



# Important Tips

## *For bringing home a shelter dog*

**CONGRATULATIONS ON CHOOSING TO ADOPT A SHELTER DOG! Shelters and Rescue Groups everywhere house wonderful dogs, each of them just wanting to become a member of your family. Before you start visiting Shelters and Rescue Groups, you need to prepare for bringing home your new best, furry friend...**

### ***HOLD A FAMILY MEETING.***

A dog is not a toy you can turn off and put in the closet. Everyone must want to have a dog and really mean it when they say they will be responsible and spend time with the dog.

### ***DO YOUR HOMEWORK ON WHAT DOG FITS YOUR FAMILY LIFESTYLE AND SURROUNDINGS.***

If you live in an apartment or townhome, you might not want a big dog. If you work long hours, you might not want a high energy dog. If you have specific allergies or must have a perfectly clean house, you may not want a long haired dog or one that sheds. Remember, mixed breeds and mutts also make great family dogs!

### ***VISIT AND LEARN.***

Once you have decided on a breed, visit the local Humane Society on a regular basis to view the dogs and interact with them. Contact the local Rescue Groups specializing in that breed to set up interviews and play dates with their dogs. Make sure all the family members are part of the decision. Let the dog choose you.

### ***ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITIES.***

At least one family member (*who is reliable*) must take the role of their caregiver. This is the person that, when all else fails, is responsible for their well-being. Next, build duties. Who will feed him, take him to potty, walk him, play with him, take him to the Veterinarian, make sure there is always food at home, etc.?

### ***HOMECOMING DAY.***

Make sure you have all his necessary items (ID tag, collar, leash, food, bowls, toys, kennel, bed, etc.) before he arrives. Everyone should be home the first day and most family members should be around for the next few days. Walk him around the front of your house for a bit before you come inside. Keep him in your sight and on a leash. Set rules (i.e. not in this room, off the furniture, no jumping) and constantly enforce them from the start.

### ***CONTROL AND SOCIALIZE YOUR DOG.***

Limit him to one or two rooms to allow him to familiarize himself with your sights, sounds, and smells. Keep him on a leash so you can easily control and correct him. He is in a "new territory", so expect some potty accidents. If you can't catch him in the act, don't yell at him. Clean up all accidents with a good, enzyme cleaner.

### ***BUILD HIS DEN.***

All dogs need "their place". A crate makes a great location that is uniquely your dog's place and will build a consistent, safe location in their new home. It should be big enough for them to be comfortable and located near your family activity. You can also use a laundry room or powder room. Put up a baby gate to keep him there.

### ***LIMIT GUESTS AND ACTIVITIES.***

Allow your dog to slowly learn about his new home. Limit guests so that he can focus on just your family. Manage any guests that to come over. Play and interact with him, but keep the adrenaline low and controlled.

Use your common sense with your new dog. After the first week or so, slowly introduce more people, sounds, places, and experiences. Maintain control and you will do fine. Again, thank you for adopting. They are always the best!