



Adopting a Dog from Abroad

Adopting any dog is a rewarding and generous gesture. Allowing a loyal and loving individual become a member of your family can be very gratifying and many people cannot imagine life without their loyal companion. Adopting a dog from abroad brings its own rewards and challenges and so we have put together some information to help you understand the process. We also offer advice and guidance so that you feel fully prepared and we'll hopefully answer your questions at the same time.

First introductions

When you first meet your new companion, make sure you give him plenty of space. It's tempting to cuddle him and stroke him, but he'll need time to adjust. He is meeting brand new people and in the past, strangers may have hurt him, so he might be nervous. Allow him to come to you when he's ready so he doesn't feel overwhelmed and take advice from the rescuer who is accompanying him. Don't forget, he may have just completed a very long journey so may feel more anxious or stressful than usual.

Home for the first time

Let your dog take things at his own pace. He may want to explore his new surroundings, so let him find his way around. If he wants to go away to a quiet space, allow him time to do that. Whatever he decides, he needs time and patience, so be guided by him. This is the best way to build trust and is the quickest way to make him feel comfortable in his new home – something he may never have had before.

Day-to-day

As well as making sure your introductions and first days are as calm as possible for you and your dog, it's important to be aware of his needs on a day-to-day basis. We've put together some tips which will help ensure you and your dog are happy, which in turn should help him to settle more quickly.

Children

No matter what background your dog comes from, children must be respectful and gentle around him. They may be excited to meet their new family member, but it's essential he doesn't feel threatened by noisy, energetic little people. They must also treat him gently and know when it's time to leave him alone. Young children should never be left unsupervised with any dog.

Own space

It's essential that you make a space in your home where your dog can retreat to at any time. Ideally, this should be a place where no other pets or children can access. This will give your dog a safe place to go whenever he feels nervous or overwhelmed.

Busy households

When you are settling a new dog into your home, you need to be aware of sound levels and wherever possible, avoid unexpected loud noises. He needs a quiet and calm environment, especially if he's had bad experiences previously. You want him to feel safe and loved and a loud, chaotic home is probably not going to achieve this. Steer clear of arguments and encourage children to be considerate by keeping calm and quiet, particularly around the dog.

Feeding time

Give your dog plenty of time and space during meal times. In the past, he may have had to fight for his food and so be very protective of what he gets now. If he has food issues to begin with, he'll soon come to realise that food is regularly supplied and he doesn't have to wolf it down before it's stolen by another dog. Never try to distract your dog while he's eating or take his food away.

Toilet training

This is one area where you may need to be very patient and calm. Living in a house may be a new experience for your dog and he might need time to learn to wait to go to the toilet outside. He might also be nervous, causing him to have the odd accident. If this happens, never get angry with your dog or show him that you are displeased as this is likely to make the problem worse. It will make your dog fearful as he won't understand. This could result in it taking longer for him to trust you.

Out and about

Don't assume that your dog will automatically walk well on a lead. In the past, he may have been taken off the street by dog catchers using brutal methods, including being grabbed by the neck with a catching pole. It might take time for him to associate wearing a lead with a fun and enjoyable activity. You may want to consider using a harness for extra comfort and security.

Think carefully about when and where you let your dog off the lead. Don't set him free until he is fully settled with the family and you know for certain he will come back to you. This may be some time after adoption. Dogs from abroad have often lived on the streets in their previous life, meaning they are quick and ready to run away at any opportunity.

Safe and Secure

Rescue dogs from abroad can be notorious escape artists! It's essential your garden is completely dog-proof. You'd be amazed at how smart they can be when looking for the quickest way out, so you've got to be one step ahead. The boundary must be sturdy with no gaps – not even a tiny one - or opportunity for your dog to dig his way out.

In the car

Cars may be a strange for your dog at first. He may associate them with bad memories, having been roughly handled and transported to the public shelter. As is so often the case, time, patience and reassurance are key to helping him adjust. Some dogs travel happily in cars, while others are more reluctant. In addition to reassurance, you could try short journeys at first, gradually increasing the distance over time. Whether dogs travel well or not, being secure in the car is an absolute must for their safety and that of other occupants. Harnesses, dog guards and crates are some options you can consider and you can get advice from the rescue about what may suit your dog the best.

And the REALLY good stuff....

So many people adopt rescue dogs from abroad and say it is one of the best things they have ever done. In fact, they say that cannot imagine life without their new companion, even after a short period of time.

In return for a caring home, food and love, a rescue dog from abroad will provide:

- Unconditional love
- Loyal companionship
- Hours of fun and laughter
- Somebody who is always overjoyed to see you
- Somebody who will be forever grateful for giving him a home and a second chance