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# The Rule of 3-3-3

## A guide\* to bringing a new adopted dog home & what to expect.



Adopting a new dog can be an exciting and rewarding experience. However, it can also be overwhelming and stressful for both the dog and the new owner. That's why I recommend following the 3-3-3 rule when bringing home a newly adopted dog.

The 3-3-3 rule is a set of guidelines for the first three days, three weeks, and three months after adopting a new dog. The goal of the 3-3-3 rule is to help the dog adjust to their new environment and build a strong foundation for a long and happy life with you, their new family.

The 3-3-3 rule is important because it emphasizes the need for patience, consistency, and positive reinforcement when bringing home a newly adopted dog. Dogs are creatures of habit and routine, and they need time to adjust to new environments and build trust with their new family.

By following the 3-3-3 rule, you're setting your new dog up for success and laying the foundation for a long and happy life together. You'll also be able to identify any behavioral issues early on and address them with a trainer before they become bigger problems.

*\*It is a guideline - be aware, some dogs adjust faster & some need longer but all dogs go through it!*



### FIRST 3 DAYS - DECOMPRESSION



- **Space** - give your dog plenty of space and time to acclimate to their new environment. Some dogs may be hesitant to eat, drink, or play during this time, don't worry.
- **Compassion** - the dog may exhibit behaviors such as fear, nervousness, or confusion as they adjust to new sights, smells, and sounds
- **Provide Safe Space** - provide a quiet, comfortable room with their bed, food, water, and toys. Limit their exposure to other pets, family members, and visitors so they don't get overwhelmed
- **Walks, trips and Exploring** - take your new dog outside for potty breaks on a leash, but don't overwhelm them with long walks or trips to the park. Let them to explore and get comfortable in their new surroundings at home.

**How your dogs feels in that phase:** many dogs don't show their real character during the first days. Some are shy and reserved, some are over-outgoing and attached. All of them are slightly insecure and confused, they just show it in different ways.

**Tip:** give them plenty of licki-mats, snuffle mats and stuffed kongs/ west paws, enrichment to help them decompress.

*After the first three days, your dog should start to become more comfortable with their new surroundings*





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## FIRST 3 WEEKS - SETTLING IN

*Be mindful of your dogs comfort level - don't rush things, remember you have a lifetime to do all the things you want together.*

- **Introductions** - gradually introduce your new dog to other family members and pets
- **Routines** - establish routines and keep them consistent
- **Rewards** - use treats, praise, and toys to reward them for following commands and exhibiting good behavior you want - try to ignore the behaviors you don't want or redirect them
- **Environments** - start introducing them to new environments, such as walks in the neighborhood or trips to the park

**How your dog feels in that phase:** Be mindful of your dogs comfort level and keep them on a leash until you're confident they won't run off or get scared and you have build a stronger bond. Your dog will slowly start feeling safe and you might see a change in its character like playfulness and curiosity as they become more comfortable.

*By the end of the first three weeks, your new dog should be comfortable with their new home and family members*

## FIRST 3 MONTHS - ARRIVING IN YOUR HOME

*Continue to reinforce positive behavior and gradually increase the exposure to new experiences.*

- **Learning** - start training what you want them to learn and consider Obedience Training Session to help them develop good habits and build confidence. This is also a good time to establish a routine for exercise, playtime, and training.
- **Patience** - be patient with your new dog and continue to provide plenty of love and positive reinforcement
- **Problems?** - Some dogs may develop new behaviors or habits during this time, such as barking, chewing, or digging. It's important to address these behaviors early on, best with a trainer and provide positive reinforcement for good behavior.

**How your dog feels in that phase:** Your new dog will realize that this is now its forever home and start feeling more safe. It will feel safe to show its real character. At the end of the 3 months they should be fully adjusted to their new home and routines. They may exhibit more confident and affectionate behaviors as they bond with their new family.

