



DOG ADOPTER'S HANDBOOK

Tips for a Successful Adoption

Checklist for Bringing Your New Dog Home

- Make sure the collar is secure
- Allow the dog to potty before getting in the car
- Put the dog in the backseat (vs the front seat), ideally with a person in the backseat with the dog
- If there is another dog in the household, BEFORE brining the new dog in read 'How To Introduce Dogs To One Another' section
- Walk your new dog outside the house for a bit, keeping him on leash and letting him sniff and explore. Male dogs may try to mark in your home, you can train him not to do this in the house and areas you don't want him to by telling him "NO!" and stopping him right before he does it.
- Don't let the dog do anything on the first day that you do not want him to do later, like getting on the furniture, sitting in the kitchen, etc... whatever your rules are. Set the rules right away and make sure all family members are consistent.
- Remember to give your dog time to adjust, 3 days to decompress, 3 weeks to start to know the routine and 3 months to feel at home. Be patient!
- Start posting updates to the [Cortez Family FaceBook Group](#) page!

Supplies to have on hand before your new dog arrives home:

- Dog Food
- Water bowl, food bowl - metal or ceramic best
- Treats for training
- Toys - chew toys
- Bed, blankets or towels
- Crate or baby gates to create their confinement area

Setup

Set up the Confinement Area, a place your dog will stay when you can't provide 100% supervision, like when you are out, busy, or just can't watch him all the time. The ideal Confinement Area should be easy to clean and easy to close off - a crate, a door, or a baby gate. It should be free of furniture and non-dog items (remember everything is a potential chew

toy to a dog). The best areas might be a laundry room, empty spare room, or a section of a larger area...

Furnish the Confinement Area with a bed (something to sleep on) water and food bowl and several toys, including the favorite toy. This should be the only place your new dog has access to his favorite toy. You might think the Confinement Area has a negative connotation, but it's actually the opposite, it becomes your dog's space and he starts to think of this space in a positive way. It's the space your dog calls his own, a comfort zone where he gets good things like food and his favorite toy. It sets him up for success with housetraining and alone time. Often we make the mistake of giving a new dog too much freedom right away which can lead to accidents and him chewing on the wrong things - then we, in error, confine him for these behaviors - and confinement does become a negative event. Better to provide your dog his safe place to gradually transition to the house with success.

Arriving Home

- When you arrive at home, walk your dog on leash for a bit before taking him inside, let him have a bathroom break.
- Introduce him to the inside of the home on leash, including his Confinement Area
- Right away give your dog a chew toy in his Confinement Area and leave him alone for 5 minutes. If your dog starts to bark, whine, howl, wait until he has been quiet for 10 seconds before you respond. Otherwise they will begin to associate that behavior with getting your attention.

Get your dog used to short absences starting within the first few hours of his arrival home. This is extremely important. The temptation is to spend every minute with your new dog when he first comes home but you should prepare him right away for a normal routine, he needs to learn to relax, be calm and settled when he's alone. Leave your dog alone in his confinement area while you go into another area of the house out of view. Start short, 30 seconds then work up to 20 minutes over his first several days in his new home. Repeat this throughout the early days. Remember it can take time and all dogs respond differently so vary your training based on your dog's transition.

Bedtime

Put a chew toy in your dog's crate or confinement area for sleep time. He may have trouble settling at first but should eventually relax and sleep. Remember it's important not to let your dog out of his confinement area while he's barking or whining.

Housetraining

Some adult dogs may not be house trained. If your dog has an accident inside, it's not because he's a bad dog - he simply hasn't been properly trained. If training is required for your new dog, the confinement area becomes your key to success. Until your dog is perfectly housetrained, never leave him alone inside unless he's in his confinement area.

Steps for successful housetraining:

- Take your dog outside on leash frequently. Start by doing this in half hour intervals.

- If you see your dog sniffing around and circling inside the house, take him outside immediately!
- Praise and reward him with a treat when he relieves himself outdoors.

Here are some simple steps to help you and your dog find success!

If you feed your dog on a schedule, she'll eliminate on a schedule, too. Keep her diet simple and consistent.

Choose an area, about ten square feet, outside, where you wish your dog to potty. Take your dog on leash to the area, pace back and forth (movement promotes movement) and chant an encouraging phrase ("do your business, do your business").

Do this for no more than three minutes:

- If she eliminates, give huge amounts of praise and play.
- If she doesn't eliminate, keep her on leash and go back indoors. Keep her on leash with you or confined in a crate.

- Try again in an hour; eventually your dog will eliminate appropriately and you can give huge amounts of praise and play.
- After each success, allow 15 minutes of freedom in house, before placing your dog back on the lead or back into the crate.
- After each three consecutive days of success, increase freedom by 15 minutes.
- If there is an accident; decrease freedom by 15 minutes for three days.
- Never yell or punish our dog for a potty accident in the house.

REMEMBER! Do not punish accidents! Ignore them, and reward success.

Exercise

Dogs need both physical exercise and mental stimulation.

Remember: A tired dog is a happy dog!

A good exercise program will make your dog a more relaxed and enjoyable companion. Depending on your dog's energy level, he will benefit greatly from daily exercise. Off-leash romps in secured areas, running or jogging, interactive games, such as fetch, help burn energy and keep your dog from getting bored and frustrated. (Don't let your dog off leash in unsecured areas, and make sure he wears an ID tag.)

Daily obedience training and food "puzzle" toys provide your dog with mental stimulation.

Dog training classes help burn off mental and physical energy. They also provide an opportunity to practice off-leash recalls. Training classes are fun for dogs and people alike.

How to Crate Train Your Dog, should you decide to utilize a crate

A crate is a valuable tool for a new adopter. Like a confinement area, a crate eases the process of housetraining, chew training and alone-time training. It helps your dog make the transition to his new home.

Crating philosophy

- Crate training uses a dog's natural instincts as a den animal. The crate becomes your dog's den, an ideal spot to snooze or take refuge during a thunderstorm.
- Never use the crate as a punishment. Your dog will come to fear it and refuse to enter it.
- Don't leave your dog in the crate too long. A dog that's crated day and night doesn't get enough exercise or human interaction and can become depressed or anxious.
- Puppies under six months of age shouldn't stay in a crate for more than three or four hours at a time. They can't control their bladders and bowels for that long. The same goes for adult dogs that are being housetrained.
- Crate your dog only until you can trust him not to destroy the house. After that, it should be a place he goes voluntarily.

Selecting a crate

Your dog's crate should be just large enough for him to stand up and turn around in. If your dog is still growing, choose a crate size that will accommodate his adult size. Block off the excess crate space so your dog can't eliminate at one end and retreat to the other.

The Crate Training Process

- Crate training can take days or weeks, depending on your dog's age, temperament, and past experiences.
- It's important to keep two things in mind while crate training:
The crate should always be associated with something pleasant.
Training should take place in a series of small steps. Don't go too fast.

Step 1: Introduce your dog to the crate

Place the crate in an area of your house where the family spends a lot of time. Put a soft blanket or towel in the crate. Take the door off and let the dog explore the crate at his leisure.

Encourage your dog to enter the crate by dropping some small food treats nearby, then just inside the door, and finally, all the way inside the crate. Don't force him to enter.

Continue tossing treats into the crate until your dog will walk calmly all the way into the crate to get the food.

Step 2: Feed your dog his meals in the crate

After introducing your dog to the crate, begin feeding him his regular meals near the crate. This will create a pleasant association with the crate.

If he remains reluctant to enter the crate, put the dish only as far inside as he will readily go without becoming fearful or anxious. Each time you feed him, place the dish a little further back in the crate.

If he begins to whine to be let out, you may have increased the length of time too quickly. Next time, try leaving him in the crate for a shorter time period. If he does whine or cry in the crate, don't let him out until he stops. Otherwise, he'll learn that the way to get out of the crate is to whine, so he'll keep doing it.

Step 3: Lengthen the crating periods

Call him over to the crate and give him a treat.

After your dog enters the crate, praise him, give him the treat, and close the door.

Sit quietly near the crate for five to ten minutes, and then go into another room for a few minutes. Return, sit quietly again for a short time, and then let him out of the crate.

Step 4: Crate your dog when you leave

After your dog can spend about 30 minutes in the crate without becoming anxious or afraid, you can begin leaving her crated for short periods when you leave the house.

When you return home, don't reward your dog for excited behavior by responding to her in an excited, enthusiastic way. Keep arrivals low key to avoid increasing her enthusiasm.

Step 5: Crate your dog at night

Put your dog in the crate using your regular command and a treat. Initially, it may be a good idea to put the crate in your bedroom or nearby in a hallway, especially if you have a puppy.

Once your dog is sleeping comfortably through the night with his crate near you, you can begin to gradually move it to the location you prefer.

Whining: If your dog whines or cries while in the crate at night, try to ignore the whining. If your dog is just testing you, he'll probably stop whining soon. *Yelling at him or pounding on the crate will only make things worse.*

How to Introduce Dogs to one Another

Some dogs do not enjoy the company of other dogs and it may not be advisable in some situations to introduce dogs at all. Respect each dog's personality and do not push dogs to "be friends."

Neutral Territory Meet and Greet

When first bringing a new dog home where there is another dog(s), even if they have already met, they should meet again on neutral territory, or outside of the house, prior to bringing the new dog into the home.

Parallel leash-walking, on neutral territory, with two handlers, is a great way to introduce dogs.

While taking a short walk, allow the dogs to curve around in a natural manner.

Both handlers should have a firm hold of their leashes; however, they should try to maintain a U- shaped bend in the lead. Taut, tight leashes may communicate tension to the dogs and should be avoided.

Avoid face-face, head-on introductions between dogs. Instead, walk parallel to each other, a few feet apart, and alternate which dog is ahead of the other.

Do not allow a dog to greet another dog if he is dragging you towards the other dog or is misbehaving in any way (pulling, jumping, or lunging). Doing so will result in training the dog to misbehave to gain access to other dogs. The dog does not make the decision as to whom he will meet and when...you do!

If the dogs appear to be friendly, allow them to briefly sniff one another, and then each dog should be called away by their handlers. If either dog stiffens, stands up on its toes, or shows any aggressive posturing, call the dogs away immediately and interrupt the interaction. Do not allow any mounting.

It is important to interrupt an interaction before things go wrong so you can preserve the possibility of a successful interaction at a later time.

It might be necessary to take several walks, in different locations, over time. Multiple introductions in this manner give you a better read for how the dogs will do. Do not rush this process if the introductions seem 'iffy' in any way.

Stop the introduction if either dog is showing signs of fear or aggression. Body language that indicates fear or aggression can include:


- raised hackles
- stiff posturing
- lip curling
- growling
- air snapping
- tail tucked between legs
- one dog avoiding the other or wanting to hide behind the handler
- lunging
- freezing

If the leash walking is successful, go to a fenced area and have one dog held on leash, and one with its leash on but free to roam.


Usually in this scenario, the resident dog is loose (but leashed), and the new dog is held on leash. This gives one dog the ability to safely check things out and move away as needed while you maintain control of the other dog and allow them to get used to each other's presence and scent. Make sure the yard or fenced area is free of items that

may possibly trigger a fight such as high- value toys, bones, food dishes, or rawhides.

Body Language of Fear in Dogs




Slight Cowering




Major Cowering


More Subtle Signs of Fear & Anxiety




Licking Lips
when no food nearby




Panting
when not hot or thirsty




Brows Furrowed, Ears to Side




Moving in Slow Motion
walking slow on floor




Acting Sleepy or Yawning
when they shouldn't be tired




Hypervigilant
looking in many directions



Suddenly Won't Eat
but was hungry earlier



Moving Away



Pacing

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Introducing Dogs and Cats

The best possible indicator to know whether a dog is a good candidate to live with a cat and vice-versa is confirmation the dog has successfully lived with a cat(s) before and that the cat has lived with a dog. Dogs not well socialized to cats are likely to react to cats as though they were either other dogs or prey objects. This means they will direct play, investigation and posturing at cats or will give chase.

If the dog is gentle, relaxed and friendly and is not much of a predatory type (i.e. doesn't chase cats or squirrels when outdoors), he is a good prospect to develop a relationship with a cat. Predatory-type dogs are much more stressful for cats and must be constantly managed when around the cat if they are to live with one. Predation is not something a dog can be easily trained not to do, as it is deeply ingrained.

Sometimes, with diligence and perseverance, a dog with intense predatory drive can be taught to direct it at other outlets and to stick to carefully trained rituals and routines when around the cat, but this is tricky and does not work in every case. Dogs that are less intense are better prospects. It is important to know that dogs can and do sometimes injure and kill cats. Dogs that kill cats are almost inevitably highly predatory, so often they can be picked out. A pair or group of predatory dogs is at greatest risk. It's also important to know that most dogs that chase cats are not in this category. They chase, but do no physical damage, if they catch or corner the cat.

There is a range of temperament in cats, and this is a factor that will influence the success of dog-cat cohabitation. In general, relaxed, laid back cats and kittens are the best prospects to accept a dog. They are also at lower risk to flee and trigger chasing, which will allow a social, rather than a predator-prey, relationship to develop. Shy, skittish and de-clawed cats are less rosy prospects. De-clawed cats feel more vulnerable and are more likely to display aggressively when cornered.

Cats who have not been socialized to dogs will almost always behave defensively, by fleeing and/or with an aggressive display the first time they encounter a new dog. If the dog does not come on too strong and if the cat is given dog-free zones to retreat to, many cats will gradually get used to the dog and sometimes even become bonded.

After Adopting - If you've decided to blend a dog and a cat in your household, here are some pointers:

- Have a 'safety room' or rooms as well as high places the cat can access but the dog cannot. Baby-gates, cat doors and clearing high surfaces can accomplish this. It is important that the cat can retreat to regroup and relax away from the dog and then venture forward into "dog territory" at her own pace. The cat should have access to food, water and litter in this area so no interactions with the dog are forced.
- Never force the cat (or dog) into proximity by holding her, caging her or otherwise restricting her desire to escape. This is stressful and does not help. Aside from it being inhumane, stress is a common reason for cats to break litter box training.
- For the first introduction, have the dog on leash in case he explodes into chase. If it seems to be going well, take the leash off and supervise closely.
- If the dog is behaving in a friendly and/or cautious way, try to not intervene in their interactions, except to praise and reward the dog for his good manners.
- Interrupt any intense chasing and try to redirect the dog's attention to another activity – this is very difficult, so you may be forced in the future to manage the dog on-leash around the cat until you have worked out a routine or divided up the house.
- In the first few weeks, observe the trend: are things getting better or worse? Monitor interactions until there is a pattern or plateau in their relationship.
- If the dog is the newcomer, be sure to give plenty of extra attention to the cat so she does not associate this change with reduced attention and affection. If the newcomer is a cat, it's also a good idea to make sure the dog associates the new intruder with good things for him. Shoot for positive associations always.
- Dogs should not have access to the cat litter box – it is too stressful for the cat and the dog may eat cat feces and litter. Most dogs will also eat cat food the cat leaves behind. We suggest feeding cats in the cat's safe room or on a high surface.

Keeping Your Kids be Safe around Dogs

What Actions Might Cause Your Dog to Bite? What You can do to Prevent Bites

Often dog bites occur because humans, especially children, are rude to the dog. You can help prevent your dog from biting by first, understanding the types of actions that drive dogs to feel bullied or pestered so much they feel they have to bite. You will need to teach your kids how to play with dogs properly.

Appropriate Child-Dog Interactions are Polite and Kind

The key to keeping everyone safe is for you to teach both the dog and your children to be polite. *Make sure your children interact with your dog the same way you want them to interact with you.* By following simple do's and don'ts, everyone will be safer and happier.

Take time to ensure the dog has lots of positive associations with your children. The kids can regularly give food rewards for the dog's calm, polite behavior, such as automatic sits.

Supervise all interactions between your children and dog, especially in the getting-to-know-you period, even if your children are well-behaved and your dog very tolerant. Accidents can happen in a split second.

If You Adopted a Puppy

Bringing home a new puppy is truly one of life's joys ... and challenges! Thoughtful pre-puppy preparations and a well-planned first 24 hours can give your fuzzy bundle of promise a head start and make your dreams of the perfect family dog come true.

You'll need to puppy-proof the area where the youngster will spend most of his time the first few months. This may mean taping loose electrical cords to baseboards; storing household chemicals on high shelves; removing plants, rugs, and breakables; setting up the crate; and installing gates.

Once you think you've completely puppy-proofed your house, lie on the floor and look around once more to get a puppy's-eye view.

If you have children, hold one last meeting to lay down the rules: Don't overwhelm the puppy the first day, and don't fight over him or create mob scenes showing him to the neighborhood.

Getting Off on the Right Paw

When you pick up your pup, remember to ask what and when he was fed. Replicate that schedule for at least the first few days to avoid gastric distress. If you wish to switch to a different brand, do so over a period of about a week by adding one part new brand to

three parts of the old for several days; then switch to equal parts; and then one part old to three parts new.

From the start, consistency is important. On the way home, your pup should ride in the back seat, either in one person's arms or, preferably, in a crate or carrier.

Once home, folks who plop the excited newcomer on the living room rug and let the kids chase him, will be mopping up in no time...and regretting the lesson they taught their new pup. Instead, *take him to his toileting area immediately.*

From there, *carry out your schedule for feeding, toileting, napping, and play/exercise.* From Day One, your pup will need family time and brief periods of solitary confinement. Solitude may be new to the puppy, so he may vocalize concern. Don't give in and comfort him or you may create a monster. "Gee, if making noise brought them running once, maybe more whimpering is needed to get their attention again," reasons the pup. Give him attention for good behavior, such as chewing on a toy or resting quietly.

Doing things correctly from the start prevents confusion. Through puppy preparedness, you are one step closer to your Dream Dog.