

Bringing Home Your Pup

RULE OF THREE!

It is important to remember that entering a new home can be very **stressful** for your new rescue pup. Your dog has had their whole life turned upside down and they will need time to adjust. During this **adjustment period**, some dogs may hide and cower while other dogs may have bursts of extreme energy and destroy things. **Take things slow, be patient, and give your pup space and time** to acclimate to their new life.

Things to consider when bringing home your rescue dog:

- When you don't know a dog's history, you don't know what their **triggers** are. Always **be mindful** when first exposing your dog to new people, places, and things.
- Keeping your dog on a **schedule** can help them adjust to their new home by letting them know what to expect. This also helps with the bonding process as your dog learns that you are **consistent** and they can **trust** you to meet their physical and mental needs.
- Keep in mind that your dog may be **overstimulated** by all of the changes. Time alone in a quiet safe area such as a crate or gated off room with some self soothing items such as bones, stuffed kongs, or toys (avoid high value items for dogs that resource guard) can help ease their anxieties. Remember the **3-3-3 rule** as described here:

- **3 DAYS:** Your dog is feeling overwhelmed and is not yet comfortable in their new environment. They are not yet acting themselves.
- **3 WEEKS:** Your dog is beginning to feel more comfortable. They are figuring out their environment and learning their new routines. They begin to show their "true self".
- **3 MONTHS:** Your dog has fully settled into their new home and feels comfortable enough to be themselves. They are set in their new routine and have formed a bond with you.

I acknowledge that my adopted dog will need time to adjust and I agree to give them the proper time and space to do so. I will reach out to a trainer for help if needed.

Signature _____

Date _____

How to...

DECOMPRESSION

What is Decompression?

- Decompression is a **calming period** that a dog needs when first arriving in your home. It is imperative the dog has this **time to adjust to the new environment, people, and other animals**. The average decompression time is about two weeks, but it differs for every dog. This period is crucial – it can make or break how your dog adjusts. **Set your dog up for success by going slowly, being patient, and managing interactions.**

To Do:

- **Forget Expectations** - Every dog reacts differently. The first 24-48 hours are a learning experience. Go slowly and be patient.
- **Keep Calm** - Create a quiet, calm environment. Avoid overwhelming the dog with toys, affection, or activity.
- **Give Space** - Provide a quiet, cozy area where they can feel safe and come out of their shell on their own time. Always let them approach you first.
- **Crate Train** - Crates offer a safe den-like space and help prevent behavioral issues. Never use a crate as punishment.
- **Slow Introductions** - Limit visitors for the first week. Introduce new people and pets slowly, preferably on neutral territory.
- **Exercise Daily** - Daily walks and play help burn energy and reduce stress, creating a calmer, happier dog.
- **Keep a Routine** - Consistent feeding, walking, and sleeping schedules help dogs feel secure and understand what to expect.
- **Establish Positive Associations** - Pair new experiences (like loud sounds or household chores) with treats and praise to build trust and comfort.

Avoid Early On:

- No dog parks, parties, pet stores, or visitors
- Avoid high value toys/treats until you know if your dog resource guards
- No off-leash time with other pets. Dragging leashes help you maintain control safely during early days inside and outside the home.
- No long outings until your dog trusts you (Vet visits are the exception)

How to...

NEW DOG SIBLINGS

Steps For Success

1. **Leash Sniffs** — Each dog should have a separate handler. Start out walking parallel to one another at a distance so the dogs can notice each other but not interact. Next, walk one dog behind the other at a distance they can handle without reacting (this may be 5ft or it may be 10ft or 30ft). Slowly decrease the distance until the dog in the back is able to sniff the dog in the front's butt, then switch places. Do not let the dogs interact face to face on the leashes.
2. **Fence Friends** — Allow the dogs to sniff each other through a fence. Watch their body language closely to ensure they are both comfortable before moving to the next step. What you want to see: relaxed and curious, with open mouths and low, wagging tails. What you do not want to see: signs of fear, like their hair standing on end, focused hard stares, or a stiff body. Note: if your dog is barrier reactive skip.
3. **Dragging Leashes** — Bring both dogs inside the fenced in area and walk parallel to each other about 10 ft apart. Slowly bring them closer together while walking parallel. As long as everyone is still comfortable, drop the leashes and allow them to interact. Continue watching their body language for signs that they are getting along well.
4. **At Home** — Once everyone is getting along on neutral territory it is time to move things home. Allow the new dog to go in the house first and get to know the smells, sights, and sounds. Be sure to have any highly reinforcing items that your dog may guard put away. Once the new dog has finished exploring, allow your dog to come into the house (with both leashes dragging) and keep an eye on their behavior. Even after you have established they are getting along well, continue to monitor them together as they get used to each other. You may want to use the "crate and rotate" method at first—only one dog out at a time. When they are consistently relaxed and well behaved, you can allow more time out together.

Important Notes

- Dog meetings should always be done in a neutral location.
- Do not try to rush things along. Any time you notice one or both of the dogs are uncomfortable take a break, move back a step and try again.
- Do not stand still with the dogs face to face. This is not a natural interaction.

How to...

BREAK UP A DOG FIGHT

There are two main goals when safely breaking up a dog fight, and those are to **distract** and **separate** the dogs involved.

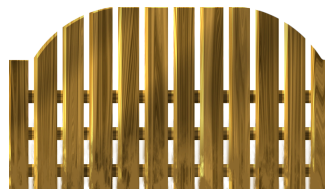
Distract

- Use whatever you can to **get your dog's attention**. Yell, clap your hands, whistle, bang on something, blow an air horn, spray them with a hose, etc.



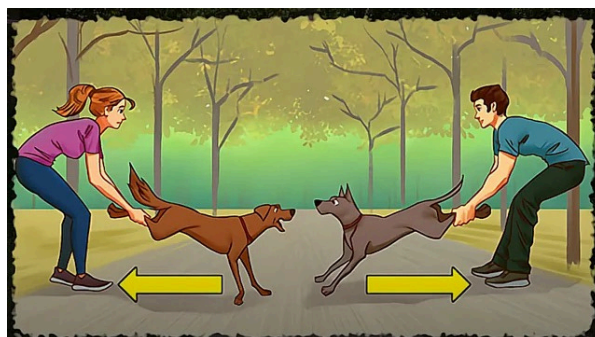
Barrier Separation

- Place something in between the dogs to **break eye contact** and **separate them from each other**. This could be throwing a blanket or towel over the head, putting a baby gate between them, sticking a broom or shovel between them, etc.



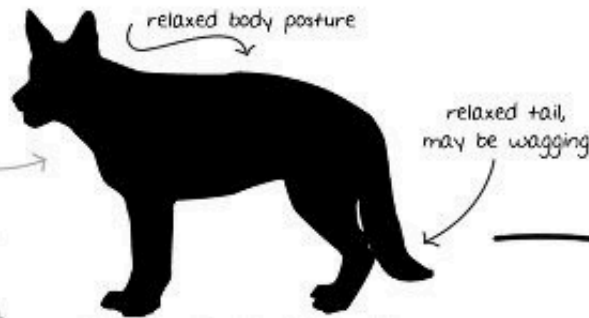
Physical Separation

- Use the wheelbarrow method to physically separate them. **DO NOT** put your hands near their mouths. Approach the dog from behind, grab them by the hind legs, and lift them so they are balancing on their front legs. Then walk/pull the dog backwards. This works best if you have 2 people (one for each dog).



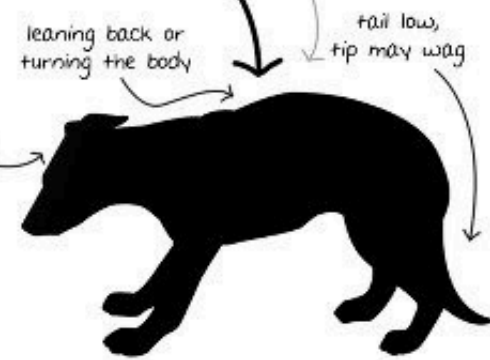
DOG TO ENGLISH TRANSLATION CHART

This is the dog you'll want to pet. He's calm, neutral, and relaxed. There is no tension in his body and he's probably panting happily and waiting for you to come over and just say "hi".

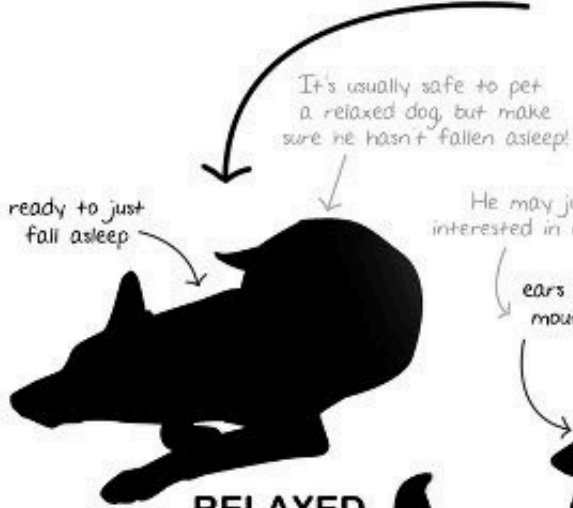


CALM & NEUTRAL

This dog is uncomfortable or doesn't know what's going on. It's best not to pet him.



ANXIOUS & NERVOUS

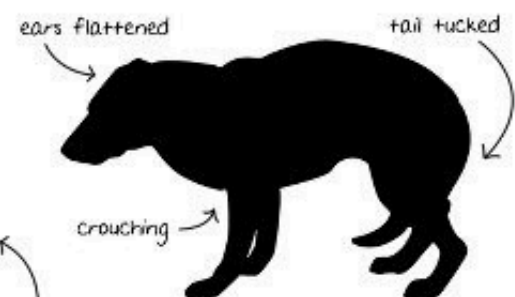


RELAXED

He may just be really interested in what's going on. ears are forward, mouth may close



ALERT



FRIGHTENED

This dog may bite to "defend" himself.



PLAYFUL

The Play Bow

"Oh, please, throw the ball"



DOMINANT

Toward another dog "I'm in charge!"



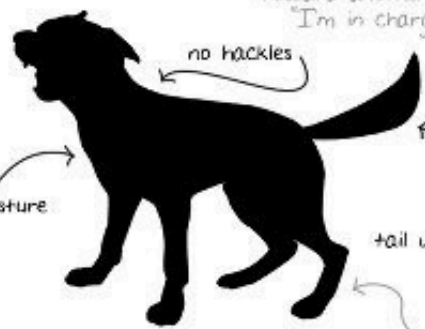
SUBMISSIVE

"I give up, don't hurt me" pose



EXCITED

fast wagging tail



AGGRESSIVE

Don't run away from an aggressive dog. Stand still ("be a tree") and look away.

An overly excited dog may jump up, knock you over, scratch you with his paws, or even nip you with his teeth.

You'll mostly see this behavior when two dogs interact, but a dog that was abused or is really scared may do it as well.

How to...

INTRODUCING DOGS AND CATS

Introducing your new dog to your cat is not the same as introducing two dogs or two cats. It should be done gradually and with multiple safety measures in place., allowing them to become acclimated to each other over time so that they can happily co-exist.

Note: If your dog has true prey drive it will not be possible to have them live with a cat safely. At the bottom of this document is a list of physical and behavioral signs of high prey drive.

Phase 1: Scent & Sound (Days 1-4)

1. Safe Room: Give the cat a dedicated room with food, water, litter box, and escape routes.
2. Scent Swapping: Exchange bedding or towels so they get used to each other's smell.
3. Feeding by Door: Feed them on opposite sides of a closed door to associate the other's scent with good things (food).

Phase 2: Visual Contact (Days 5+)

1. Barrier Introductions: Use a baby gate or screen door to let them see each other without direct contact. Keep sessions short (5-10 mins).
2. Leashed Control: Keep the dog on a leash during these sessions.
3. Positive Reinforcement: Reward calm behavior (looking at you, sitting) with high-value treats.
4. Watch Body Language: Stop if you see hissing, growling, lunging, or cowering; go back a step.

Phase 3: Supervised Freedom

1. Leash Dragging: Once calm, allow short, supervised interactions with the dog's leash dragging (so you can step on it).
2. Cat's Escape: Ensure the cat can always escape to its safe room.
3. Gradual Increase: Slowly increase time together as both remain relaxed.

Key Tips

- Patience is crucial: This can take weeks or months.
- Never force interaction or hold pets to force a meeting.
- Provide separate resources: Food, water, litter, and rest spots for each.

Videos Tutorials:

- How To Introduce A New Dog To Your Cat | The Pack:
<https://youtu.be/ayTnGGYs28c?si=nkqvjKfBB8nq8s->



- Introducing Cats and Dogs | Cat Protection:

<https://www.cats.org.uk/help-and-advice/cats-and-your-family/dogs-and-other-pets>



Physical and Behavioral Signs of Prey Drive

- Intense Fixation/Staring: The dog becomes hyper-focused, ignoring surroundings, and stares intently at birds, squirrels, or moving toys.
- Stalking Behavior: The dog lowers its body, moves stealthily, or freezes before a pursuit.
- Chasing and Lunging: An uncontrollable urge to bolt after fast-moving objects, including cars, bikes, joggers, or small animals.
- Shaking/Pouncing: Grabbing toys or objects, shaking them violently, or pinning them down.
- Frustration Signals: Barking, whining, or frantic pulling when unable to reach the target.
- Tunnel Vision: Ignoring commands or pain when in pursuit of potential prey.