First 3 days - DECOMPRESSION

Do:

• Allow your new dog adequate time – a minimum of 3 days - to decompress. This allows stress hormone levels in the blood to go down.

• Use baby gates and/or a crate to create a safe and calm area for your new dog where he can eat, drink and get plenty of rest.

• Allow your current dog(s) and new dog visual access to each other through pens, gates, etc. They may choose to sniff through these barriers. If all looks good, you can do slow introductions.

• Allow your dog to take in the new smells, sounds, and sights from his area if he prefers. He might need to watch you for a while before joining you.

• Have your dog drag a light leash attached to her collar so you can gently guide him where you want him to go rather than grabbing his collar or picking him up. This also helps if he gets startled and bolts into a tight space. Very important for shy/fearful dogs.

• Let your dog smell everything; this is how he’s getting information. This helps him be less stressed.

• Supervise your new dog in your house and yard; a new place can inspire dogs to potty indoors or escape the yard.

• Walk your new dog to the potty spot over and over again. Reward with a treat on the spot when he finishes.

• Offer food, like bits of chicken or string cheese, to start building a bond with your new dog. If he looks comfortable taking it from your hand, great! If not, toss the food away from you.

• Gently pet your new dog low on the chest or shoulder (vs. reaching over head). If you stop and he asks for more, go ahead. If not, give him time and don’t push it. He won’t keep it a secret if he wants affection from you.

• Supervise children and don’t allow them to physically overwhelm your new dog by hugging or putting their face close to the dog’s face.

• Encourage your new dog’s appetite by adding a little warm water and/or some canned dog food to dry kibble, and feed him in his area away from noisy children or other dogs.

Don’t:

• Introduce your new dog to a bunch of people and/or non-family animals during the first few days. Let her get to know you a little bit first.

• Overwhelm your new dog with outings away from home.

• Leave stuff laying around that your resident dog and/or new dog might find valuable enough to fight over, like food, bones, bowls, toys.

• Handle or pet your new dog if she doesn’t appear to want it; it may take some time for her to warm up.

Read the full article at www.RescueSMART.net and download support materials to help you during your new dog’s first 3 days/3 weeks/3 months – and beyond - in your home.
• Take it personally if you try and pet your new dog and she moves away. Toss a small treat away from your body, and if she eats it and looks back at you, toss another (do this only in her area if other dogs are around).

• Worry if your new dog doesn’t feel like eating for a day or so; give her access to water and keep an eye on her.

• Bother your new dog while she’s eating.

First 3 weeks – BUILDING TRUST

Do:

• Pay close attention to how your dog acts when you walk toward her when she has a toy or a bone/chew treat. If you see her stiffen, or she growls/snarls/bites, contact a certified dog trainer or behavior consultant. Visit the Training Library at www.CompliantK9.com and read about Resource Guarding in the Red Flags section of the library.

• Take your dog out in the neighborhood. Carry treats with you to create a positive association with all the new sights and sounds.

• Use positive training methods with your dog and consult a trainer if you’re having problems.

• Work on cat introductions – visit www.bestfriends.org and type “Introduce a Dog to a Cat” in the search box.

• Play with your dog to see what she “likes” (chasing a flirt pole or a ball, finding treats in the grass). Lots of dogs don’t have experience with toys, so be patient and get creative.

• Continue to manage interactions between your resident dog and the new dog

• Continue using confinement/crate with your new dog when you’re not home

Don’t:

• Push your dog to do anything she is obviously uncomfortable with; this will undermine your trust-building efforts. Work with a certified trainer or behavior consultant to learn how to help your dog overcome fears.

• Put your current dog and new dog together with high-value items (bones, toys, food)

First 3 months – SETTLING IN

Do:

• Have a trainer do a home visit if you’re having problems in the home environment

• Join a training class for manners or fun

• Introduce your new dog to your friends’ dogs (if each of them are friendly)

• Have your dog assessed at a professional dog daycare facility for socialization if you’re unsure how she is with other dogs.

Don’t:

• Introduce any other new pets into the family until you have everything nailed down with your new dog.