



GUIDELINES TO TRANSITIONING YOUR RESCUE DOG INTO YOUR HOME

Bringing a rescue dog into your home is exciting and daunting; exciting in that you are adding a new member to your family and daunting in that you have not had the benefit of knowing the dog since birth and therefore do not know his personality and behaviors, likes and dislikes, and how it responds to certain situations. However, if you implement the suggested "dos" and "don'ts" below, you have the ability to make a successful transition for both you and the dog.

Initial Exposure to Your Home

DO	Do use a crate when transporting the dog in your vehicle to your home. Once you arrive at your home, walk the dog around your neighborhood and property for 30 – 60 minutes before inviting the dog into your home. Allow the dog to sniff and relax during the walk. Offer words of encouragement when the dog looks to you for guidance and relieves itself.	This begins the process of forming of bond between you and the dog and simulates the experience of migration so that moving into your home feels like migrating from one area to another, and thus makes sense to the dog on a primal level. It also gives you and the dog time to relax before entering your home. You never want to bring the dog into your home in an excited state. You always want the dog to enter your home in a calm relaxed state so the dog will associate your home with a place of comfort and safety.
DO NOT	Don't allow the dog to pull you, drag you, or run around out of control.	The first walk is the beginning of forming a bond with the dog. Therefore, you want to begin to establish immediately that you, not the dog, are the leader and protector of the pack. You establish leadership by setting boundaries, rules and limitations for the dog. The boundary you are setting is that while on leash, the dog does not take control of the walk, you do. Your new dog will likely be insecure and nervous and/or may not know how to walk on leash. Therefore, do not be frustrated if the dog pulls or seems hyperactive. Simply slow down to a crawl or just stand still for a few seconds and then move a few steps forward.
Additional Tip: Do NOT use a retractable or "flexi-leash". You do not have control of the dog with this type of leash; this type of leash places the dog in a dominant position by encouraging him to walk ahead of you at a distance. The dog will not bond with you because he is walking in front of you. In addition, a flexi-leash indirectly informs the dog that since he is leading the walk he must also protect you, therefore creating stress for the dog which could lead to aggressive behavior. Make sure you have a regular 6' leash to help maintain contact with your dog and that the leash is relaxed.		

Entering the Home

DO	Humans should enter the home first. Ask your dog to sit before entering the home. If your dog does not know the sit command, walk ahead of the dog into the house first.	By entering the home before the dog, you are reinforcing to the dog that you are the pack leader. Leaders always enter new environments first to ensure the safety of the pack. By entering the home first you are also communicating this is YOUR space and you are inviting the dog into it. By asking the dog to sit you are beginning to obtain an understanding of what commands the dog knows. This is also the beginning of the dog understanding the rules you expect him to follow.
DO NOT	Do not allow the dog to push past you and barge into your home and run around out of control.	If the dog enters the home first, he is acting in a dominant role by checking out the environment to ensure the safety of the home. The dog is indirectly learning that he is the dominant member of the pack and is claiming the home as his. A dog running around the home, out of control, may damage your home or harm himself. It is your job as a "parent" and leader to provide calmness & security for the dog so he will begin to trust you.

Space for Your Dog

DO	When you enter your home, direct your dog to an area you have prepared in your home for him. A small area such as a bathroom or laundry room usually works well so that you can easily clean any accidents the dog may have. Use a baby gate as the barrier. Some Cocker Spaniels will jump over a baby gate, so it may be beneficial to have two gates so you can stack one on top of the other. Leave the dog in this area for a few minutes with a crate, bed, water, and food. Then you can show the dog a few rooms in the home where the family usually is located, such as the family room. The dog should be supervised at all times and never left to wander around the home unsupervised.	Many adoptive and foster families mistakenly believe the dog will be happier having freedom to run loose within the home. The exact opposite is true. The more space a dog has available, the more space the dog believes he must protect. Dogs feel more comfortable, confident and relaxed when they have a smaller space to call their own. Place a bed, water and one or two toys only in the space that is set aside for the dog.
DO NOT	Do NOT allow the dog to have full exposure to your home. Gradually introduce your dog to your home over a series of days or weeks, depending on the size of your home. Allow your dog to develop a sense of "home" during the first few days by confining him to the room you have designated as his "space" for periods of time throughout each day alternating with time spent with the family in other areas of the home. Have a crate in the dog's space since most dogs view a crate as a place of safety.	

Giving Attention

<i>DO</i>	Give your dog attention throughout the day on your terms.	You want to give your dog enough attention for him to understand that he is part of the pack. However, you do not want the dog determining when and how much attention you are to give him. You decide as the pack leader when you are giving the dog attention and the type of attention you wish to give, including petting the dog, walking the dog, and playing with the dog.
<i>DO NOT</i>	Do NOT give your dog attention when he demands it by barking, whining, scratching at doors or walls, jumping, pawing or licking.	By giving the dog attention when he engages in behavior such as barking or whining, you are rewarding his demanding, pushy, bossy, dominant behaviors and indirectly teaching him that he is the boss of you, which will lead to aggressive behaviors. The dog is also learning he is the dominant personality and thus the pack leader who is responsible to take care of you. This is a very stressful role for a dog, especially a Cocker Spaniel, and leads to aggressive behavior such as barking non-stop, snapping, and biting.
<p><i>Additional Tip:</i> Many foster and adoptive families initially give the dog "love" by patting & cuddling the dog non-stop. This does not constitute "love" in the canine world. By giving your dog non-stop touch, "kisses" and conversation, you are indicating to the dog YOU are insecure, needy and not a pack leader. By leaving the dog alone for sporadic periods of time, you are teaching the dog that when he is alone, he is safe and can relax; teaching him you are confident, secure and dominant. The dog learns he can be left alone in the home and you will return.</p>		

Tone of Voice

<i>DO</i>	Speak in a normal tone of voice; calm and even toned.	Dogs communicate primarily through body language. They are masters of interpreting human moods by observing our body language and listening to our tone of voice. A normal calm tone indicates you are in control and can be trusted to provide safety to him.
<i>DO NOT</i>	Do NOT speak in a "baby" voice to your new dog. Likewise, do not "yell" at your dog in frustration and anger.	Some dog owners mistakenly believe speaking in a high-pitched baby voice conveys kindness and trustworthiness to the dog. Speaking in a high-pitched "baby" tone instead conveys YOU are weak and insecure (in essence, a baby); therefore not to be trusted to ensure safety of the pack. Likewise, yelling conveys you are out of control and not to be trusted. Dogs have hearing that is significantly more acute than humans. You can whisper to your dog and it will hear you just fine. Even better, you do not need to speak to your dog at all. Your body language will communicate every message you wish to convey.

Toys and Play

DO	The best way to form a bond with your dog is through play. Play with your dog daily, more than once a day in short spurts.	Dogs learn through play. The more enjoyable and fun the activity, the more focused the dog is on you to play the game.
DO NOT	Do not play tug of war or chase. Instead, play games such as Hide and Seek (a favorite of Cocker Spaniels).	Games such as tug of war and chase often lead to aggressive behaviors. Hide and seek is fun and teaches commands such as "come" and "find."
<p>Additional Tip: Some pet owners feel the need to purchase dozens of toys for their dogs, thinking the more toys the animal has, the more entertained or mentally stimulated he will be. The opposite is true. The more toys a dog has, the more items he feels he must guard and protect. This leads to "resource guarding", stress for the dog, and aggressive behaviors. You can still buy dozens of toys, but put them in a cabinet or closet and rotate them daily or weekly. In this way, the dog has new exciting toys, but is not inundated with more toys than he knows what to do with. It is suggested no more than three toys available at any given time. To start with, choose one rope toy, one rubber/kong type toy and one plush toy. Once you determine the type of toy your dog prefers you can give him three of that type.</p>		

Feeding Time

DO	Feed your dog the same food that he was eating before he came into your care. Incorporate any new food that you wish to introduce into his current diet slowly over the next 7-10 days. Feel free to hand feed your dog (which helps establish a bond and trust) and to stick your hand into your dog's food bowl while he is eating.	Dogs are very sensitive to changes in diet. A quick change to your dog's diet can cause diarrhea, which can lead to more serious illnesses. Hand feeding will help your dog understand you control his access to food, which is a valuable resource. This also places you in a leadership position. By placing your hand in your dog's bowl while he eats you are reinforcing your dominance and also reinforcing you are not taking or denying your dog food, but that you are the dominant member of the pack.
DO NOT	Do not tease your dog with food; holding it out for your dog to take then denying access to the food. Do not overfeed your dog. Adult dogs are usually content being fed either once or twice daily.	Teasing your dog with food will teach the dog that you are not trustworthy. Overfeeding your dog will lead to a host of health conditions that will shorten the dog's life and increase veterinary bills.

What is Love

DO	No one knows for sure if dogs feel "love" the same way humans feel love. However, scientists do know humans often behave with dogs in ways that constitute love in human terms but not love in canine terms. Dogs feel relaxed, secure and seem "happy" when humans set consistent boundaries, rules and limitations.	Many behaviors humans think are a display of love, are perceived by a dog as weakness, i.e., speaking in a "baby" voice, constantly giving the dog attention, immediately responding to every request of the dog, not setting boundaries or rules. Dogs are most relaxed and "happy" when they know the rules they are expected to follow.
DO NOT	Do not be afraid to set boundaries and rules for your dogs and do not be afraid to expect your dog to abide by those rules.	Your dog will trust you as the pack leader and be happy to comply with your requests if you consistently apply the rules. You will be happy having a reliable well-behaved dog and your dog will be happy because you're happy.

Leashes & Walking

DO	Practice walking your dog indoors by your side off leash by holding your hand at the side of your leg with a treat or toy in your hand. Your dog will focus on what is in your hand and walk by your side. Do this in short spurts, taking a few steps at first then longer distances each time you practice. As your dog begins to walk by your side, practice indoors with your dog on-leash with a regular 4' or 6' leash. Once your dog is able to walk a few steps at least by your side, try practicing outside.	Having your dog walk by your side is the ultimate display that you and your dog are bonded. Your dog will also be safer by your side since you can more easily protect your dog and ensure your dog does not irritate other people or dogs by lunging at or jumping on them.
DO NOT	Do NOT use a Flexi-leash or other expandable type of leash. Have you ever seen a dog on a flexi-leash actually walking by the human's side or focused on the human? The dog is usually not focused on the human at all but is simply just out walking.	Flexi-leashes encourage the dog to walk ahead of you. In a pack, the pack leader walks ahead of the pack to ensure the environment is safe to walk into. By allowing your dog to walk in front of you, you are teaching the dog he is dominant and responsible for taking care of you. If the dog is responsible for you then you are expected to obey his rules. If your dog is walking ahead of you, he is not bonded to you. Invest time teaching your dog to walk by YOUR side. Your dog wants to be your companion, so return his desire by walking <u>with</u> your dog, not <u>by</u> your dog.

Meeting and Greeting New People

DO	When introducing your new dog to people at your front door, ask them to ignore the dog. No look, no touch, no talk. Once the dog is calm and sitting quietly, the person can then give the dog attention in the form of a pat or a treat.	Dogs often get excited when people come to the door because people usually give them attention. If you haven't established yourself as the pack leader, the dog will guard & protect the home.
DO NOT	Do not allow your dog to rush at the door and jump on people. If your dog rushes the door, take him to his "space" or crate so he doesn't jump at the door. Alternatively, you can leash your dog near the door and step on the leash so the dog cannot jump on people. Instruct him to sit. Once he is calm, give him attention or a treat. Remember to ask people meeting your dog to remove sunglasses and hats; a nervous dog cannot determine the intentions of the person if they can't see their eyes.	Not only is it rude and annoying for a dog to jump and bark, the dog may bite or frighten a child or elderly person.

Leaving the Dog Alone

DO	On the first day, leave the home for 60 seconds, leaving your dog in his "space". If he is calm, reward him for being "quiet". If he whines, ignore him until he is calm and quiet. Practice this a few times a day by adding an extra minute or two each time. The goal is to be able to leave the dog alone in his space for 30 minutes within the first one to two weeks.	You need live your life both with your dog and without him. You need to know you can leave him alone while you go about your business without your dog injuring itself or destroying the home.
DO NOT	Do NOT give your dog attention if he is whining or barking. Doing so reinforces he is not safe when alone. It also reassures his whining or barking will produce your presence or voice, a type of attention-seeking behavior.	Dogs are pack animals and feel happy and safe when in the company of their pack members. However, living in a human society requires that a dog learns to be comfortable being alone. If your dog will be left alone for more than 4 hours each day you should consider hiring a dog walker or dog sitter. It is not fair to the dog to be left alone for long hours.

More than One Dog in the Home

<p>DO</p>	<p>If you are considering introducing a second dog into your home, the most successful additions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the opposite gender • similar age or breed with similar energy levels • older dogs often do not get along with puppies <p>Introduce the dogs off the property first to determine whether they show any interest in each other. If they show an interest and get along, introduce them again outside the home. Then enter the home, allowing your current dog to enter the home after you but before the new dog so your current dog's status as an established pack member is preserved. Give attention to your current dog at all times prior to the new dog; feed your current dog before the new dog by putting the food bowl down first. Give "preferential treatment" to the current dog before the new dog. This will help reduce any conflict between the dogs.</p>	<p>Not only is there a hierarchy between the humans and the dogs in the home, but there is a hierarchy among the dogs themselves. That hierarchy often changes over time, but the dogs themselves need to determine who is of higher rank within the pack. Humans often inadvertently create conflict between dogs by "feeling sorry for" or protecting the lower ranking dog.</p>
<p>DO NOT</p>	<p>Do not feel sorry for the new dog or show sympathy for the new dog. Failure to respect that status of your current dog will lead to conflicts between the dogs that could result in harm to either dog.</p>	<p>While most dog fights do not result in serious injury or death, they can be very frightening to the humans witnessing the conflict.</p>

Sleeping

<p>DO</p>	<p>Train your dog to sleep and take naps in a crate.</p>	<p>Dogs feel safe in their den. Reinforcing your dog that the crate is his own space, will help him feel confident and relaxed. When going on a vacation, you will need someone to care for your dog(s). People are more willing to help if the dog is not an inconvenience. While you may enjoy sleeping in bed with your dog, your dog sitter may not. Your dog may whine and keep the dog sitter up all night if he is accustomed to sleeping in your bed while the dog sitter won't allow it. In addition, dogs bring dirt and bugs from their paws and fur into the bed.</p>
<p>DO NOT</p>	<p>Don't allow your new dog to sleep in bed with you.</p>	<p>In the canine world, the alpha or dominant mating pair sleep separate from the rest of the pack. By sleeping with your dog, you are placing your dog in the same rank with you. It will be more difficult to train your dog if he doesn't recognize you as dominant, the pack leader.</p>

Children

<p>DO</p>	<p>Supervise all children around the dog.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach children to look at the dog's nose instead of his eyes. • Teach children not to jump at or reach towards the dog's face. • Teach children to "give the dog space" and wait for the dog to approach rather than them reaching out for the dog. • Teach children that when they want to pet the dog, to reach behind the ears and then touch the head; do not reach towards his eyes. 	<p>Children can be very intimidating to a dog if the dog was not raised with or around young children.</p> <p>Children tend to be loud, their movements are unpredictable, and they might stare directly into the dogs' eyes. Dogs may warn the children to stay away by growling or snapping. Some adults see the dog's "warning" behavior as aggression and respond themselves in an aggressive manner, thereby confirming to the dog that children are dangerous because something "bad" happens when children are nearby. In the worst case scenario, the dog will bite when children ignore his warning.</p> <p>This teaches the dog biting is the appropriate action to keep children away.</p>
<p>DO NOT</p>	<p>Do not allow children around your new dog unless there is an adult present to supervise and observe the comfort level of the dog around the children. The adult must not hesitate to remove the dog from the area if the dog appears stressed or over-tired from playing. For the first several weeks while the dog is in your home do not allow the children to play tug of war or chase with the dog. Do not allow children to pull the dog's ears or put their face immediately in front of the dog's face. Do not allow the dog to lick your child's face, either.</p>	<p>Dogs want to please; children want to bond with the dog and have the dog love them. However, dogs can become very stressed and anxious if they are unclear of what game the child is trying to play or what the child wants from them. This stress and frustration can lead to snapping and biting. Many children ignore the dog's need for space by entering the dog's private space or waking the dog up when he is sleeping. It is important the adult establishes rules in the home with respect to giving the dog his space and rest time so he can engage in play with your children in a positive manner.</p>

While this is not a complete list of all tips to help transition your new dog to your home, it is a comprehensive list of *guidelines* that will help you get started with making your new dog a happy member of your family.