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RESCUE DOG GUIDE

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The ultimate guide to
**bringing a rescue
dog into your life**

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welcome & congratulations on **your new family member!**

We would like to commend you for choosing to adopt your dog from a shelter or rescue organisation. Now that you have given a dog a second chance in life, you want to make the transition to life in your home as easy and stress free as possible for both of you.

From the moment you pick up your dog, you will become everything to them, and they will be immensely grateful for their new chance in life. The first few days together are exciting for both you and your dog. Take your time getting to know each other and make it special, so that you develop a bond with each other.

Your rescue dog will try to find its place in your home and will crave your attention and affection above all else. At first, he may be unsure of your permanence, and will follow you around, worrying that you might leave him behind.

What he needs now is stability and safety, and a routine to help him settle. For a stress-free life together, put your efforts into teaching your dog what you want him to do, rather than telling him what not to do. Take it easy and be patient, give lots of love (and treats), and invest time training and introducing him to his new life with you.

We have developed this booklet to provide guidance, and to help ensure a great start for you and your new dog. Some rescue dogs will adapt faster to their new home environment and new owners, whereas others will take longer, however all require patience above all else.

In this guide, we answer some of the most common questions that new rescue dog parents have, and give advice on important topics. These include where your dog should sleep, when it is safe to let them off lead, teaching new behaviour to older dogs, as well as how to establish rules and routine.

This guide has been written by dog trainers in cooperation with rescue organisations. It has lots of helpful hints, checklists and interactive elements for you to complete. We hope that you find it of value. If you have adopted a puppy, you may also find it helpful to download our puppy guide at bowwowinsurance.com.au/mypuppy

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Download this guide at bowwowinsurance.com.au/rescuedog



Boy or girl?

We will refer to your rescue dog in this guide as "he" to avoid having to use him/her and he/she throughout the booklet. Of course, all the same information applies to female rescue dogs too!

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bringing your

rescue dog home

Giving your new family member the best start

Bringing your rescue dog home is an exciting time, not only for you and your family, but also for your new dog. You are giving him a second chance in life and he will shower you with love and affection to show gratitude for this opportunity.

One of the biggest challenges of taking on a rescue dog is its unknown past. You are unlikely to have much knowledge about your dog's history, including his experience with kids, other dogs, adults and the general environment that he has lived in and been exposed to. These experiences (or lack thereof), can have a significant effect on his behaviour.

We want to give you courage and confidence in raising your new rescue dog. Start the journey by focussing on ensuring a smooth transition into your home.

Whilst some dogs adapt quickly, some might need more time and may get stressed with too much change at once. Take it easy and try to make all experiences positive for your new family member.

No dog has bad intentions and many behavioural problems can be modified and solved with time and dedication. Just because your rescue dog may lack training and socialisation, doesn't mean he is 'broken' or badly behaved. Dogs are willing to learn and please, and it is in their nature to want to adjust to their new home environment.

As your dog will look for guidance and leadership, teach him what is and isn't allowed in your home. Try to spend as much time with him as possible over the first couple of days to create a bond and show him how to figure out his brand new world with you.

Be positive and encouraging and take things slowly. Make sure you don't invite too many people over to your house at once - give your dog the chance to settle in and get used to his new family members first before you introduce others.

The big first day

We suggest that you plan to pick up your dog from the shelter early in the morning. That way, you have the day to spend with him and can start introducing him to his new life. Ideally, you can take some time off

work to spend at home with him to help settle him in. Everything will be new to your dog and he might get overwhelmed. Ensure you take things slowly and give him time to adjust.

Before leaving the shelter/pound/rescue environment, we suggest you take him for a short walk so he can do a wee and sniff around. Bring a chew treat with you and settle him into your car before driving off. You may prefer to bring someone else along with you to drive so you can comfort your new pooch in the car.

We recommend transporting him in a crate, or securing him with a harness so he can't move around in the car while it is moving.



Once you arrive home, and before entering your house, take him for another walk around the block to show him the neighborhood. Make sure you choose a quiet route - you don't want to overload him by walking him past potential environmental challenges such as a busy bus terminal or loud construction sites. Make sure to praise and reward him for good behaviour before entering your house, and give him the opportunity to toilet outside.

We suggest that you doggy-proof your house prior to bringing him home (read more about this on page 9). Ensure that you also close off all rooms that are off limits to your dog. When bringing him inside his new home for the first time, let him investigate and sniff around the house and garden whilst on the leash. Point out things he needs to know like:

- where his water bowl and food bowls are, and give him a small feed;
- where his new bed is and places where he can relax;
- where his toys are;
- where he should go to the toilet, as even adult dogs can get confused and toilet inside if disoriented. (Read more on toilet training on page 31).

On the first day, ensure that he only meets close family members that live in the house with you. Other family and friends can be introduced at a later stage. If you have other pets at home, make sure you introduce them safely. (Read more on page 8).



Your dog's first night

At the start, your dog may be nervous, confused and worried that you will abandon him. He won't know his place in his new home yet. To help him feel more secure, show your dog his bed and reward him for going in it and staying there. You can also try putting your dog's bed next to your bed for the first couple of nights to help him settle in.

Once your dog starts sleeping through the night on his bed, move the bed slowly in stages out of your room into the room where you want him to sleep at night, and at other times when you aren't at home.

Some dogs may worry they will be abandoned again, so they may check at night to see if you are still there. Assure them they are ok and send them back to their dog bed.

Many rescue dogs become unsettled at night in the first few days. It might take your dog a few days to understand that he will now be living permanently with you and begin to relax.



First week

- Supervise your dog and give him lots of opportunities to toilet outside, ensuring you reward him when he goes where you want him to. Give your dog a routine in the morning and evening, as it will help him to settle in better and understand what to expect. A morning and evening walk will be good bonding for you and your dog.
- Start training some basic commands and expose him slowly to the world so you can see what he is comfortable with and where he might need some more socialisation and training. Be patient and forgiving if things don't go the way you may have expected. Your rescue dog may not be socialised to certain things and may be scared of them. He may not have been taught something, or the commands he knows may be different to the ones you use.

Do not let your dog off the lead for the first few weeks until you have bonded and established a good recall command. At the start, take your dog to a fenced dog park or keep him on a long leash to ensure he doesn't run away when he gets scared or disoriented. Don't forget, you are just getting to know each other.

- Slowly start introducing your dog to your extended family and neighbours. Use yummy treats to make all these new experiences positive. Begin leaving your dog for short periods of time. This will help him to learn to settle himself in your house and get him prepared for later when you might have to go back to work. See the Home Alone Plan on page 32.

First months

- People often find that the first month or so is like a honeymoon period where you begin to get to know each other. Just like in a human relationship, during this time, your dog will want to show off the best side of himself, and certain behaviours may be suppressed or somewhat inhibited.

- Once your dog adjusts and makes himself feel more at home, certain behaviours may come through that weren't there at the start.
- Make sure you provide as much structure as possible during this time and follow the schedule that you have established, so that your dog knows what you expect from him and what he can expect from you. Clear boundaries and guidelines give security to your dog and will help him learn the rules and settle in faster. Invest time in training and bonding with your dog. After a few months, he will know who and where he belongs and should have settled in and bonded well.
- Watch your dog closely over the first couple of weeks and months to understand his emotional state around new things he encounters. He might be fearful or scared of things that you never expected him to be unsure about. If you come across behavioural issues, it is always beneficial to start a training course or seek help from a certified professional dog trainer or behaviourist.



Changing your dog's name and creating name recognition

As you are giving your dog a new life, we also recommend choosing a new name for him that is to your liking. This will help provide a fresh start for your dog and leave old memories behind.

It should only take a few days for your dog to start recognising his new name. Here is how to start the process:



- ① Go to an environment where there are no distractions or noises, such as the living room, hallway or kitchen.
- ② Say your dog's new name, wait until he hears it and looks up. Then say "good" and reward him with a treat.
- ③ Next, let your dog investigate his environment. You can even distract him from looking at you by gently kicking a toy away. Then say his name, and the second he looks up, say "good" and follow immediately with a treat reward. Repeat the same thing approximately 10 more times.
- ④ If your dog isn't interested in the treats you offer, find a more appealing treat or use a toy as a reward for looking at you when you say his name.
- ⑤ Multiple repetitions are required over a couple of days until your dog understands that hearing his name means 'look and come to my human for a treat'.
- ⑥ We recommend you do this exercise over three sessions per day, for 10 repetitions per session, over the course of 3-4 days. Start moving towards locations with higher distractions, like the backyard, outside the house, or the park. Keep your dog on leash if outside your home environment.

Find the perfect name
Search through thousands of pet names at bowwow.com.au



Our Story



Adopting our little German Spitz, Benji, from a shelter was one of the best things we ever did. Aged two at the time, Benji moved quickly not just in our home but also in our hearts. Be it camping, traveling, visiting friends, hikes in the bush or just hanging out at the beach - he is the best buddy we could want for all our adventures.

Kerstin, Ian & Benji,
Chifley NSW



Introduction to other dogs and animals in the household

Dogs are very adaptable and, when managed correctly, can get used to other animals. Slow and steady introductions are recommended to help ensure they get along.

If you already have another dog, ideally you would have brought him to the pound or rescue organisation for a meet and greet, before making the decision to adopt your new rescue dog.

When bringing your rescue dog home, it is recommended that you pick a neutral location (like a park or a friend's garden) for the first introduction, to help reduce territorial behaviour. Take it easy and try to make it fun for both your new and old dogs. Follow these simple steps:

- ① Keep both dogs on lead;
- ② At first, allow them to just walk along next to each other for 10 minutes or so without interacting;
- ③ Once they have settled next to each other on a walk, then introduce them and let them play with each other;
- ④ Go home and let the new dog investigate his new place while the other dog is on a walk or confined in a crate;
- ⑤ Once your new family member has investigated his new home, give both dogs some supervised time together for short periods;
- ⑥ Watch for any warning signs in both dogs, to ensure they are comfortable together before allowing longer periods of playtime;
- ⑦ Avoid giving treats or food together, as even the most tolerant dogs can fight over food. It is not worth the risk and it is recommended to always feed them separately.

If you have any other animals such as birds, bunnies or cats in your house, please keep your newly adopted dog on leash or in a crate when first introducing him to these other animals. You might not know if your new dog has had exposure to other animals before, and if he was tolerant of them.

In the first few weeks, ensure that you never leave your new dog and any other animals unsupervised until you are sure they are getting along and are calm and relaxed together. If you see any signs of stress, overexcitement or fearfulness, we recommend consulting a certified dog trainer and behaviourist to help. For more information please go to: pets.webmd.com/dogs/introducing-new-dog--cat

Our Story



We recently adopted our 6-year-old Husky, Dakota, from Home for Huskies in Victoria. Dakota didn't have the greatest start to life, being tied up to a house for most of it, and has been challenging to say the least. He is afraid of males and pulls like a freight train, although with patience, training and determination, he's improving every day. He makes a great sled dog and I have begun racing him this year. He's already showing great potential and is really fast.

It is such an awesome feeling adopting rescues. It's difficult to explain, though there's something you see in their eyes and feel in their hearts that makes them so special.

Michelle & Dakota,
Lundhurst VIC



Doggy-proofing your home

Make sure you doggy-proof your house before your new dog's arrival, so you can focus on spending quality time with him when he first arrives home.

Some rescue dogs might not be toilet trained yet or may get confused at the start. It is recommended to block off access to various rooms and slowly introduce your dog to more rooms in the house. Use baby gates to help with this process.

Ensure that all power cords are hidden, kids' toys, cleaning products, medication and other potentially dangerous or breakable items are put away, and that shoes and any valuable items are out of reach. Check for gaps under fences, gates and garage doors to ensure your dog cannot escape. Self-latching gates can be handy as they ensure the dog can't follow you out of an open gate.



Top tips for doggy-proofing your home

- ✔ Check for gaps in fences/gates/doors
- ✔ Remove all valuable items
- ✔ Install self-latching gates
- ✔ Install baby gates











Top 10 most poisonous plants for dogs

As you are unlikely to be aware of your rescue dog's past, it is important to treat him like a puppy and not allow scavenging or chewing on plants. Even older rescue dogs can behave like puppies and chew everything, as they

may never have learnt what to chew and what not to chew. Some dogs may not have had exposure to an outside garden, and will investigate thoroughly by chewing everything in sight.

Check your backyard to ensure you don't have any poisonous plants for dogs. We also recommend teaching your dog a good "leave it" command and showing him what he can chew instead of plants.



Brunfelsia 	Iris 	Liliums 	Mushrooms 	Tomato plants 
Tulips & Daffodils 	Many bulbs (including daffodils, onions and snowdrops) 	Rhododendron (including azaleas) 	Stephanotis (Madagascar jasmine) 	Oleander Yellow oleander 

IMPORTANT: Train your dog not to chew any plants or take food off the ground. If your dog shows any signs of being unwell and you suspect he might have chewed or eaten something, take a sample of the plant/food to your vet and get him checked straight away.

doggy arrival

» equipment checklist «

Having the right food, supplies and equipment ready before your dog's arrival will help you to maximize your enjoyment of your new family member when you bring him home. We have put together a checklist of supplies you will need. We suggest that you use it as a shopping guide.

Basic Supplies

✓ **Food dish**

✓ **Water dish**

✓ **Dog bed**

Ensure you get one that fits your dog - your dog should be able to comfortably stretch out on it. It is recommended to choose a bed with washable covers.

✓ **Collar**

Choose a collar that allows you to adjust the size and has a good clip on it. The collar shouldn't be too heavy for your dog's neck and should sit snugly so you can fit two fingers underneath it when around his neck.

✓ **ID tag**

Choose a quality tag from your local vet or pet shop, or order online. Get your dog's name and two phone numbers engraved on the tag (in case you can't be contacted on one of them).

✓ **Lead**

A good quality lead is a great investment and should last up to five years. The lead should have a good quality clip and shouldn't be too heavy for your dog. A retractable lead is not recommended for walking in the streets, as you won't be able to have effective control of your dog when it is metres ahead of you. Remember, you are just getting to know your dog and don't know how he might react to his new environment.

✓ **Car harness or seatbelt buckle**

In some states you are required by law to keep your dog restrained whilst traveling in the car. Your options are a harness, crate, seat buckle clip or a metal mesh barrier between the back area and passenger seats. Even if the law in your state does not enforce it, it is important to keep you, your family as well as the dog, safe and it is highly recommended to restrain your dog in the car in case of an accident.



Food

✓ Food for meals

Ask the shelter or rescue organisation what dry food they have been feeding your dog. If possible, we suggest you purchase a small bag of the same brand first and keep your dog on the same food for about one or two weeks before you transition him to another brand of your choosing. This is to avoid introducing too much change at the start. Read more about your dog's diet on page 26.

Your rescue dog might be nervous when first arriving at his new home and this could cause soft stools. If you immediately change diets you won't know if his soft stools are caused by food or nervousness. Transitioning gradually from one brand to the next will help avoid further stomach upset.

Your vet may recommend a specific brand of dog food if your new rescue dog is underweight, or for other reasons that require a special diet.

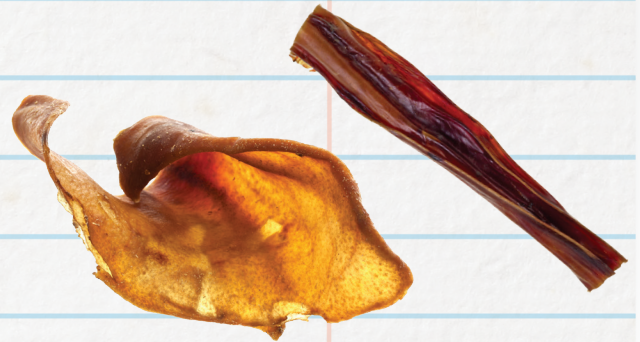


✓ Training treats

We recommend using natural dry treats, or your dog's dry food as a reward, as they can easily be carried in your pocket. Having treats or dry food on you helps you to reinforce good behaviour on the spot for your rescue dog. For training in the park or elsewhere outside your home, it is recommended to use higher value treats such as barbecue chicken meat.

✓ Chew treats

Chew treats are an especially useful distraction for the first few times you leave your dog home alone. They will keep him occupied rather than stressing about you leaving, and help avoid him chewing things he should not. Common chew treats are pigs ears, antlers, sheep ears, hooves or bully sticks. Please ask your local pet shop for good quality chew treats that are made in Australia or New Zealand.



✓ Training Pouch

You may have seen training pouches being used by dog or animal trainers. We recommend you invest in one if you are committed to having a well-trained dog. This is because dogs learn through repetition, and behaviours need to be reinforced in under three seconds for your dog to remember what he received the reward for. By always having a treat on hand, and rewarding positive behaviour, you will quickly instil good manners. The more regularly the right behaviour gets reinforced, the faster your rescue dog will thrive in his new home.

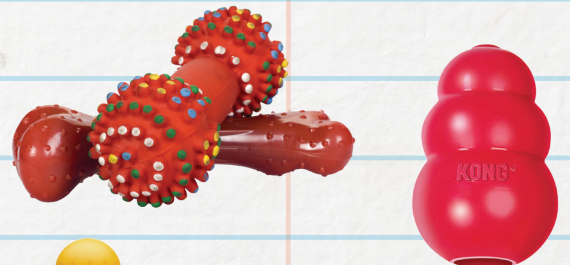


Toys

✓ Toys

It is worthwhile testing if your dog likes toys and balls before buying lots of them. Some dogs are not interested in toys at all. Once you know that your dog likes to play with toys, a toy basket is recommended for storing and rotating toys to keep them exciting for your dog. We recommend having around 10-12 different toys for your dog.

Good quality toys that can't easily be destroyed are recommended. It is better to have two quality toys that you can leave your dog with, than ten that require constant supervision. Food toys, such as Bob-A-Lot, Kong, or a Snuffle Mat, provide mental stimulation, and can help an active dog to be calm. These toys can be filled with food and entice the dog to become engaged trying to get the food. Fluffy toys can be fun, however their use should be supervised. Fluffy toys can easily get destroyed, creating not only mess, but also potentially forming bad habits that could lead to him destroying bedding, cushions and other fluff-containing household items.



Grooming

✓ Dog shampoo and conditioner

✓ Brush

Choose a soft brush for short haired dogs or a wire one for long haired dogs. Even if you are planning to get your dog groomed regularly, you will still need to brush your dog in between grooming to avoid his fur getting matted. Many people are under the impression they do not have to brush a short haired dog, however, to minimise shedding, regular brushing is recommended.

✓ Nail clippers

Please take extra care when clipping your dog's nails - many people clip too short and the nail bed can start bleeding. Go to your local vet or groomer to get your dog's nails clipped or take extra care when doing it yourself. Ensure you have lots of treats ready for your dog's first nail clip with you or the groomer, as many dogs do not like getting their nails clipped.



Miscellaneous

✓ Baby gates or a puppy play pen

are great if your dog is still a puppy, or if you want to limit access to certain areas of your house.

✓ Crate

Useful if you wish to crate train your dog/puppy.

✓ ADAPTIL collar or dispenser

This is a pheromone collar that can make your rescue dog feel safe, and help settle him into his new home. Read more at adaptil.com.au

✓ Flea and tick treatment

Please follow your vet's recommendation for the correct treatment and dosage.

✓ Worming tablets

Please follow your vet's recommendation and ask the rescue or pound when the last treatment was, to ensure your dog is up to date.

✓ Pet insurance

It is important to take out pet insurance from the very start, to ensure your rescue dog is always covered. **Bow Wow Meow** has been chosen as Product Review's Pet Insurance Award Winner for the past 5 years, based on independent customer reviews.

Get two months FREE pet insurance for your rescue dog – just use promo code **BRS44** when getting a quote at bowwowinsurance.com.au



Our Story



When our dog Oscar became increasingly anxious, we decided to look for an older dog as a friend for him. We found a 12-year-old boy named Matthew who had been surrendered to Labrador Rescue. Matthew (who I call Matty Matt) was fairly stressed when he arrived. I told Oscar he was getting a new brother and showed him pics. We waited in

the park as he was driven over to meet us, and as the car stopped, Oscar ran over to say hello. The rest is history...Matthew is now 13 1/2 and still going strong, and we are so glad that we brought him into our family.

Nicola & Matthew,
Heidelberg Heights VIC

Integrating with the family

Once you have made the decision to adopt a rescue dog, it is important to sit down with the family and discuss rules and responsibilities around your new family member. These include listing the household rules your new dog needs to follow, the commands you wish him to learn, and agreeing who will be responsible for feeding, taking him for walks and grooming.

It is preferable to do this before you bring your dog home so that consistent rules and routine can be established from the outset. This will help your new fur baby acclimatise to his new home and make it very clear amongst family members who is responsible for what.

Instead of just using the word "No", we recommend you teach your dog the "Leave it" command to stop undesirable behaviour such as chewing shoes, eating plants in the backyard, digging etc. Your dog may not know the word 'No', or may have a negative association with the word from its previous life, causing it to become scared when you use it.

Establishing family rules

Setting up clearly defined rules and boundaries that are reinforced by everyone in the household will help your dog to learn faster, settle in quicker and be less confused.

To help you get started, here are some topics you may like to think about before your adopted dog arrives home.

Is your dog allowed on the couch?

☐ YES ☐ NO

(If you answered YES, teach your dog a command to get up on the couch. That way you can stop him getting on it when he is muddy or wet).

Is your dog allowed to sleep on your or the kids' beds?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Is your dog allowed to swim in the family pool?

☐ YES ☐ NO

(If yes, teach your dog how to get in and out of the pool to avoid the risk of drowning)

Is your dog allowed to sit under the table during family dinner?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Is your dog allowed to beg at the table?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Is your dog allowed to jump up on you or other people?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Is your dog allowed to kiss and lick faces?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Are there any areas in the house that are off limits?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Areas off limits are: _____

Review your rules after a month

You may have changed your mind on some areas and it could be useful to get everybody together to review and readjust the rules after a month or so.

You may also find that you need some help with further training and should consider bringing in a dog trainer to help you.



Deciding who does what

Help make your new dog a true family dog that bonds with all family members, by sharing the responsibilities of caring for him. We suggest you record the name of the person responsible for each task in the table below. This will ensure that everybody is involved, and duties won't be forgotten.

Make sure that a responsible adult takes the dog out for walks in the first couple of weeks to gauge if he is fearful of anything. A child may not be able to read a dog well enough or be able to get him out of a dangerous situation. It is also not recommended to let children under 12 years old walk the dog by themselves, and it is important to consider the size and strength of the dog compared to the child.

Task	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Feeding morning							
Feeding evening							
Walk morning							
Walk evening							
Brushing							
Training							

Teaching your dog commands

Teaching your dog commands to follow will make it easier for him to learn his place in the family and to respond to all family members. The more commands a dog can follow, the more freedom you can grant him (e.g. if your dog has a reliable recall, you can grant him more off-leash freedom).

Your dog will most likely already know a few commands. The rescue organisation you got him from may advise you on any commands he knows, and if so, you can build from there.

Your dog will learn new commands quickly if everyone in the household uses them and reinforces and rewards the correct behaviour. To make this step easy, please find a sample list with commands below, which includes space to add your own commands and desired behaviours. If you need help with training your dog, it is best to seek a dog trainer's help. Your local shelter or rescue organisation will be able to provide you with some contacts. Learn more about training on pages 30-31.

Verbal command	Desired behaviour	For an initial assessment, rate how well your rescue dog knows this command 1 = doesn't know well 5 = knows well
Sit	Sit	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
Stay	Stay until you come back	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
Come	Come back to me	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
On your bed	Go to the dog bed and lie down	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
Heel	Walk nicely on lead on your left hand side, stop and sit each time you stop.	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
Leave it	Leave/drop whatever he has picked up or is looking at and don't touch it again.	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
Drop or down	Lie down	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
Give	Give the toy/ball	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
Fetch	Run after the ball/toy and bring it back	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
Off & on the couch	Get on the couch when I invite you and get off the couch when asked.	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
Add your own:		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5
		<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5



your children and your new dog.. **getting it right from the start**

Congratulations. By adopting a rescue dog, you are teaching your children the value of saving a precious life.

Kids and dogs often develop a close loving bond, and giving your child a dog is a wonderful gift. Owning a dog is an opportunity to teach your children responsibility and respect for animals, not to mention all the fun they are sure to have together!

Bear in mind that your rescue dog might not have had much contact with children in its previous life and may need to learn what great playmates they can be. Take it slow, ensuring the kids don't overwhelm your dog at first.

In this section, we recommend lessons to teach your child and fun games for your child and dog to play together. Before you begin, please read this booklet to the end to ensure you understand your dog's body language and how to interact safely.

Our Story



We rescued our gorgeous Kobi two years ago.

He is beyond affectionate, full of beans and our favourite alarm clock in the morning. He loves outdoor adventures, car rides, his toys & food, food, food!

He is the greatest welcome home after a day at work, keenest snuggle buddy and our faithful companion no matter what the task. We can't imagine our lives without him & are grateful every day that the stars aligned & he became a furry member of our family!

Jacqui & Leigh,
Melbourne VIC



Lessons to teach your children

Small children can behave wildly and their behaviour can be too unpredictable for some dogs. You don't know what your rescue dog has been through in the past, and you don't want anybody to have a bad experience.



Therefore, even when the utmost caution is taken, young kids and dogs should not be left unsupervised, and we recommend all interactions between dogs and kids under the age of 7 be closely monitored. If you are busy and can't supervise, please put your dog in your bedroom or in his crate to keep everyone safe.

To give this relationship the best possible start, there are a few simple lessons you should teach your children about interacting with their new dog. These also apply to visitors in your home.

- Don't pat the dog on his head, he prefers a chest or ear scratch;
- Don't allow pulling on his ears or tail or poking his eyes or nose;
- Don't approach the dog from the back - he could easily get a fright, growl or snap;

- Don't corner the dog or block his flight path;
- Don't disturb the dog when he is sleeping or eating;
- Leave the dog alone when he moves away or growls;
- Don't yell at the dog;
- Don't repeat commands multiple times;
- Don't say his name over and over again;
- Don't go in your dog's crate, it is his safe space. Leave him alone and do not tease him when he is in his crate, tethered or otherwise confined.

For more information on preventing dog bites, read the sections on dog and family safety (page 18) and the section on dog body language (page 36) in this booklet.

Safe interactions between kids and dogs

Your kids need to learn not to pat random dogs. Always ask the owner if they can pat the dog before doing so. You may be surprised how many dogs have not been socialised with kids and aren't happy to be patted by them.



Remember to teach them this important rule:
If a dog you don't know is on its own, leave it alone.

Temperament testing

Some rescue dogs come with a temperament assessment which might say your dog is 'child friendly'. Whilst this may be nice to have, it should be treated with caution, as you won't know much about the testing, including how much has been done, in what kind of environment, how old the kids were etc. Just because a dog has had contact with teenagers, for example, doesn't mean it will tolerate a loud and bouncy toddler.

Take your dog's body language seriously

It is important to understand that dogs cannot speak like we humans do. When they do try and 'talk' to us through barking, most of the time we just tell them to be quiet!

Dogs communicate primarily through their body language, with signals we can easily miss if we are not observant.

A yawn when your dog is obviously not tired, a headshake, an ear flick, stiffening of his body – these are all signals to indicate how he is feeling. By the time a dog growls at someone – and we don't mean in a playful way – he will already have given you a whole lot of other signals that you may not have noticed. His next action could be a bite. Your dog does not want to bite, but it may be his last resort after he has shown you through his body language that he is not happy with a particular situation.

It is even more important in households with young children, not to miss the signals your dog is giving you. We want to ensure that we keep everyone in the family happy, including the kids and the dog.

Learn more about your dog's body language on page 36 of this guide.



Preventing dog bites

It is important to know that dogs can bite regardless of how much they love us!

In the vast majority of incidents where kids get bitten by dogs, the dog is familiar to them. This may sound surprising, but it actually isn't. We have a tendency to trust our dogs to always do the right thing and forget they are animals at the end of the day. We often also ignore the subtle signs a dog gives us before it bites. A snap or a bite is the dog's way of saying "I have told you many times that I am not happy with what you are doing, so now finally back off", but that might already be too late for the child.

Unfortunately, as a result of the way kids interact with dogs, the majority of bites end up being to their faces.



{ Games for kids & dogs } to play together



Fetch a ball

Teach your dog to retrieve a ball and bring it back. Some dogs are natural fetchers and will enjoy this a lot.

Hide and seek

One person holds the dog and the child hides with a treat and calls the dog from its hiding spot. Start with easy places not too far away. Advance as the dog understands its job is to find the hiding child.



Blow bubbles

Dogs love to chase and we want them to chase things that are allowed to be chased. Let your child blow the bubbles and give your dog the opportunity to chase them.



At first, keep the games short and fun, so as not to overwhelm your new dog. Gradually build up the duration of the games, starting with five minutes and increasing up to 20-30 minutes over time.



Teach tricks

A great way to create a bond is through trick training. Kids have fun showing off their new dog's trick to their friends. Teach simple things like shake, paw and roll over.



Tug of War

A fun game for both dog and kids to release some excess energy. Teach your dog to take the toy and give it back when asked. Commands can be "take it" and "give" for releasing the toy.

dog & family safety

Keeping you, your family and your new dog safe is of the utmost importance. Below are some helpful tips.

● Your home

- Your adopted dog needs a safe, quiet place where he can rest and won't be disturbed. When you leave him alone at home, you want to make sure he has a place where he can relax and sleep, and won't be able to destroy things in the house or backyard.
- Refer to the section on page 9 on how to dog-proof your home.

● Outside and on walks

- Keep in mind that your rescue dog is new to you. You might not know much about his past and he might not be used to the environment you live in. The new world can be perceived as a dangerous place to your rescue dog. Factors like cars, heavy traffic and crowds of people may stress him out and might take him time to get used to. He may run on the street into traffic, or chase things that he shouldn't.
- Ensure you watch him at all times in the beginning and keep him on leash every time you leave the house. Make sure your dog's collar or harness sits tight enough so that he can't slip through if he wants to run away.
- Keep a pet ID tag with his name and your phone number, as well as an alternative contact number on his collar or harness at all times.

● Weather and temperature

- Don't leave your dog in the car if the temperature is more than 22°C. Within less than 10 minutes, your car can quickly heat up to 47°C, even with the windows open. Your dog could have a heat stroke or die from overheating.
- Don't walk your dog on hot ground. As a rule, if you can't leave the back of your hand on the ground for longer than 5 seconds, then your dog shouldn't walk on it.
- On hot days, only take your dog out in the morning and evening. Make sure your dog has access to a shady area during the day, lots of water and a place with good air ventilation. It is better to keep him inside on very hot days and, if possible, even consider leaving the air-conditioning on. Similar rules apply to cold days. Depending on your dog's breed and the climate you live in, consider getting a coat for your dog to wear in colder months.

● Interactions and exposure

- Watch your dog's body language. If your dog tucks his ears back, yawns a lot, crunches up his body, moves away from people, dogs or other animals, hides behind your legs or turns away, it is a clear signal he is overwhelmed and doesn't want to interact with whatever is being presented to him. Remove him from the situation and give him space. Seek advice and help from a professional dog trainer or behaviourist if necessary.

Learn more about your dog's body language on page 36.



your dog's health

Most rescue organisations, shelters and pounds will have had a general basic vet check-up done, along with desexing if necessary, before releasing your dog to you for adoption. You will likely have received instructions and paperwork on your dog's vaccinations, microchip number, approximate age and breed. Please take these with you when you go for your first vet check-up. If the organisation you adopted your dog from has not given you much information, or you are concerned about something, we recommend that you set up a vet appointment for a general check-up soon after your dog's adoption.

Use this initial appointment to assess your dog's overall health, check your dog is in the healthy weight range, discuss any concerns or issues you may have and ensure its vaccination papers are up to date. Speak to your vet about when their

next worming and vaccination is required and their recommended flea and tick prevention regime.

We recommend you take out pet insurance as soon as you adopt your dog. Bow Wow Meow Pet Insurance will insure your rescue dog even if you don't have its complete vet history. You can get cover for accidents from the start, whilst a 30-day waiting period applies for most illnesses.

Get two months FREE pet insurance for your rescue dog – just use promo code BRS44 when getting a quote at bowwowinsurance.com.au

Vaccination schedule

Many of the most serious canine diseases – including Canine Hepatitis, Canine Distemper, Canine Parainfluenza and

Canine Parvovirus – are preventable with simple dog vaccinations. Some of these conditions can cause very serious health problems, discomfort or pain for your dog. In some cases, the condition can lead to death within a number of days, or potentially even hours.

Vaccinations are therefore a must, and should be kept up on a regular basis, as recommended by your vet. Regular vet checks are also essential to ensure ongoing good health and to give you the best chance of preventing and managing diseases.

Research has been conducted testing how long immunity lasts following vaccination. Results show that some vaccines can protect your dog for up to three years. Your vet may be able to do what is known as a 'titre test' to test if your dog still has immunity and if you may be able to delay

his vaccinations for a while. For more information on this topic, please consult your vet or read more on vaccination schedules and costs on our website: bowwowinsurance.com.au/pet-community/pet-talk/puppy-dog-vaccination-schedules-and-vaccination-costs

Kennel cough

Don't be surprised if you picked up a healthy dog and two days later he starts coughing. He might have caught kennel cough in the pound/shelter environment and is now showing symptoms. Kennel cough is a virus that can be caught by your dog even if it has been vaccinated. It is like having the flu, and a dog with kennel cough will feel miserable and be coughing regularly. If your dog has these symptoms, is recommended to take him to the vet and keep him under strict quarantine, to avoid spreading the virus, as it is transferred like human flu. Kennel cough can sound terrible but most of the time it is not serious and most dogs will recover without treatment.

Puppies, as well as younger or older dogs with lower immunity, are more prone to getting kennel cough, along with dogs that came from kennel environments like the shelter or pound.

Worming

Worming your dog is important to avoid illness. Check your dog's poo when you get him. If you see any live worms in his poo, de-worm him immediately, even if he might not be due for another couple of weeks. Worms can cause health problems like diarrhoea, hair loss and vomiting, just to name a few.

Worms have nothing to do with hygiene and it is recommended to worm an adult dog four times a year or even more if you find worms in your dog's poo. Puppies must be wormed more frequently and it is recommended to dose according to the puppy's weight. Please consult your vet about puppy worming to ensure you get the right dose and frequency.

Ticks

Ticks are dangerous as they can transmit not only diseases but also paralysis from the paralysis tick. Spring and summer are peak seasons for these nasty little creatures. To protect your dog, start tick prevention from the day you pick up your dog. Please consult your vet as to which product is best to use and also check your dog daily if you live in a tick prone environment.

Where to check for ticks

- Ticks like it most where it's warm and moist.
- Check your dog's fur top to bottom.
- Check in between its paws.
- Check its gums.
- Check inside its ears.
- Check eyelids and near the nose.

How to remove a tick using tweezers

- Grasp the tick as close to your dog's skin as possible, but be gentle! Try not to pinch your dog's skin.
- Pull outwards in a straight, steady motion, making sure you've removed the entire tick, since anything left behind could lead to an infection
- Please do NOT place petroleum, finger nail polish or other similar substances on the tick, this will just increase the chance of infection.



Fleas

It is important that you use a flea prevention treatment, and there are many options on the market to choose from. Some will be more suited to your dog than others (e.g. a flea collar will not last long on a dog that goes swimming).

Fleas not only survive on your dog's body, but their eggs can survive for months in carpets, dog beds or any other areas your dog likes to lie on. It is recommended to wash all bedding and other areas that your dog likes to lie on. Sometimes the only way to break the cycle is to flea bomb your house.

Neutering/spaying

Responsible dog ownership also includes spaying or neutering your dog. There are various reasons for desexing, with the main reason being to avoid your dog from having unexpected and unwanted puppies. There are already thousands of unwanted dogs in pounds across the country - and one of them just got saved by you!

Most rescue organisations, pounds or shelters will desex the dog before you adopt it. If this is not the case, you should get your dog desexed as soon as possible. The desexing procedure is pretty similar for male and female dogs. The animal will be put under general anaesthetic and have either its uterus and ovaries (for females) or its testicles (for males) removed.

The recovery for male dogs is quite fast and will take 3 to 4 days, while for female dogs it can take a bit longer, approximately 5 to 6 days. It is essential that your dog does not lick or chew the sutures, so he may have to wear an Elizabethan collar for a few days. To ensure problem free healing, it is recommended to reduce exercise and avoid swimming for a week or two. It is best to keep your dog on lead until all wounds have healed and sutures have been removed by the vet.



COMMON PET EMERGENCIES



POISON

Chemicals, foods, allergic reactions



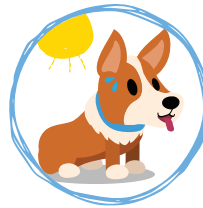
MOBILITY

Seizures, severe limp, unconsciousness



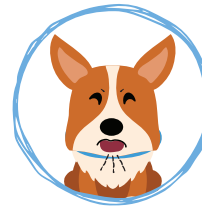
TRAUMA

Bites, bleeding, impacts



HEAT

Heat stroke, heat stress



THROAT

Choking, severe vomiting, refusal to eat/drink



OTHER

Eye injury, inability to pass waste, blood in waste

You should always seek veterinary help if you suspect your dog has any of the above conditions. Make sure you keep your vet and emergency service contact information easily accessible.



SEIZURES

- The most important thing to do is protect your dog from self-injury.
- DO NOT place your fingers or any object in your dog's mouth.
- Clear the area around your dog to help prevent injury during the seizure.
- Do NOT attempt to restrain your dog, but you can place a hand on their body.
- When the seizure has stopped, contact your vet for further instructions.
- If the seizure does not stop within 3 to 5 minutes or if your dog comes out of the seizure and goes into another one within an hour, transport him immediately to the vet.



WOUND CARE

- Place pressure with gauze or a clean cloth to stop bleeding.
- If there is debris, flush the wound with saline or clean water.
- For deep wounds, or severe bleeding, keep pressure on the wound until you can get your dog to a vet.



POISON

- If you suspect poisoning, seek care immediately.
- If you cannot get to your local vet immediately, please call an emergency vet for further instructions.
- Alternatively, you can call the Animal Poisons Helpline on 1300 869 738 for a risk assessment, treatment recommendations or referral advice.



CHOKING

- If your dog is choking, hold his upper jaw open with one hand, and look for a foreign object.
- Unless you can clearly see and grasp the obstruction, do not put your fingers into your dog's mouth or throat.
- Lift smaller dog's legs into the air so gravity can help dislodge the obstruction.
- If you can't remove the foreign object using the heel of your hand, deliver 4-5 sharp blows to the dog between the shoulder blades.



It is also a good idea to pack a first aid kit for your dog. This comes in handy when you are in the car, at home or outdoors. Find out what you need to pack at: bowwowinsurance.com.au/pet-community/pet-talk/dog-first-aid

you've saved your dog's life... now make sure you can always afford to look after him

Bringing your rescue dog home is exciting and a great opportunity for a fresh start. Whilst your primary concern right now will be settling him into your home, you are also taking on the responsibility of looking after him for the rest of his life. Along with that comes the potential for incurring significant vet bills should he become ill or get injured in the future.

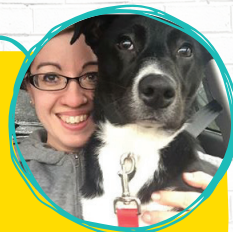
From a health perspective, rescuing a dog can be a bit of a stab in the dark, as you will generally have little idea of the dog's history or previous health issues. Most of the time you won't have a medical history for your dog and any pre-existing conditions may be unknown. As dogs age, their health risk increases as does the likelihood of needing medical treatment, which can be very costly.

To ensure your rescue dog will always be covered, we recommend taking out pet insurance soon after bringing him home. If there is no medical history that can be provided, all you need are the adoption papers and any medical documentation that has been provided by the rescue organisation or shelter that you adopted your dog from.

Cali

This is me and my rescued girl Cali, who is now two. We rescued her at seven weeks old, in a very bad way. We took out pet insurance for her with Bow Wow Meow at our vet's recommendation. We have spent a lot getting her back to full health and it has been a huge relief knowing she is covered for the majority. Every claim has been so easy. Thank you!

– Natasha & Cali, Kardinya WA



Hamish

We adopted Hamish 7 years ago when he was 18 months old. He is the most grateful, happy dog. Unfortunately, he was recently diagnosed with diabetes and Cushing's syndrome. He has to have insulin injections and medication twice a day, with regular vet stays to monitor his blood sugar and cortisol levels. Luckily we are with Bow Wow Meow Insurance to help us to keep up with his considerable ongoing medical expenses. We are so grateful that we can help him and have given him a second chance in life.

– Sue & Hamish, Endeavour Hills VIC



Kenya

This is our gorgeous rescue girl Kenya. Just before she turned one she ran into a branch and stabbed herself... with collapsed lungs she needed emergency specialist surgery. Twelve months later she was bitten by a deadly brown snake! Somehow she made it through. On both occasions we were able to get our beautiful girl the best care thanks to our Bow Wow Meow Pet Insurance ... the only insurance I pay with a smile. I foster for Herd2homes now and I always recommend Bow Wow Meow to our adopters for pet insurance - could not be happier with your service!

– Deborah & Kenya, The Oaks NSW



Bow Wow Meow has been chosen as Product Review's Pet Insurance Award Winner for the past 6 years, based on independent customer reviews.



★ SPECIAL OFFER ★★

Get 2 months FREE pet Insurance for your rescue dog#!

Use the promo code **BRS44**
when getting a quote at bowwowinsurance.com.au



{Doggy Spa – from head to paw}

Bathing

When bathing your rescue dog for the first time after bringing him home, it would be helpful to have two people to do the job - one to do the washing and the other to give the dog treats. This is to help make bathing a pleasant and positive experience for your dog, as he may not have had good experiences in the past.

You do not know how your dog is going to react to bathing or showering - be prepared if he tries to run away or jumps out of the bath/shower with shampoo all over him. Keep the first bath short, and if you are worried, you can always get a dog groomer to do the job for you.

Bathing too often can cause your dog's skin to dry out and its coat can start to look dull. You may prefer to bathe your dog only when he smells or has rolled in mud, unless he has a skin condition and your vet has advised differently. Make sure you use shampoo and conditioner made specifically for pets.

You should also brush your dog on a regular basis. Brushing can prevent your dog's coat from matting. It also helps with blood circulation and can reduce shedding, if done weekly. For your dog's first brushing experience, once again, two people are recommended: one giving him treats while the other one does the brushing. Your new dog might enjoy brushing if he has had good experiences in the past. If not, he should start to enjoy brushing over time and you shouldn't have to use treats on an ongoing basis.

Grooming

Some dogs require regular grooming to prevent their fur from matting. This applies mainly to breeds with medium or long hair, as well as breeds with a curly coat, e.g. Pomeranians, Poodles, Poodle crosses, Huskies, Maltese. It is recommended that breeds that require regular grooming visit a professional groomer every 8-12 weeks to avoid matting and the potential health issues related to it.

When taking your dog for his first groom, ask for a quiet day at the grooming salon and mention that your dog is a rescue and you do not know his past experience with grooming. Your dog might be scared or try to run away. Get feedback from the groomer afterwards as to how he went. This can help you make the experience better for him in the future. Consult a dog trainer if your dog is scared of being groomed.

Ears

Check your dog's ears regularly. Some dog breeds are more prone to getting ear infections than others, especially ones with long floppy ears, where dirt can easily collect. If your dog is shaking a lot or trying to scratch his ears, this could be a sign of an ear infection and we would advise getting him checked out by your vet. Ear infections can be very painful and a dog in pain can display unwanted behaviour, such as growling at you when you are trying to pat their ears or head.

Eyes

Regular cleaning and trimming of your dog's fringe is recommended to keep the eye area clean from dust and dirt, especially if you have a breed that requires grooming around its face. The hair near the eyes can cause dirt to collect and tear ducts to block, which can cause eyes to get infected.

Teeth

Dental hygiene is important. Dogs' teeth require regular cleaning and will need to be looked after. Dry dog food is designed to clean dogs' teeth while they crunch on it. Sometimes a dental stick is recommended for weekly teeth cleaning. You can also brush your dog's teeth regularly. If your vet recommends it, you can also get a teeth clean done every one to two years. The vet will put your dog under general anaesthetic to do the cleaning.

Your dog may have dental issues but not show any obvious signs of discomfort. By the time he shows obvious signs of dental problems such as avoiding food, he will already be in a lot of pain.

Nails

The more your dog walks on paved surfaces, the more his nails will get trimmed naturally. If your dog was in a shelter/pound environment for a longer period of time, his nails might be long and require shortening. Nails that are too long can cause discomfort and pain to your dog when walking. Please ask the vet or dog groomer to trim your dog's nails to the appropriate length, as cutting them at home can be tricky.

Anal glands

Not a sexy topic, but we thought we would cover it. Dogs have two small anal glands, which get expressed when your dog poops. If your dog has a lot of soft stools they may not get expressed naturally and can cause your dog discomfort. Your dog might start rubbing his bum on your floor or let off some really smelly farts. If so, a groomer or vet can help your dog by emptying their anal glands.

What you need:

- Dog shampoo & conditioner
- Towel
- Floor mat for your dog to stand on when coming out of the bath
- Hair dryer
- Brush
- A second person to help (and give your dog treats if he is, not entirely happy with being bathed)



Developmental stages of a dog's life

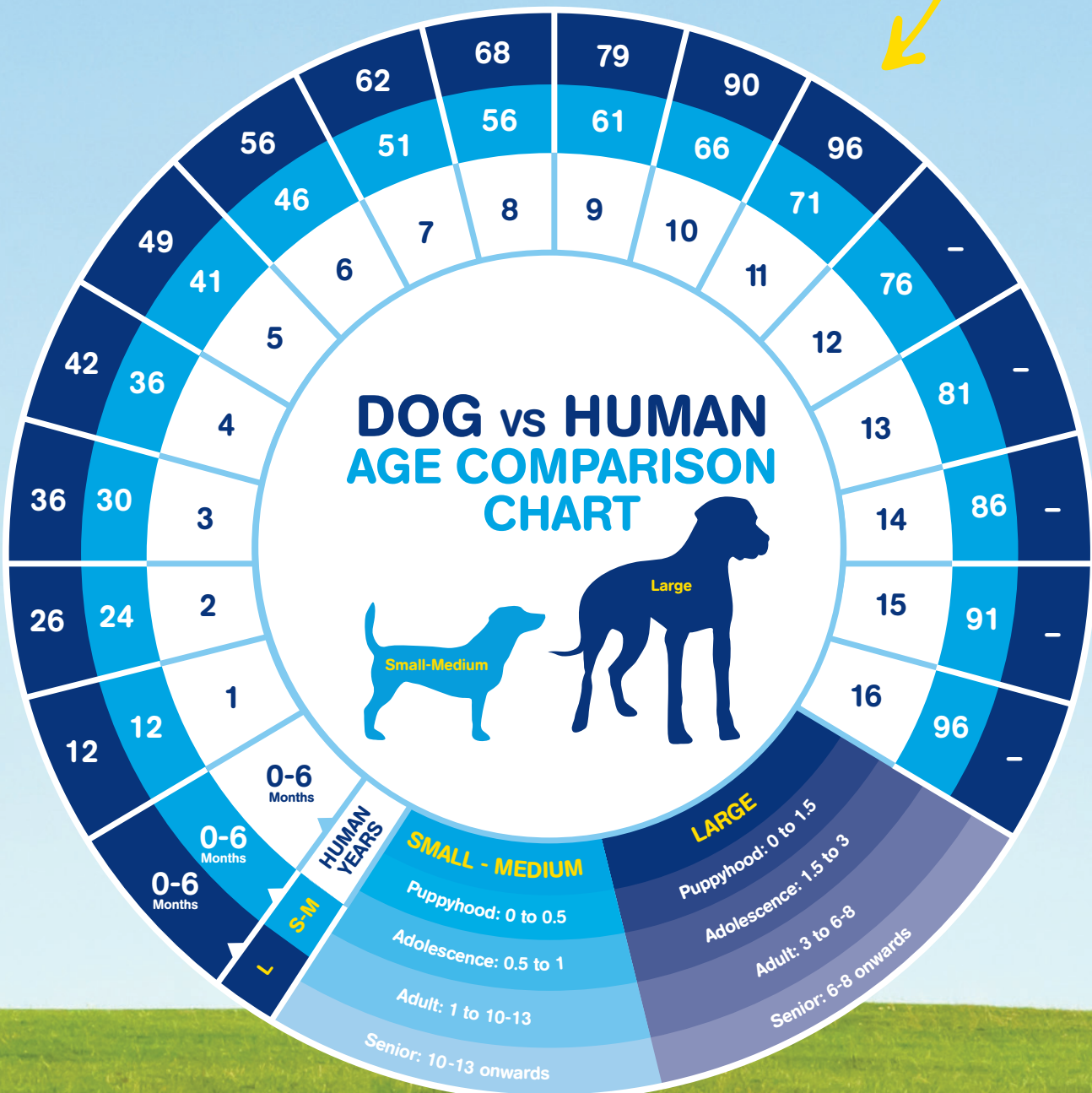
Dogs age at different speeds depending on their breed or breed mix, the environment they are brought up in and their health. Like people, dogs also evolve with age and experience.

One certainty is that large dog breeds mature much slower and have a longer puppy stage than small dog breeds. Due to their size, the life expectancy of larger dogs is also much shorter than that of small dog breeds. Regardless of how old

dogs are when they enter the next stage in life, they all go through the same developmental stages - from puppyhood to teenager/adolescent stage, to adulthood and then to senior. Each stage brings different challenges and training requirements.

To give you an idea about each stage and when your dog might enter it, we have provided a guideline on the following page.

The following graphic is rather simplistic, but it will give you an idea of your dog's age equivalent in human years and a rough indication of the key stages in your dog's life. Keep in mind that this can vary, depending on many factors.



LIFE STAGE	PUPPYHOOD
What it is	Puppyhood describes the time period when your puppy grows from a newborn to a baby, a toddler and then a child. He leaves this phase as a teenager. You will see your puppy changing physically and mentally on a weekly basis.
Age	From birth to between 6-18 months of age
Food	Puppy food
Exercise	5 minutes for every month of age, morning and evening
Health	Like human toddlers, puppies are prone to accidents and are more susceptible to medical issues. They tend to be clumsy, as they are still learning about their body.
Sleep	18-20 hours per day
Energy Levels	High
Training	Lots of training required. Puppies are very quick to pick up new skills that you teach them.
Socialisation	Lots of socialisation required, especially before the age of 16 weeks.

LIFE STAGE	ADULT
What it is	The adult dog period should be relatively smooth. Your dog will settle into his size and his personality and mature mentally. When adopting an adult rescue dog, what you see is usually what you get.
Age	Starts between 12 months and 3 years and ends between 6-13 years of age
Food	Adult food
Exercise	Minimum of 60 minutes per day
Health	Many dogs are stable and healthy at this stage, but lifelong conditions often start developing during adulthood. Keep on top of your dog's health with annual health checks at your vet and focus on your dog's dental health.
Sleep	12-14 hours per day
Energy Levels	Mellow with some peaks
Training	If your dog has been trained from a young age and there are no problems or behavioural issues, keeping up the existing training level may be enough for your dog. If your dog hasn't had any training, any age is a good age to start!
Socialisation	Many dogs end up being surrendered to shelters because of poor socialisation which leads to inappropriate behaviour in certain situations. If your dog is unsure or nervous in some situations, it is recommended to take things slowly and engage a certified professional dog trainer to help socialise your dog to these situations and experiences.

LIFE STAGE	ADOLESCENCE
What it is	This is when hormonal changes kick in and your dog becomes a teenager. As with humans, adolescence can be a rocky period. Your dog will start to discover the world, test out his own abilities and your limits, and not always act in the way you would like him to.
Age	Starts between 6-18 months and ends between 1-3 years of age
Food	Puppy food
Exercise	60 to 90 minutes per day, depending on breed and energy levels of your dog
Health	The hormones are kicking in and your dog will be able to reproduce. This may be a good time to get your dog desexed.
Sleep	12-18 hours per day
Energy Levels	High
Training	High to medium
Socialisation	Continue training and stay on top of things. You may have a pushy teenager in the house!

LIFE STAGE	SENIOR
What it is	When your dog enters the senior stage of its life, he will start to slow down and get greyer around his face and muzzle. He may become less tolerant of things that didn't bother him before.
Age	Begins between 6 and 10 years of age
Food	Senior food. Metabolism slows down. Watch your dog's weight.
Exercise	30-45 minutes per day
Health	Similar to people, this is the stage where medical conditions often begin, and accidents may have a bigger impact on your dog's health. Conditions like incontinence, dementia, loss of hearing and sight as well as the development of lipomas, are quite common in senior dogs. Dental health is very important. Important: Sign up for pet insurance covering illness before your dog turns 9.
Sleep	Up to 22 hours
Energy Levels	Chilled
Training	Your dog may have formed habits over the years. Don't despair, old dogs can still learn new tricks and they enjoy it too! However, behavioural change will take more effort in older dogs.
Socialisation	Socialising your dog to new things can be challenging if there isn't some sort of positive previous experience. Rather than exposing an inexperienced senior dog to a challenging situation, you may choose to simply avoid the situation.

Dogs are as individual as people and there are no hard-and-fast rules.

Some dogs will require more training than others and some will require socialisation throughout their lives. Genetics, environment and experiences will have an impact on your dog's behaviour throughout its life.

your dog's diet & weight

How should I feed my dog?

The world of pet food can be head spinning. From different brands of dry food to raw diets, there is a huge range of options to choose from. Not every brand will suit your dog or be to your dog's taste. Sometimes it takes a bit of trial and error to find the right food for your dog. Dogs have a sensitive digestive system, much more so than ours.

✓ TIP

Store your dog's dry food in airtight storage containers to avoid it becoming tasteless to your dog and stale over time. The dry food absorbs air, and old or exposed food won't taste fresh and crunchy to your dog.

It is recommended to keep your dog on the same dog food the rescue or pound/shelter used initially, and then gradually transition your dog to the dog food you choose for him. The transition from old to new dog food should take 7-10 days to avoid upset stomach and loose stools.

To start transitioning from old food to new dog food, use 80% old food on day one and 20% new food. The following days gradually reduce the old food and replace with new food, so that each day you increase the new food and decrease the old food.

The image to the right shows how to do this, so that by day 9 you have fully transitioned to the new food.

	OLD FOOD		NEW FOOD
Day 1	80	+	20
Day 2	70	+	30
Day 3	60	+	40
Day 4	50	+	50
Day 5	40	+	60
Day 6	30	+	70
Day 7	20	+	80
Day 8	10	+	90
Day 9	0	+	100

✓ TIP

If your dog gets loose stools during the transition period, stay on the same ratio for another day. It might take you longer to transition him, but you will avoid mess and an unhappy dog with digestive discomfort.

It is important to stick to one food. If you feed him dry food, stay with one brand, especially if your dog is thriving on it. Try not to mix brands or run out of food suddenly. There are online pet stores where you can get a convenient monthly subscription of dog food delivered to your house.

The following ingredients in dog food should be avoided:

- | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|
| ● Bone meal | ● Wheat flour | ● Potato product | ● BHT |
| ● Meat by-products | ● Soy flour | ● Sugar | ● Propyl gallate |
| ● Tallow | ● Brewer's rice | ● Colouring | ● Ethoxyquin |
| ● Animal fat | ● Cellulose | ● BHA | ● Hydrochloric acid |
| ● Corn | | | |



Healthy weight

Carrying excess weight isn't good for your dog's joints, his overall health or happiness. A diet prescribed by your vet or a dog nutritionist might be recommended to reduce your dog's weight safely, without causing hunger and lack of nutrition. Please consult a specialist before putting your dog on a diet. Just as with people, using diet food alone isn't always the answer.

An underweight dog will lack nutrition and potentially feel weak and hungry. It is important to gradually increase weight without causing any health problems. There are dog foods on the market that have been scientifically designed to provide a balanced diet for certain breeds, or dogs with certain lifestyles (such as an active dog or a senior dog). Speak to your vet about your dog's diet if you are concerned your dog may not be on the right food.

Each dog breed has an ideal weight. If you have adopted a fully-grown dog, please use the picture chart below to help make your first assessment about your dog's weight.

Ideal weight



Emaciated



Thin



Overweight



Obese



Image source: luckydog.com.mx/en/health/tips/ideal-weight/

How much should I feed?

How much to feed depends on the brand of dog food you use and on your dog's weight. You will need to adjust quantities depending on your dog's age, activity level and weight status (i.e. if he is normal weight, underweight or overweight). Always read and follow the instructions on the packaging of your dog's food.

What should I feed my dog?

As with people, each life stage requires different nutrition. If you have adopted a puppy, make sure you purchase puppy food. If you have adopted a senior dog, you may consider feeding senior dog food. Make sure you get advice on when to switch from puppy food to adult food and then to senior food.

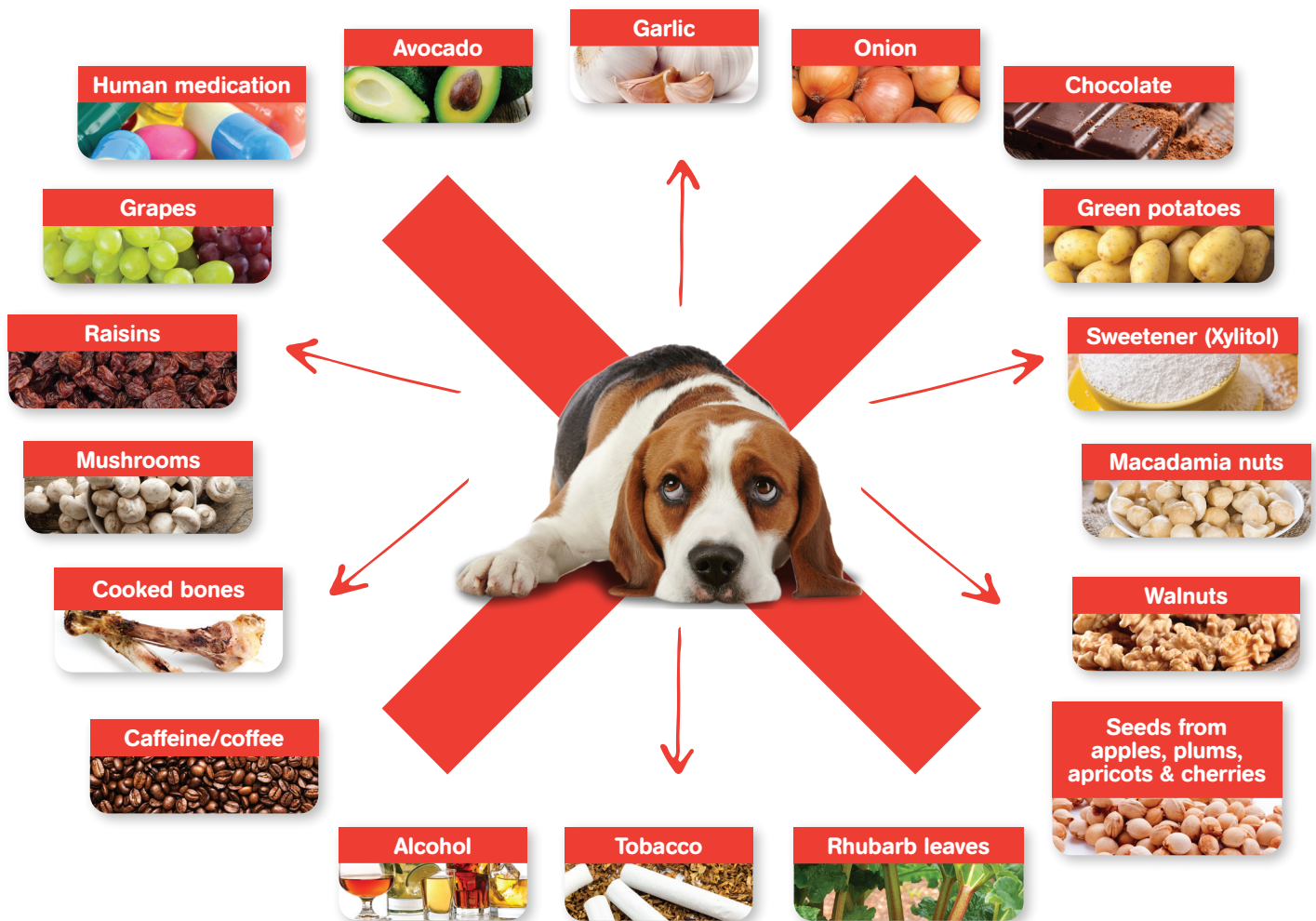
Quality of food is not only about the price tag, it is more to do with the ingredients. If a brand of dog food contains lots of preservatives, sugar, salt and other fillers, then it is not high quality food. You can get quality dog food from good pet stores/online stores or your vet. Another option is to feed your dog a raw diet, which is becoming increasingly popular. Raw feeding can have a lot of benefits, including shinier coats, healthier skin, cleaner teeth, higher energy levels and smaller stools. However, raw feeding involves much more than just feeding raw meats. Finding the right balance of vitamins, minerals, proteins, meat and vegetables etc, is a science in itself and not for everyone. It is helpful that there are now more and more ready-made foods for raw-feeding available to buy off the shelf in pet stores. You can find out more at the following raw feeding websites: dogfoodadvisor.com/best-dog-food/raw-dog-food backtobasicsrawpetfood.com/feeding-guide

How often should I feed?

Whether to feed once or twice a day is up to you (unless recommended specifically by your vet). Adult dogs can be fed once a day in the morning or evening, or you can feed them twice a day by dividing their daily food ratio into two portions - one for the morning and one for the evening feed. It all comes down to your schedule and the routine you want your dog on. It is best to feed your dog after exercising him rather than beforehand, as it's not much fun for your dog running on a full stomach, and exercising on a full stomach can become a health risk.

If you adopted a puppy, you should feed your puppy a third of their daily food ratio three times a day until the age of six months, and then move to two feeds a day. If you work, and three feeds a day isn't possible, don't stress if you can only feed your puppy two meals a day.

{ Dangerous foods for your dog }



Good for humans, good for dogs

- Apples (without the seeds)
- Cooked chicken meat (great as training treat)
- Salmon (good source of omega 3 fatty acids)
- Peanut butter
- Bananas
- Blueberries, strawberries, raspberries
- Raw egg (great protein)
- Yoghurt (natural or Greek yoghurt acts as a probiotic)
- Carrots





socialisation and its importance

Socialisation is about getting your dog used to, and comfortable with, all types of things in its environment. This is done through controlled positive exposure and interaction with a variety of stimuli including objects, sounds, smells, people, animals and environments.

Socialisation is one of the most important things to do with a puppy to help it build confidence and become a well-balanced dog. The ideal time to focus on socialisation is from 6 -16 weeks of age, as this is a dog's sensitive phase where most learning is permanent and behaviours are formed through experiences.

It is likely that you won't have any information on your new rescue dog's socialisation history. If your dog acts nervously or shies away from certain things, it doesn't necessarily mean that he has been mistreated. Rather, it may just be a lack of familiarity with these experiences. Many dogs are kept inside during their critical period of socialisation, or they may have grown up in a different environment, e.g. a rural environment, where the experiences and loud noises of the city did not exist.

Some dogs can be overwhelmed when settling in with their new families, and might show signs of stress and nervousness in new situations during this time. This could come out when they are around groups of people, dogs or other animals, or during experiences such as going to the vet, park, to a coffee shop etc. Please take extra care if you find your dog is unsure of things and is more cautious than other dogs.

Lack of socialisation – what can you do?

It is possible to re-socialise your dog. Through training and patience, your

dog can overcome nervousness and a lack of socialisation, and be taught to form positive experiences in situations that previously caused anxiety. Always move at your dog's pace - some dogs are more confident than others, and some will need more time to adjust to new situations.

Using treats can be a very helpful tool to introduce your dog to new things and to create a new, positive association with something your dog is not comfortable with. However, in some cases, a dog may be so stressed by something that he may not even want to eat. In such instances, it can be beneficial to create space when introducing him to new things. Being too close to something that may scare your dog can trigger what is called a 'flight or fight response'. The flight response might cause him to try to run away. If this isn't an option (e.g. if he is on leash), he may bark, lunge or try to attack the threat. Always start to expose your dog to new things from a distance and let your dog show a willingness to move forward, rather than dragging a scared dog towards it. Dragging your dog towards something he is not comfortable with will create more problems.

Two common techniques commonly used to change dogs' behaviour are desensitisation and counter conditioning. Please consult a professional and certified dog trainer to help you with the re-socialisation process if you feel you need help.

Why didn't he display these behaviours at the shelter?

Often people cannot understand why their dog didn't demonstrate certain behaviours, like fear or nervousness, when they were introduced to them at the shelter. There can be a variety of

reasons for this. The shelter environment is hard on dogs and it can cause them to shut down. A dog in this condition will not display certain natural behaviours. Furthermore, the shelter environment isn't set up to test a dog in the home environment or in different contexts or scenarios. Your rescue dog will have acquired knowledge and behaviour skills that may present themselves differently when they are out of that environment.

Take it slowly but surely

One of the biggest things that rescue dogs need is time to settle in, to start to feel safe and to decompress. Many rescue dogs spend weeks or months either in a shelter or in foster homes, and this can have a negative effect on their behaviour and make them feel insecure.

Have compassion and patience, and do the best you can to settle your dog in. Remember, just because they might not have had the best start and might have missed out on many socialisation experiences, it doesn't make them better or worse than another dog that might have had the perfect start in life.

Rest assured that your rescue dog will pay you back for the work you put in, with affection and love. Re-socialising him and making new experiences positive is the best way to move forward with your dog.





training

Training and manners

Wondering if you should train your rescue dog? The simple answer is **YES!**

Training your dog gives him the opportunity to understand you. It is also a great way to strengthen the bond between the two of you.

Your new dog needs to learn to understand you and learn what is expected of him. Training him will give you the freedom to involve him in all the family's activities, such as going to cafés, on family holidays, visiting friends or just being with you for BBQs in the park. It will not only make it more pleasant to be around your dog, but will also help establish communication between him and all members of the family.

Teach your dog what you want him to do, rather than getting frustrated and angry with him about what you don't want him to do. Basic commands like 'Sit', 'Stay', 'Come', 'Leave it' and 'On your bed' are easy to teach and will help integrate your dog into your life. Train your dog so well that you can be proud, and people comment on what a well-mannered dog you have!

Make training fun

Do you remember the subjects you enjoyed most at school? It is likely that they were the ones where you had a teacher that made learning fun. We encourage you to do the same – make training and teaching your dog a fun activity so it doesn't turn into a chore for either of you.

Dogs like to please and love learning. They respond much quicker to training when they can learn to earn. Your new family member will be keen to repeat newly learned behaviours if he knows he can earn himself a treat or two, and will grow in confidence through learning something new.

Each dog is different. Before you start training, experiment to see what kind of treats your dog likes. He might prefer playing with you as an alternative reward. Try it out and see what works best. For him, training is like playing games, with the added bonus of spending time with you and getting fed yummy treats.

Once a command or skill is established, you won't need to reward your dog all the time with a treat. Rewarding with treats around half the time will be enough to show your dog that it is worth continuing with the behaviour.

However, at the start, when you are just teaching your dog a new skill or command, it is important to reward every time he does the correct desired behaviour.

Did you know that timing is crucial in dog training?

Dogs only make a connection between a behaviour and a consequence if the consequence (e.g. a treat reward) comes within 3 seconds of the behaviour. We recommend getting a bum bag or treat pouch so that you can reward your dog immediately, wherever you are.

Can you teach an old dog new tricks? Contrary to the saying, yes you can! It is never too late to learn, and a senior dog is likely to enjoy the experience as much as a young dog does.

Can you train a dog with disabilities? Here as well, the answer is yes! Just adapt your training methods and the exercises to your dog's capabilities.

What commands does my dog know?

To find out if your dog knows a command, try using either the verbal command or the hand signal (as pictured below). Say the command once, preferably accompanied by the hand signal, and wait. If your dog doesn't respond, repeat after 10 seconds.

1 SIT

'Sit' is like saying please. It is one of the simplest commands you can teach your dog and is a useful way to show good manners. Your dog could, for example, be directed to sit before dinner, before the lead gets clipped on and off, at the curb when waiting to cross a road, and also sit in front of people rather than jumping up on them.

Verbal Command: SIT

Hand signal:

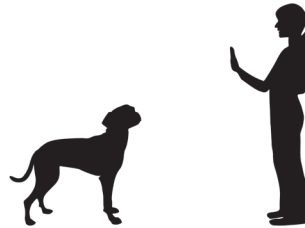


2 STAY

'Stay' is a direction to your dog to wait patiently where you left him until you come back. It is a useful command for the coffee shop, for example, when you want to leave him tied up under a chair while you order or pay your bill. Stay is also good for front door opening and closing, and will prevent your dog from running out the door while you let people in.

Verbal Command: STAY

Hand signal:



3 LIE DOWN

This teaches your dog to lie down on command. This command can be useful in many settings, for example a visit to the vet, at a restaurant while you are eating, or at home, when you want your dog to rest on his bed whilst you are busy with other things.

Verbal command: DOWN or LIE DOWN or DROP

Hand signal:



4 COME

'Come' is a very useful command, and will help grant your dog more freedom. Teaching a good recall is important if you want to let your dog off leash in outdoor settings like the dog park, the beach and so on. It is also the command you can use to call your dog away from dangers like roads or other animals, or when you just want him to come back to you when you are ready to leave the park. Please do not let your dog off lead if he does not reliably come back when called. It might be helpful to use a 10 metre long lead for safety when you practice, or use a fenced off area.

Verbal command: Your dog's name and COME

Hand signal:



5 LEAVE IT

Rather than screaming "Nooo" at your dog, it is good for his confidence to learn the command 'Leave It'. This is a valuable command to get your dog to leave or disengage from something immediately, look at you for praise or another command, or even come back to you for a reward. It can be used to stop him from chasing birds, running away with your socks or a bag of food, or to keep him safe from danger.

Verbal command: LEAVE IT or LEAVE

Hand signal:

There is no hand signal for this.



Toilet training

Even adult dogs can get confused when they move into their new home, especially if they have come from a shelter kennel environment and have become used to toileting inside their enclosure.

It is best to supervise toileting the first three to four weeks to avoid mistakes inside the house. The aim is to train your dog to never do his business inside the house and instead do it on walks or outside in your backyard, if you have one.

Dog bladders are very different to human bladders, which makes them capable of holding their urine in for longer than we do. However, it is recommended to build a routine so your dog knows what to expect. Teach him, for example, that he will be taken out in the morning before you go to work, in the evening when you get home and at night before going to bed. This will make it easier for your rescue dog to understand to hold and wait for the opportunity to be taken out to toilet.

When it is time for him to go, take your dog to the designated toilet area. Praise your dog heavily when he does his business, reward him with a treat there and then (three second rule) to ensure he understands that he is being rewarded for toileting where you want him to. Clean up any of your dog's mistakes with enzyme removing products - household cleaners usually don't do the job. You can purchase these at your local vet or pet shop.

3 Golden rules

- Supervise your dog and build a toileting routine. Start off by giving him many opportunities to toilet outside, and then gradually reduce him down to a routine.
- Reward him within 3 seconds and with treats and praise for toileting in the spot where you want him to go.
- Clean up accidents with enzyme removing cleaning products.

Home alone management

Leaving your dog home on his own for the first time can be scary, both for you and your new friend. He might not feel safe yet or accepting that this is his new home.

As mentioned earlier, it is recommended that you spend a few days at home with your dog when you first bring him home. This is the time when you should start getting your dog used to being by himself. The mistake people often make is that they do not leave the dog alone at all during these first few days. When they then go back to work again, the dog is suddenly left on its own all day and can find it difficult to adjust.

Dogs often get stressed when we try to move too fast in the process of getting them used to being alone. Our 10 day home alone plan (see below) will give you some guidance on how long to start leaving your dog home alone for, gradually easing them into more time on their own.

First 10 days home alone plan

DAY 1:

Stay home with your dog and get him used to his new home

DAY 2: LEAVE 5 MIN

DAY 3: LEAVE 10 MIN

DAY 4: LEAVE 15 MIN

DAY 5: LEAVE 20 MIN

DAY 6: LEAVE 25 MIN

DAY 7: LEAVE 30 MIN

DAY 8: LEAVE 45 MIN

DAY 9: LEAVE 60 MIN

DAY 10: LEAVE 90 MIN

Here a few tips to help you settle him in and make sure that he adjusts easily to staying home alone:

- Ensure you make time to settle your dog into your new home. Many rescue dogs have had multiple homes and can have abandonment issues. Giving him confidence that you are coming back to him will help settle him in faster.
- Always leave your dog in a safe place such as a crate for short periods, or a fenced area, so that he can't harm himself or destroy anything that might be precious to you.
- The area that you leave him in should have water, be in the shade, have his dog bed, toys, chew treat and/or a food dispenser.
- It can be comforting to leave an old t-shirt that smells of you in his dog bed when you go out. Always leave the collar with his ID tag on him, in case he manages to escape.
- It is often the moment you leave the house that is most stressful for your dog. When you go out, leave him with something engaging, like a chew treat or a mentally stimulating food dispenser toy, to keep him occupied and make your departure positive.
- If, at any stage your dog seems stressed, reduce the time you are away and increase the alone time slowly again. If your dog cannot deal with being alone for five minutes, try starting with one minute. Alternatively, you might find that twenty minutes is enough time for him at the start. If he is fine with that, do this daily for a couple of days before you push him to 25 - 30 minutes. Be patient and take your time with this process.
- If you return to your dog when he is barking and whining, he may learn that this behaviour is what makes you come back.



Separation anxiety

How will I know if my dog has separation anxiety?

Separation anxiety is a word commonly used to describe a dog that is in distress when home alone or one that cannot cope with its human departing. Dogs with separation anxiety will often bark, whimper or howl excessively for long periods of time when home alone, become very destructive, or even try to escape to find or follow their owners. Excessive urination or defecation can also sometimes go along with it.

While some rescue dogs can have abandonment issues or experience separation anxiety, many don't have it at all. Sometimes your dog just needs to learn who he belongs to and where he belongs first, before feeling safe. This process generally takes time. It is always recommended to leave your dog for short periods of time when you first get him, as outlined in our home alone plan. Be patient, and take the time to settle your dog in before getting stressed about separation anxiety. He is still learning about his new home and that you will be coming back to him.

If you are unsure if your dog has separation anxiety, it is important to seek professional help from a certified dog trainer or behavioural vet. They will first need to confirm that your dog has separation anxiety and will then develop a plan of behaviour modification therapy for him. This will take time and patience to implement.

Preventing destructive behaviour

There can be various reasons for destructive behaviour, and prevention is obviously the best option. It is important to nip destructive behaviour in the bud when first bringing your rescue dog home. Remember, if your dog can't get to something, he can't destroy it, and out of sight is out of reach!

Just because your rescue dog is not a puppy anymore, it doesn't mean that he won't chew shoes or other things lying around. Chewing can be a sign of distress or boredom, or your dog may just simply love chewing. Some dogs chew when they are left home alone, or your dog may not have learnt what he is allowed to chew and what he isn't. Chewing inappropriate objects like cables can be dangerous for your dog, so it is important to get this under control. Dogs can learn to discriminate between objects, and it is possible to teach them what is and is not allowed.

Please follow our advice in the section above for the recommended approach to leaving your dog home alone. A restricted area, such as a playpen, a crate or blocked off kitchen, can be a good way to keep your house in one piece until you are certain your dog won't chew. If you can't get destructive behaviour under control, please consult your vet or a professional certified dog trainer.



Monitoring your dog whilst you are out of the house can be helpful to see what your dog is up to. Is he relaxed or stressed, does he entertain himself, or just sleep?

The 'Dog Monitor' app allows you to monitor your dog from wherever you are. All you need are two smartphones with the app installed. See dogmonitorapp.com

Avoid disappointment

- supervise, or use a crate/playpen
- leave the dog with a chew treat when going out
- remove all chewable personal valuables

Answers to common questions about bringing a rescue dog home

Should I rename my rescue dog?

It is a good idea to give your dog a fresh start, and a new name might help with this. Sometimes dogs can have bad memories attached to their old name. Remember, he is now YOUR dog, so make sure you love his name. (See page 7 for more tips)

Is my rescue dog a healthy weight?

Many dogs that have been in shelters lose weight, as it can be a stressful environment for them. It is recommended that you take your new rescue dog to the vet soon after getting him. Get the vet to do a full health check-up and, if necessary, devise a dietary plan to get your dog to a healthy weight.



Can I change bad habits?

Yes, contrary to the popular adage, you certainly can “teach an old dog new tricks”. Many dogs have been abandoned because they have not been trained and raised properly and have therefore developed bad behaviours. Most dogs by nature, are keen to please, and are content when given structure and guidance. They will be eager to learn new things, and training can be a quick and successful process. It is important to set clear boundaries for your new dog, along with using lots of positive reinforcement to form new habits.

Do I need to register my dog with the council?

Yes, you do need to register your rescue dog with your local council. Information required can vary, so check with your council what information they require. They generally need proof of desexing and a microchip number.

Is my dog microchipped and how do I update its details?

All reputable rescue organisations and shelters will ensure your rescue dog is microchipped before you pick it up from them. The organisation should have updated the microchip number with the details you gave them, i.e. your name, address and contact number. It is a good idea to double check your details were entered correctly. You can do this at your local vet or council.

How do I introduce my new dog to my other dogs/animals?

If you have another dog, it is recommended that you take your dog to the shelter for a meet and greet before you adopt, as the rescue dog may not get along with your existing dog. Foster organisations or shelters often do screenings beforehand and may be able to tell you if a dog is suitable to live with other pets or not.

Your new rescue dog should be introduced to other dogs and animals (e.g. cats, rabbits or birds) in your household in controlled situations, such as on lead or through a baby gate. This process should take place slowly over the course of a few days. (See page 8 for more details on introducing your dog to other animals)

How long does it take a rescue dog to settle into his new home?

It can take up to six months for a rescue dog to truly settle in. The first two to three weeks we call the ‘honeymoon period’, where your new family member is typically on his best behaviour while he figures out his new home and family dynamics. After that, your rescue dog will be more comfortable and may start pushing more boundaries. It is therefore extremely important that you start training and setting boundaries from day one. It is difficult for dogs to understand why things that were okay to do yesterday suddenly aren’t acceptable anymore.



Should I train my rescue dog?

You can't just expect your rescue dog to know what the right thing to do is. Even if it seems like he already knows a few commands, training your dog is a great way to get him to respond to you and understand that you are his new owner. It's not just a big part of responsible dog ownership but also a great way to bond and build a relationship with your new family pet.

Will my dog be toilet trained?

In many cases, dogs over six months will be toilet trained. However, if your dog has been staying in a kennel at a shelter or pound, he may have forgotten his house training rules, as toileting inside the kennel is often the only option. Either way, it is probably best to assume that your dog will have forgotten what the rules are and go back to the basics of toilet training as a reminder. Success is likely to come quickly. (See page 31 for more tips)



When should I get pet insurance?

The best time to get pet insurance is on the day you pick up your rescue dog from the shelter, pound or rescue organisation. All the information you need to take out a policy, such as approximate date of birth and breed, will be in your adoption documents. Pet insurers typically require your dog's full vet history when you first claim, however, Bow Wow Meow can still cover you if your rescue dog's history isn't available, as long as you have a certificate of adoption.

Get one month FREE pet insurance for your rescue dog – just use promo code RDG38 when getting a quote at bowwowinsurance.com.au

When is it safe to let my dog off lead?

It can take up to three weeks for your new dog to bond with you, and sometimes longer. Please take extra care as you don't yet know if or what your dog may be scared of, and he could get disoriented and potentially run away from you if you let him loose too soon. It is recommended you use a long lead and train a good recall, as well as making sure your dog responds to his name even when distracted, before letting him off lead. We suggest you go into fenced-off dog parks at first to practice.

Has my rescue dog been abused?

In many cases, new owners won't have any information about their dog's previous life before it came into rescue or shelter care. Don't assume that your dog is fearful or shy because of a history of abuse. Fear-based behaviours can be the result of mistreatment, but can also just be the result of a lack of socialisation and habituation when the dog was in his early puppy period (three months or younger). If you are unsure about your rescue dog's behaviour, or can't seem to get it under control, we suggest you contact a dog behaviourist to seek help.



Understanding your dog's body language

A dog's body language signals tend to be very subtle, and as a result we often miss or misread them. For example, if a dog licks his lips we may think he is hungry, or when he yawns we might interpret this as being tired, when actually, these may be clear signs of discomfort. There are also many misconceptions about canine body language. A wagging tail, for example, doesn't always mean a dog is friendly.

Understanding your dog and interpreting what he shows you through his body language can help you respond better to him. For example, you may want to avoid

situations that cause him discomfort or to be nervous. Knowing when your dog is happy and relaxed can also be helpful to you, as you can provide him with more of these experiences.

Make an effort to watch and read your dog carefully for the first couple of weeks after you get him, to understand how he responds to different environments and scenarios, and when he might need your help.

Once you spend time watching your dog, you will find that he has his own personal way of expressing his feelings, just like people do. Some dogs express stress more through

yawning than lip licking, others may refuse food when not sure about a situation.

While we don't expect that you will become an expert in dog body language, we have put together a few common body language examples which will help you to read your dog better. **Keep in mind that your dog's body language should always be understood in the context of the situation.** A lip lick when food is presented to him may just mean your dog is looking forward to eating. However, if he is not comfortable about a situation, he may also lip lick as a sign of stress.

--- SIGNS OF HAPPINESS AND RELAXATION ---



Relaxed body, ears and tail.



Mouth slightly open, dog is relaxed and attentively looking towards another dog or person.



Playful bowing or pawing, "I want to play".



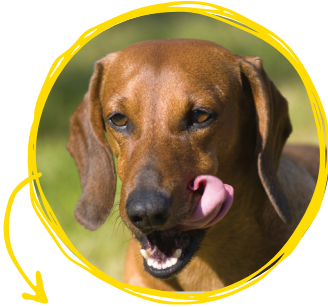
Dogs playing, mouthing each other's neck and legs.



Dogs wrestling around, both on the ground rolling over each other.



SIGNS OF DISCOMFORT AND STRESS



Lip licking when no food is present.



Looking away and avoiding eye contact.



Whale eyes – showing whites of eyes and eyes look enlarged.



Yawning



Backing away, tail tucked in.



Panting/stiffened posture or flinching.

Want to learn more about dog body language?

An informative video about dogs' body language signals can be watched at youtube.com/watch?v=AGtO65tyqtU

There are many photos and videos on the internet that will show you how body language looks in different situations and how it can be read. We have selected a few to illustrate how easily people miss signs of discomfort and stress:

- 1 The following video shows that stress signals can be very subtle and easy to miss: youtube.com/watch?v=mWlOGXToxyM
- 2 This video of a toddler jumping on a dog is another good example of a dog demonstrating through body language how unhappy he is. The dog gives off countless stress signals that show that it is being pushed way too far. Watch the video at: youtube.com/watch?v=yaxCYgqh2ao

- 3 These photos illustrate a dog showing clear signs of stress and discomfort. In all four photos, you can see from his body language that the dog is not happy.



Image source: leerburg.com/dogs-babies.htm

Patience is the key in helping your dog overcome his fears or nervousness in different situations. Please consult a qualified dog trainer to help you.

What can cause your dog to be nervous and display signs of discomfort?

A lack of socialisation to certain things can cause fear and nervousness in dogs. Dogs that have not been socialised appropriately with kids, for example, can show nervousness or fear around them. (Please read more about socialisation on page 29).

Some dogs are simply overwhelmed when first arriving at their new home, especially when they have been in the shelter or in foster care for a long period of time. Others may have had a bad experience in the past with specific things and are therefore fearful of them.

Regardless of the cause, nervous dogs require extra care when being introduced to new situations, people or other dogs so as not to overwhelm them and set them back even further.



What should I do if my dog runs away?

- **Call all vets in your local area** and inform them that your dog is missing. Leave your name and contact phone number and describe your dog to them. (i.e. its breed, age, colour, name and where it was last sighted). Mention if your dog is scared of anything (like people or other dogs).
- **Call your local council** and your nearest shelter to inform them of your missing dog and leave your contact number and your dog's microchip number with them.
- **Contact the rescue organisation** you adopted your rescue dog from. Inform them that your dog has run away and to contact you if they are contacted by a vet or council.
- **Make up posters of your missing dog** and stick them up in your local area, e.g. parks, coffee shops, shopping centres, local vets and on light posts. Ensure you put a current photo of your dog on the flyer (if you don't have one, contact the rescue group you got your dog from for a photo), your mobile number, your dog's name and where it was last seen. We also recommend stating there is a reward for returning your dog, that he is a rescue and might be scared when approached by a stranger, and to lure him with food when approaching him.
- **Rally the troops.** Ask your friends and family to help you start a search for your dog. The first 24 hours are very important and you have the best chance of finding your dog in this time. Give your search troop missing dog posters and flyers to hand out, as well as some treats in case they find your dog and he needs to be lured to safety. Tell your neighbours, the delivery man and shop owners near your home that your dog is missing. The more people that know, the more eyes can be out there helping to look for your dog.
- **Use social media to help you find your dog.**

Use Facebook groups in your local area. Most areas have a 'Lost Pets' Facebook Group and they are often very helpful and successful at relocating lost pets.

- facebook.com/LostPetFinders
- facebook.com/lostpetsinnsw
- Go to websites like lostpetfinders.com.au or call the Lost Pets Hotline 1300 725 640

- **Be relentless in your search and don't give up.** Dogs often behave unexpectedly when they have run away. Even if you call your dog and he is near, he may not come because he is scared or injured. If your dog is trapped somewhere he might not bark.

Remember that city dogs don't travel as far as country dogs. Some breeds can travel long distances (e.g. Huskies). When dogs are lost they often switch to survival mode and run. They also may not recognise their owner by sight that easily anymore if they are in a state of distress.

Prevention is the best solution

Always have a collar with an ID tag around your dog's neck. Make sure the phone number on the tag is up to date and add an alternative number on it, just in case you are on holidays or otherwise not available. Make sure the tag is secured and cannot easily come off or isn't rusty or unreadable.

It is recommended to use secure boarding kennels or professional dog boarding facilities to mind your dog whilst you are away on holidays. If you leave your dog with a dog minder/pet sitter, advise them of anything your dog might be frightened of, not to let the dog out of sight and to always walk it on lead. Get an additional tag made up with your dog minder's phone number on it if you are going overseas and will not be contactable.

Make sure your microchip records are up to date. When you move house you need to change the details too, just like your car registration.

Secure your home and don't just think "he won't make it through/over/under that". Dogs are clever and adventurous and some are real escape artists. When they are bored, scared or spooked, they are more likely to try and escape. If you are worried, you can invest in a GPS tag, which will enable you to continually keep track of your dog's location.

Keep this page handy, e.g. on your fridge

Emergency contact information



Dog name:

DOB:

Microchip number:

Your vet:

Phone number:

Address

Your nearest 24/7 emergency vet:

Phone number:

Address:

Pet insurance company:

Policy number:

Phone number:

Email:

Local council:

Phone number:

Address:

Nearest shelter:

Address:

Phone:





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[^]Live Vet Support is a service provided by PetSure that gives you 24/7 access to general veterinary telehealth advice for your insured pet(s) via online video or chat, via the Customer Portals owned and operated by PetSure. Access to Live Vet Support consultations subject to the Customer Portal terms of use available at petportal.bowwowinsurance.com.au