

Bringing Your New Dog... Home!



By Grant Holmes,
Perfectly Pawsible owner



Remember,
A well-behaved, obedient dog is
Perfectly Pawsible!



Bringing your dog home...

Whether a puppy or an older rescue, there are steps you can take to make the most of your first trip home with your new pack member. In this case, we are assuming you've already selected your pet. If you haven't, see the special section at the end (**Choosing the right dog**).

TIME: First, let's talk about time. One of the biggest issues I see is time. We tend to think that we need to do something with the dog, 'now'. Like the dog will know and understand our urgency. It is one thing to expect urgency from your pooch on a command like "sit", but quite another to expect the dog to lie down, roll over, and hold still for eye drops - **NOW**. Think of how you would feel if someone four times your size suddenly decided to hold you down, hold your eye open and put a foreign substance in your eye. Think you might squirm?

Lesson 1: Allow TIME for the process. Think of all the changes that need to occur in your life, the people that may live with you and for your new dog. This is especially important if you are rescuing a dog from a pound or other facility. Remember the longer your dog has been in a facility with limited human interaction, the more time and patience you should allow for them to adjust. We suggest planning a **DAY** to bring home your pet, remember the less time you allow, the more stress you'll place on your pet.

PATIENCE: These first two are the hardest. Re-read the first paragraph, it's that important. So, along with time, is patience. Why set aside a whole day for your new pet?

Visit facility (preferably with everyone that will live with your new pet!); most facilities have an area where you are able to walk potential pets. Take your pet there now and play some more. Take a toy or two with you. Take a pillow for the dog to sleep on, or a blanket/whatever. Put that on the ground, so when the dog rolls around and moves, it gets its scent on the blanket/pillow. Get down on the ground and play. See how the dog responds to your commands, if any. Now is the best time to change your mind. **Be Sure!** Again, **Take Your Time!** Allow everyone time to play. Make sure the pooch gets to know everyone. See who they gravitate to. While this is happening, and you've had your turn, go finalize any paperwork, so when you're ready to go, you can go. Make sure the pooch had some time to potty! (Hint for later: find a nice juicy treat that your dog likes!)

Lesson 2: Ensure you have the right dog!

The Trip Home; Utilize the pillow above in your vehicle. Have the dog sit/lay on the object on the way home. Work to keep the pet calm. You've had a chance to play and have fun. Minimize stress by talking calmly to your new pack member. If it acts sleepy or relaxes, let it sleep and as they say, "let sleeping dogs lie". Be prepared before you leave with a couple towels, water, whatever you may need to clean up a mess in your car. Remember, your dog is under high stress. They may not travel well and throw up or have an accident. Do **NOT** punish your dog if this happens. Don't praise either, just clean up the mess and move forward. Again, we're working towards a rewarding, positive experience.

Lesson 3: Ensure a calm ride home!

Arriving Home; This is a great time to repeat the experience above when you visited the facility. Walk your dog around the yard. Let her sniff and get to know her new surroundings. Play a bit outside on the blanket again. This also allows your pet a chance to relax and maybe get another potty break in. You'll be glad you *took the time* to relax your pet. Above, we asked you to notice whom the dog was most interested in. The most **Calm/Assertive** member of your pack or the one the dog was most comfortable with is on-deck for the next exercise.

Lesson 4: Let your dog explore!

Walking your home; Time to take your addition inside your home. Your dog should be on-leash through all this, by the way. Again, take your time, we're going to let the dog explore at his pace. The reason for the lead is not wanting (especially a male) the dog to mark territory. The lead should be loose, but able to be controlled quickly. Pay attention! If your dog should start to mark, immediately pull **up** sharply (not HARD, just sharply) and say "no" firmly. If your dog went outside, it may not really have to pee, it's just looking to mark. If the dog did not pee outside, immediately take the dog outside and tell her to "potty". If she goes, reward her with enthusiastic praise, then go back inside to wherever you were. Make sure the dog sniffs the same place and does NOT want to mark again. Repeat this throughout your entire house. Depending on the size of your house and your dog's want to sniff, this could take a while. Anytime you see your pooch looking like it might mark, follow the above procedure.

Lesson 5: Let your dog explore *completely!* (sound familiar?)

First Time in the Kennel; We'll assume here that you have a kennel of the right size for your dog. Ask your favorite pet retailer. They'll be happy to help you get the right one.

Prep the Kennel: When you return home, have another human pack member place the blanket/pillow from the play session in the box/cage/kennel your dog will call home. There are plenty of web links about putting your dog in a kennel. Your dog likes a quiet place; don't be afraid to cover a wire type cage with a large towel to help your new arrival feel safer. This is another reason we suggest starting earlier in the day with this whole thing! **Prep some treats:** Remember those juicy treats your dog likes? We'll use them sparingly, but it's time to get them out. A dog will respond to the smallest treat, so a treat the size of a quarter and the thickness of a yellow pencil can be cut in half, then in 4-6 bites, giving you 8-12 nibbles to use. **Prep the room:** There should be room around your kennel for you to work, but the area should be blocked, so pooch can't decide to go hide in the living room! So, the pillow is in the kennel, and the treats are ready.

As important as time was in all the other steps, in this step, it is REALLY important! Unless your pooch was kenneled before, this will be a new experience, so have the most CALM/PATIENT person in your pack do this step, it cannot be rushed- we are now on your dog's time-clock, not ours.

First, CALMLY lead the dog to the kennel with the treat, no pulling on the collar, yelling, etc. Let your dog's nose do the work. Know what word you're going to use to refer to the box/cage/home/bed/kennel/whatever. Your dog doesn't care, just be consistent! Lead your hand into the kennel (admittedly we're trying to cover a lot of dog/kennel size/type combinations here. Again, lots of info online about kenneling your dog) and coax the dog's nose into the kennel. The dog will follow. Trust me. At first your dog may balk; BE PATIENT. The first time our German Shepherd, Lexi, went in, it took several tries and nearly 30 minutes. So, break it up. If pup gets to the point of nose/head into the kennel a couple times, take a break. Go chase a ball or something to reward her and know it's related to fun, not punishment. If you do take a break, sprinkle a few treats in the box for her to find when you return. Repeat, now put your hand in further, go in the side of the kennel, toss treats in further, etc. If it's the dog's idea to go in, it is SO MUCH EASIER!! After some time, your pooch will be fully "in the box". If she starts to come out, calmly stop her and 'ask' her to spend a minute or two inside- give another treat. Repeat. Then get the dog to go in willingly. This time close the door calmly/quietly- don't scare her by slamming it shut like, "Gotcha!" No. Sit and talk to your dog, pet her through the door, give a treat. Work up to the dog being comfortable with the door shut.

Next, go into the next room for a few minutes. Extend that time. Again, on a couple good tries, go play, then return to practice. You can see that if by 10-11am, your dog is getting used to the kennel, that's a good thing. If you're trying to get this done at 9:30pm and you go to bed at 10pm, guess who's going to have a long night? You AND the dog!

If you do take our advice and start early in the day, try and get the dog up to 20 minutes by himself. Then go play, have lunch, whatever- then back to the kennel. Get to 30 minutes, then an hour or more. As it gets later in the day, your dog should be going in willingly now, maybe even when you say your word. Lexi started going in on her own that same day and took a nap. She liked it that much!

The point is, by your bed time, the dog should be very comfortable with “his” new den.

Lesson 6: Patience, patience, patience!

Bed Time; Now, hopefully all your early hard work will pay off. Dogs love consistency. If you watch TV till 10pm and go to bed, so will your dog. Okay, not sure about the TV part, but bed time at the same time most every night helps with everything from sleep patterns to digestion patterns.

Start a habit; say, “Scout, it’s bedtime!” (our Golden Retriever knew the sound the cable TV converter box made when it shut off!). Take Scout out to potty, reward her for good potty and go straight to the kennel and use your word, “Scout, kennel- Bed time.” Later, you’ll shorten that to “bedtime”. She’ll know. Close the door calmly and go to bed.

Nowhere in ANY of our instructions did you notice us telling you to have conversations with your dog. Don’t apologize to your dog for the kennel or going to bed or why the laundry room needs dusted. The dog doesn’t care! Just EXPECT. It’s really important not to build in a conversation about bed time. Come in from potty, give the command for the kennel, encourage her to go in, treat if needed, close the door, go to bed. Don’t make it into something it’s not.

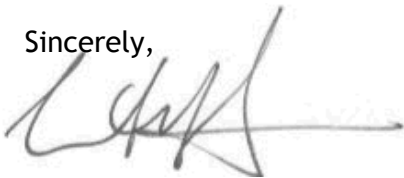
Depending on your dog, its previous experience, age, how well you prepped the dog earlier, and 1200 other variables, your dog will either sleep peacefully through the night. Or not. If it’s a NEW puppy, you may need to get up once/twice during the night, do a potty run, back to the kennel-repeat. There is nothing as important as your calm, assertive leadership through the entire process! A nervous owner, convinced the dog will hate the kennel will be right. A calm, assertive owner convinced the dog will love the kennel and sleep quietly through the night, will also probably be right.

Lesson 7: Patience, Calm/Assertive leadership

Have questions? Visit our site and ask the expert! <http://www.PerfectlyPawsible.com>

Thank you for rescuing a pet in need of a great home! And if you need help training your new addition, please keep us in mind!

Sincerely,



Grant Holmes, Owner

Perfectly Pawsible Dog Obedience

“A well-behaved, obedient dog *is* Perfectly Pawsible!”

Oh, yes, the “Special Section”...(next page!)

Choosing the right dog

This isn't as easy as it seems. You go into a pound, find a cute dog and pet it for five minutes. It didn't bite you, seems fairly playful, "Hey Margaret, this is the one!" Then again, maybe not. Depending on the breed, or mix and what the dog has been through lately, you may not see the dog's true personality for weeks. *That*, is the hard part.

Do some basic research on dogs and breeds. The library and internet are great sources. Animal Planet has the show Dogs101, that tell you all about certain pure-breeds. Some of the Animal Planet shows are posted on-line. Go to pet stores and ask if they have anyone you can discuss this with. Some pet stores have imbedded vet offices. Someone there should be happy to help. Remember, every dog has its unique personality. And while you can make some assumptions, once you mix breeds -all bets are off. Pay attention to how much maintenance, grooming or health issues may play into your choice.

This is my personal plea; Please don't get a puppy from a breeder. We have thousands of dogs that need adopted now. Getting a puppy from a breeder just encourages them to make more. Some of those dogs will end up at the pound. I'm not saying breeders are bad, I'm saying there are plenty of dogs to adopt in shelters and pounds. Okay, off my soap box.

Think of your life-style; Do you like to jog? A Yorkie would be a bad choice. Like to curl up with a good book or just watch TV? Don't get an Australian Cattle Dog! If you have a 55 pound, 7 year old daughter, a 96 pound dog will need serious training quickly to understand that this little person her same height is NOT as strong or playful as it is. Remember puppies (our Lexi is 11 months at this writing. She is STILL a puppy) tend to lack coordination. They run into things, including kids. Expect a few accidents with a rambunctious dog. I could go on for pages, but I'm sure you get the point.

In the text above, I constantly talk about time and patience. This is no different. Take your time. Visit many facilities. Visit on-line sites like PetFinder.com. Ask Vets or pet stores about potential dogs for adoption they may know of, or see if lists are posted.

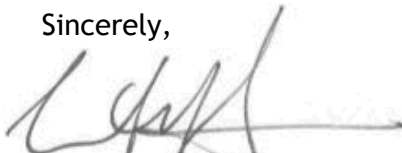
See if there is a dog trainer in your area with a service that would help you choose your dog and help train you the proper techniques that we describe above. We do that for our clients. It really helps put their minds at ease to know they have help from the beginning.

One final consideration on choosing; Many shelters have a "5 day guarantee" or similar. You may take a dog home and within that 5 day period, things don't work out, you may return the dog. Don't feel badly about utilizing such a guarantee. It would be so much better for you to have the 'perfect' dog, vs. one you constantly are frustrated by. When you find the right dog, you'll know!

And one final reality check; How are your finances? You could easily spend \$50-100 each month to *properly* care for an animal. And if you can't *properly* care for a dog, why do you want one?

Make good, responsible choices and your new pet will fill your life with entertainment and companionship for years to come! Best luck in your adventure!

Sincerely,



Grant Holmes, Owner

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