied and remember to take him for regular walks throughout the day. If you anticipate a hectic moving day consider boarding him at day care, kennels or with friends to keep him safe.
- When you arrive at your new home, take your dog for an on-lead walk both inside and outside the home. Keep him confined in a room or his crate to ensure he doesn't escape while you are busy with unpacking chores.
- Place his bowls, toys and bed in the same rooms as in the old house (e.g., next to the kitchen fridge, in the family room). Continue to use the same bed he's been using—providing a new bed in his new home may be too much change for him to take all at once.
- Understand that your dog will need time to adjust to his new living arrangement, as well as to possible time and climate changes. As he adapts to his new surroundings, he will begin to feel more comfortable and relaxed, especially if he sees that you yourself are calm and comfortable in the new environment.
- It typically takes about three weeks for a dog to become accustomed to his new setting, so try to keep to the same routine your dog previously enjoyed. This will alleviate stress and help him settle in faster.
- Plan to be home with your dog for the first few days after the move. During these days, begin spending short periods of time away from the house to see how he will respond. That way, when you have to be away all day, your dog will be better adjusted to the home and will feel more comfortable when you're not there.
- Be patient with your dog. Realise that accidents will happen. The more you are able to monitor him and, if necessary, restrict his movements, the less chance for mistakes. If there were pets in the house previously, there may be issues with your dog wanting to mark his territory. Be careful not to over correct him and be sure to praise him profusely when he does something positive.
- Observe your dog's behaviour. The move he has just experienced may be traumatic for him. Watch for potential medical concerns such as not eating, diarrhea and coughing, which may be associated with stress and require treatment. Other signs of stress are pacing, hiding, destroying things and separation anxiety.
- Fearful behaviour is common when a big change has occurred in a dog's life. Your dog may be uncharacteristically timid in his new surroundings. Needy or “clingy” behaviour is also common. Your dog may be feeling unsure, and so he may try to follow you wherever you go. Remember, you are his most familiar anchor in the new home.
- If your dog shows signs of nervousness, try not to overly reassure him. By giving him an unusual amount of attention when he is worried, you can inadvertently communicate to him that there must be something to worry about. Just remain calm and confident. Toys like the Buster® Cube or Kong® may be a good way to entertain your dog and keep his mind focused on something fun.
- Check your new home's surroundings for any dangerous items, such as rat poison, antifreeze, chewable objects or holes in a fenced area.
- Research a veterinarian and plan to visit the clinic with your dog before an actual appointment or emergency visit. Provide the clinic with a copy of your dog's veterinary records.
- License your dog according to local authorities, update his identification tags, and contact your dog's microchip or tattoo registry to update your contact information. Place new stickers on the doors and windows around your house to alert emergency services that there are pets inside.

Be patient with your furry pal as he adjusts to his new home. He may take days or even weeks to get comfortable with his new home and routine. Continue to provide an environment of love, comfort and trust, and your dog will soon settle in to his new home sweet home.

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