

# Bringing Home a New Dog

Bringing home a dog can be a rollercoaster ride. But don't forget to make the necessary preparations! Here's a handy guide to help you prepare your home (and self!) for your dog's arrival.

By Tanya Kane

With the right planning and preparation, bringing home a new dog can be a wonderful experience. You will still be guaranteed some sleepless nights, but doing it right will set yourself and your new dog for an easier teething period (pun intended)!

## Before Your Dog Arrives:

- Ensure you have done your homework about your dog's habits, food preferences, likes and dislikes.
- Accordingly, stock up on all essentials like food, a few appropriate toys, a collar and leash, food and water bowls, bedding, grooming brush etc.



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- Puppy-proof your home to avoid calamities! Puppies are curious beings and use their mouths to touch and feel everything they can. Place breakables objects out of reach, bundle loose cables, etc. Gradually, once the dog has a bond with you, you can start putting things in place and correct him if he tries to go near something precious.
- Plan in advance where you would like your dog to relieve himself. This avoids last-minute confusion and even accidents are greatly reduced when you have clarity about the same. Also, make sure that the dog has easy access to the right space through the day and night until you are confident that he is able to hold up.



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- Understand your schedule and make sure your dog adapts to it. Pre-plan walk schedules and feeding schedules so that it is convenient and easy to follow.
- If you have children, equip them with enough information on how to handle this new addition to the family.
- As a family, plan house rules -- What will be allowed, not allowed and the likes. House rules must be consistent.
- Find a good, recommended veterinarian who you feel comfortable with.



## **D-Day and Ahead:**

- Choose a day when you are relatively free to bring home your dog.
- If you have done your homework, you will already know everything about him before you bring him home. So now it's just a question of getting him home! If you are bringing home a pup, it is a good idea to have him come home in a crate or a basket. The pup will be away from his litter-mates for the first time and may feel uneasy in his new environment. Many dogs can get car sick, so be prepared in case that happens. Line the car with newspapers and keep extra paper handy.
- When you arrive, first take the pup to the designated area to relieve himself. Doing so will establish from the beginning that this is the right place to do the job. Always praise when the right area has been used.

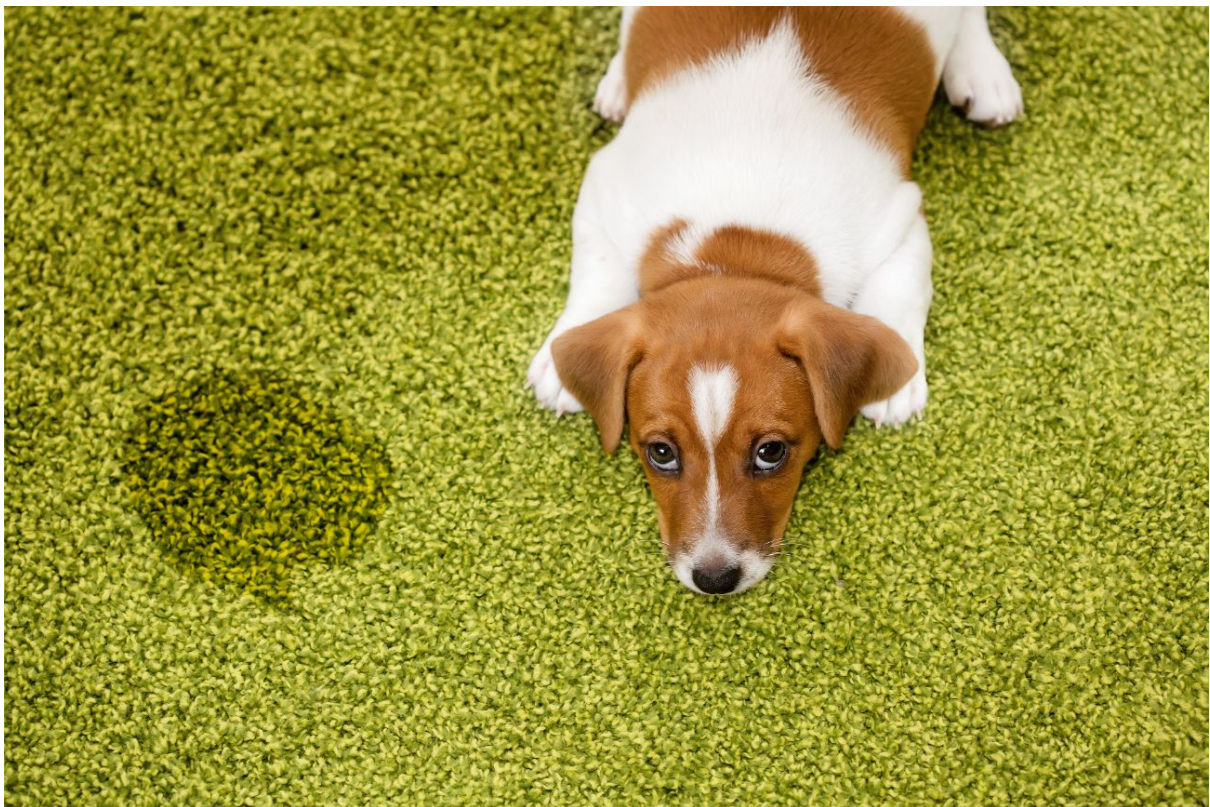


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- Also be prepared that toilet accidents will happen, especially with young dogs and in a new environment. Firmly vocalize displeasure when this happens. Gradually, once you establish a good routine, your pup will know that he can count on you, and accidents will eventually reduce.

- Do not change a dog's diet immediately. If you are keen on changing the diet, let him first settle into the environment. Change can be gradually introduced five days post settling.
- Expect anxiety, stress, curiosity -- this may be the first time the dog is away from his mother and siblings. He will be a bit lost, but gradually you will be his family and all this will be forgotten.
- While it's great to have him home, and I am sure you want to spend every minute with him, understand that tomorrow when regular life restarts, he will need to be left alone sometimes or maybe even every day. So on day one, step out of the house without making a big fuss at least once for a short period of about 15-20 minutes.



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- Even while in the house, ensure that he is not super-glued to you all the time. He must know that he is safe irrespective of your presence and build that confidence from Day 1. Give him his space, and let him learn to respect yours.

- Make feeding times fun and relaxed. Let him be used to you being around his food from Day 1. The dog must perceive you as a provider, not a threat. A great way to do that is to hold back a small portion of his food, and then when he thinks his meal is done, you add the small portion into his bowl. Adult dogs with food aggression history will need detailed and specific work, so please consult a professional before getting your hands into food bowls!
- Puppies sleep a lot -- it's normal. But also watch to make sure your pup wakes up and is active in short spells.
- Puppies also may be teething. Do not allow any teeth on the skin from Day 1. Even if it does not hurt, it will reach a point when it hurts. A dog must learn that teeth on the skin is unacceptable. Instead of getting into a wrestling match, the best way to stop this is to stop all engagement and ignore the pup for a short period when teeth arrive on skin. Very quickly, the puppy will learn that you do not appreciate the same.
- Collect all medical records from the breeder/ previous family/ shelter when you get your dog, especially if it is a puppy. These will come in handy at the first veterinary visit after your dog has settled down at home.
- Most puppies will not have completed their entire vaccination schedule, so be very careful and particular about who and what you expose them to. Puppies have delicate immunity and are susceptible to catching viruses easily.
- The first few nights can be hard because typically, most puppies will cry. Keeping them warm always helps. They miss their mothers, so a ticking clock wrapped in a towel in their bed is a great cheat to simulate the mother's heartbeat.
- Dogs respond to routine and consistency. Set up a good routine, stay consistent with it and with house rules, and you are good to go.
- Lastly, don't forget your camera to capture all the precious moments!

You are about to board a roller-coaster, but the rewards of licks and tail wags are priceless. Keep your sense of humour intact, arm yourself with some common sense, educate yourself with some knowledge, hop on, and enjoy the ride!