



Adopting a dog from a shelter or rescue organization is a very exciting time for us. We can't wait to smother her in love, show her the four soft beds we bought, and the giant basket of toys. We can't wait to show her a new amazing life, and introduce her to our family and friends. This particular dog may have been in the shelter for over a year and we're over the moon to be giving her a forever home and family. Despite our good intentions, we often don't realize that this transition into a new environment can sometimes be stressful for our new pack member. I'm going to breakdown the "3-3-3 rule for dogs" here and offer some simple ways to assist with the adjustment.

The **3-3-3 rule** represents the common milestones your newly adopted dog will likely go through in 3 days, 3 weeks, and 3 months. Each dog is an individual, and some will take longer or shorter to adjust. The key is to show up with calm, loving patience during this exciting time. Remember, she's just getting to know you too, and first impressions are lasting!

3 Days



In the first 3 days your new dog may feel overwhelmed and unsure of what is going on. She may not want to eat or drink, which is a normal stress response. She may also shut down and hide in a crate or under furniture. Having 'accidents' in the house may occur until a feeding/potty routine is established. Alternatively, she may be hyperactive, acting out, and testing boundaries to see what she can get away with. This is the time to stay calm and go slow with things. Keep the house as peaceful as possible, and give your new companion lots of space.

I love playing soft, relaxing music and diffusing organic, therapeutic-grade essential oils to calm the nervous system. I believe it's important for dogs to have a 'safe place' to go at all times. A crate with soft blankets and toys is a staple in our home. I suggest having an 'open door policy' so she can go in and out whenever she wants without feeling threatened or trapped. We want the crate to be a positive experience, so randomly throwing treats inside when she is not looking will allow her to receive positive reinforcement upon entering.

3 Weeks



After 3 weeks your new family member really starts to settle in and feel comfortable in the pack, realizing this may be a forever home. By this time she has figured out the environment and gets comfortable with the routine. You may notice a 'change' in personality, but this is the true essence coming out. When dogs feel safe they will show you who they are. Sometimes during this period behavior issues may surface. Take a deep breath, and calmly but confidently let her know the house rules and boundaries. The humans of the household are her emotional leaders and staying calm is key.

3 Months



After 3 months your dog is finally feeling completely safe and comfortable in her new home. A trusting bond has been formed and she's feeling secure with her new family. By this time she has also learned the routine, and will let you know if you're late with dinner. Continuing with a regular walking, feeding, and playtime schedule will continue to strengthen her confidence and bond with the family. Along with physical exercise, keep her mind sharp with basic obedience training /reinforcement, teaching her new behaviors, and utilizing food puzzles. A physically and mentally tired dog is a happy dog.

Our dogs are constantly giving and receiving information through energy, body language, words, pictures and feelings. They can read us better than most humans can. I believe in staying in constant communication with your dog. When you leave the house let her know where you're going and when you'll return, using words and mental pictures. They will get the message! I often advise clients to send their dogs 'mental postcards' when they're at work or out of town

without them. This exercise is not only fun, but keeps you both connected and communicating telepathically.

As always, enjoy the enormous love from your adopted dog, and remember to stay in the present moment with them. Take time to be still and breathe with them. Listen. They have so much to teach us.

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www.pawsitivetouch.org

www.paytonspromisesanctuary.org