

— THE FIRST — 72 HOURS



Help Your New Dog Settle In

A simple, practical guide to bringing your newly adopted dog home without overwhelming either one of you.

REAL
TIPS
SIMPLE STEPS
A CALMER,
HAPPIER START



*A
brighter
tomorrow
together*
♥

PLANNING WITH POOCHES





MEET ME & ASHA



*Twenty Years of
Volunteering.
Still Learning.*

Hi, I'm Jill!

I'm the founder of Planning with Pooches, and I've been volunteering with shelter dogs for over 20 years. I've had the privilege of working with so many incredible dogs and the amazing people who love them.

You would think that after 20 years, I'd have this whole "dog thing" figured out. Well, let me introduce you to Asha.

MEET ASHA

When I met Asha at the shelter, she was incredibly sweet. But once we brought her home, we started seeing behaviors we hadn't seen at the shelter.

Every time my husband comes through the garage door, she barks, jumps, and gets mouthy with him.

And guess what? We're still working on it.

*Real life.
Real dogs.
Still figuring
it out.*



A REMINDER FOR YOU

Even after 20 years of volunteering, I'm reminded that every dog is different. What worked for one dog might not work for another.

Bringing a dog home isn't about immediately having the perfect companion. It's about building a relationship with an animal who doesn't know you yet.

Asha and I are still figuring each other out. We're learning what makes her uncomfortable, what helps her feel safe, and how to build trust along the way.



**A LITTLE
REMINDER
FROM ME:**

Twenty years of experience doesn't mean twenty years of having all the answers. It means twenty years of learning that every dog has something new to teach us.



PLANNING WITH POOCHES

WELCOME HOME. NOW GIVE THAT DOG A MINUTE.

Congratulations! You adopted a dog. You probably pictured couch snuggles, cute photos, and a new best friend. And then reality happened.

Maybe your dog is pacing, barking, jumping, hiding, or following you everywhere. Maybe you are wondering what you have gotten yourself into.

My recently adopted dog, Asha, was incredibly sweet at the shelter. But when my husband comes through the garage door, she barks, jumps, and gets mouthy. We are still working on it.

The dog you met at the shelter may act differently at home. That does not mean you made a mistake. You are both learning about each other.

Your dog does not know your house, your schedule, or your expectations. They do not yet know whether this place is safe.

YOUR FIRST 10 MINUTES

Offer a quiet potty opportunity, provide water, and show your dog a safe place to rest. Skip the grand tour and the welcome-home party.

For the next 72 hours, focus on less excitement, less pressure, more sleep, and a predictable routine. You do not have to figure everything out today.

THE FIRST-DAY CHECKLIST

I know you want to show your new dog their wonderful new life. But think about where they just came from: a shelter can be noisy, stressful, and full of unfamiliar smells and activity.

Your dog may be exhausted. What they need most right now may be a chance to decompress.

DO THESE FIRST

- ☐ Offer a quiet potty opportunity.
- ☐ Check collar, ID, leash, and doors for escape safety.
- ☐ Provide fresh water and a comfortable resting place.
- ☐ Follow the usual food and medication instructions.
- ☐ Set up a quiet, dog-proofed area.
- ☐ Keep introductions to people and pets limited and controlled.
- ☐ Review shelter paperwork and arrange veterinary follow-up.
- ☐ Let your dog sleep. Seriously.

SKIP THESE FOR NOW

- A parade of visitors or introductions.
- Hugs, kisses, and affection your dog has not asked for.
- Access to every room in the house.
- Trying to teach every command on day one.

THE POINT

Make their world smaller, quieter, and more predictable. That is enough for today.

GIVE YOUR DOG THEIR OWN SPACE

One of the biggest mistakes I see is giving a newly adopted dog too much freedom and attention too quickly. It comes from a loving place, but it can be overwhelming.

Imagine being dropped into a stranger's house, not knowing the rules, while everyone wants to touch you. You would want a minute, too.

CREATE A DECOMPRESSION AREA

- Choose a quiet, dog-proofed room or safely contained area.
- Include a comfortable bed, fresh water, and a familiar item if available.
- Offer suitable enrichment only if your dog seems interested.
- Use a crate if your dog already finds it comfortable; do not force a frightened dog inside.
- Notice whether your dog prefers privacy or resting quietly near you.

KEEP THEIR WORLD SMALL

I prefer to limit access to the whole house for the first three days. This is a starting point, not a deadline. Gradually expand freedom as your dog shows comfort and readiness.

A LITTLE SPACE IS NOT REJECTION

Your dog does not need access to the entire house to feel loved. They need somewhere they can feel safe.

WHEN YOUR DOG WON'T SETTLE

Your dog is pacing, whining, or jumping at every sound. Your instinct may be to add another walk or another game. But sometimes a restless dog does not need more activity. They need less stimulation.

CHECK BEFORE YOU DO MORE

- Basic needs: Do they need to potty, drink, eat, or get comfortable?
- Environment: Is the television loud? Are people coming and going?
- Rest: Can they access a quiet, comfortable place to sleep?
- Pressure: Are you repeatedly petting, calling, or encouraging interaction?
- Body language: Are they trembling, panting, hiding, or trying to escape?

TRY THIS

Lower the noise. Reduce activity. Offer a quiet potty break if needed. Give your dog access to their resting area, then allow them some peace. You do not have to entertain your dog every waking minute.

IMPORTANT SAFETY NOTE

If your dog is panicking, injuring themselves, showing severe distress, or cannot settle, do not shut them away and wait it out. Consult a veterinarian or qualified, reward-based behavior professional.

Calm is not something you can force. It is something you help your dog feel safe enough to experience.



YOUR FIRST 72-HOUR ROUTINE

A new dog does not know when breakfast is coming, when they go outside, or when it is time to rest. A consistent rhythm helps them begin to understand their new world.

WHEN	SIMPLE PLAN
Morning	Potty, breakfast, calm time
Midmorning	Rest in a designated space
Midday	Potty, brief appropriate activity, rest
Afternoon	Quiet time and another potty opportunity
Evening	Dinner, potty, low-key family time
Bedtime	Final potty and a peaceful bedtime routine

- DAY 1: Focus on safety, basic needs, and rest.
- DAY 2: Repeat the rhythm. Notice what helps and what overwhelms.
- DAY 3: Continue building trust. Expand access only if your dog is ready.

FLEXIBLE, NOT RIGID

Adjust meals, potty breaks, activity, and supervision for your dog’s age and health. Puppies often need more frequent outings. Three days is not a deadline for adjustment.

SURVIVING THE FIRST NIGHT

Because nobody makes great decisions at 2 a.m.

Your dog has spent the day in a strange place with unfamiliar people. Now the lights go out, and they are expected to sleep. Some dogs settle beautifully. Others... not so much.

SET YOURSELF UP FOR A BETTER NIGHT

- Choose a comfortable sleeping area: a familiar crate, a dog-proofed room, or a safe spot near you.
- Offer a final potty opportunity before bedtime.
- Keep lights low and avoid exciting play.
- Repeat the same simple sequence each evening.
- If your dog wakes, check whether they need the bathroom, reassurance, or help with discomfort.

WHAT IF THEY WHINE OR BARK?

Do not assume stubbornness. Your dog may be frightened, confused, uncomfortable, or in need of a potty break. If separation increases distress, try moving their sleeping area closer and seek professional guidance if needed. Do not force a dog to cry through panic.

TONIGHT'S REMINDER

You do not have to solve every behavior problem before breakfast. Meet your dog's needs, keep them safe, and start a predictable routine. Tomorrow is another opportunity.

NORMAL ADJUSTMENT OR A CONCERN?

A dog who seemed quiet at the shelter may become more vocal at home. A dog who greeted everyone may suddenly seem uncertain. Asha reminds me that getting to know a dog does not stop when you leave the shelter.

YOU MAY NOTICE

- More sleep, caution around people, or a need for quiet.
- Changes in activity or confidence as your dog becomes familiar with the home.
- Reactions to household noises or unfamiliar entrances.

These behaviors can happen during adjustment, but do not automatically dismiss them as harmless.

WHEN TO GET HELP

- Veterinary advice: Significant appetite changes, repeated vomiting or diarrhea, pain, or unusual lethargy.
- Emergency veterinary care: Difficulty breathing, collapse, or other severe symptoms.
- Behavioral support: Escalating aggression, biting, severe fear, persistent panic, or dangerous escape attempts.

THE BIGGEST LESSON: TRUST

Our first instinct is to shower a dog with affection. But this dog does not know us yet. Go about your day, let them approach at their own pace, and respect their need for space.

A REMINDER WORTH REPEATING

Trust is not something you demand. It is something you earn.



YOUR 72-HOUR PROGRESS TRACKER

It is easy to focus on the barking, whining, or accidents. But did your dog nap? Eat comfortably? Approach you on their own? Those small moments matter.

WHAT I NOTICED	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
Ate and drank normally	☐	☐	☐
Had potty opportunities	☐	☐	☐
Rested comfortably	☐	☐	☐
Had calm interactions	☐	☐	☐
Showed signs of safety	☐	☐	☐
Followed a routine	☐	☐	☐

Something that helped my dog relax:

Something that seemed stressful:

One small win I am celebrating:

The dog you got may not be the dog you wanted, but they may be the dog you needed to teach you something.

Maybe that lesson is patience, slowing down, or learning to listen without words. You are not building a perfect dog in three days. You are building the beginning of a relationship.

One quiet moment, one predictable day, and one little bit of trust at a time.

Educational guide only; not a substitute for individualized veterinary or professional behavioral advice.