

## Bringing Your New Dog Home



We are so excited that you decided to adopt your new dog! We want this to be a positive experience so that you and your new dog can live happily together for a long time. Here are some tips for starting your new relationship off on the right “paw.”

We know you have just committed to a new family member, and this can be stressful and exciting for all involved, including your new dog. When bringing your dog home for the first time, keep in mind that he or she has probably been through a lot in the last few days. Being adopted into a new family can be very

overwhelming for a dog. Here are some tips on introducing your new furry friend to your home.

### What to Do

Most dogs thrive on having a regular routine. Establishing a routine will ensure there are no surprises and help your new dog adjust more quickly. Your first day with your new dog should be spent allowing him to get used to his new home. Everything he encounters will be new and possibly stressful for him, so it is important to allow him to adjust at his own pace. It could take two days for him to be his normal self or it could take two months. There is no set time limit on this adjustment period because every dog is different.

It is best to give your new pup some time to adjust to you and your family before taking him to new places. As much fun as it is to pick out toys and supplies with your new pup, it can be very overwhelming for him to be in a busy store with so many new people and smells. It is also good to be aware that a veterinary clinic can be a stressful environment for any dog, and do everything you can to make it a positive experience for him, like bringing treats with you.

### Reducing Problem Behaviors through Management

It’s often important to manage situations while you’re working towards a final solution. In dog ownership, this means setting up your home and life in a way that prevents or discourages your dog from doing unwanted things.

Management does not teach your dog what not to do. It simply prevents or discourages your dog from doing unwanted behaviors. It’s usually best to combine management with positive reinforcement (treat or toy reward-based) training. In some cases, simply managing the problem can be enough of a solution.

### Examples of Management

Management can help to reduce or stop almost any unwanted behavior while you work on training better behaviors with your dog. Below is a chart of some common behavior problems and potential management solutions.

Common Behavior Problem	Management Ideas
Jumping onto counters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close the dog in his crate or a bedroom when you can’t watch him</li> <li>• Place double-sided tape on the counters</li> <li>• Keep food and other goodies off of the counters</li> </ul>

Digging in the garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't leave the dog unattended outside</li> <li>• Place a fence around the garden</li> <li>• Lay chicken wire a few inches under the dirt</li> </ul>
Chewing on non-chew toy items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep tempting items out of reach of the dog or behind closed doors</li> <li>• Crate the dog when she's not supervised</li> <li>• Spray tempting items with a safe but bad-tasting product like Bitter Apple Spray</li> </ul>
Pulling on leash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a no-pull harness or head halter</li> </ul>
Jumping on household guests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place the dog in his crate when guests come over and don't let him out until he calms down</li> <li>• Introduce the dog to guests outside before bringing them inside. This is often less exciting and reduces jumping</li> <li>• Keep the dog on leash when guests arrive and then remove the leash after the dog has settled down</li> </ul>

### **When You Need More Than Management**

Again, remember that management is not training. Some owners don't mind using management to stop their dog from jumping onto counters. They don't need to implement training if that's the case.

Many owners would like their dog to walk nicely on leash though. In order to teach your dog how to walk nicely on leash, you must do more than purchase a no-pull harness. Implement positive reinforcement training techniques to help teach your dog that not pulling is the goal!

In the case of many more severe behavioral concerns (like aggression, phobias, fear, separation anxiety, and reactivity), a very good management plan is very important. Speak to a professional animal trainer for help creating this management plan. **Remember that you must always expect your management plan to fail** – management is just a band aid. Use it to prevent further incidents while you work on a training plan to modify the unwanted behaviors.

Sometimes potential management plans are unrealistic. For example, a dog that's afraid of new people still needs to go to the veterinarian. It's simply unrealistic to never introduce the dog to another human again. That's why it's so important to pair management with good training.

### **Training**

Training is an important thing that should begin early, no matter what age your new dog is. Socializing puppies is crucial to their development and will help you have a well-rounded pup as an adult. Training can help teach your dog manners, help a fearful dog become more confident, and is also a great stress reliever.

### **Resources**

If you have any questions regarding your new dog's behavior, please do not hesitate to call us here at the Humane Society of Elkhart County, at 574-475-4732. You can also contact local trainers in the area, such as Joshica's Planet Canine, at 574-522-8584.

There are also many online resources:

- American Society of Veterinary Behaviorists: [avsab.org](http://avsab.org)
- International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants: [iaabc.org](http://iaabc.org)
- Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers: [ccpdt.org](http://ccpdt.org)
- The Association of Professional Dog Trainers: [apdt.com](http://apdt.com)