

What to Expect During Your First Days Together

It's not uncommon for an under-socialized dog to hide under a couch or table for days or even weeks at a time, only coming out to eat and drink at night. Remember, the more patient and gentle you are, the faster he will come around. Here are some helpful tips to start you off on the right foot:

Give your new dog a crate covered with a blanket as a "safe haven." Reward him for entering the crate with lots of yummy treats.

Give your new dog space when he wants it. New environments can be stressful so don't force him to interact with you. Try to make him feel comfortable by giving him toys and treats from a distance. Let him warm up to you and your home on his own terms.

Keep the crate beside your bed to help him get used to your presence and so he can quietly bond with you while you both rest.

Because he was housed with other dogs he may trust new dogs before he trusts new people. So if you already have a friendly, outgoing dog, he'll be a great comfort to your new dog, as well as a valuable role model. After initial introductions, make sure your dogs have plenty of opportunities to spend time together.

Give your dog at least a few days to bond with you and settle in before introducing to strangers. When he seems more comfortable with you, he can start meeting new friends, one or two at a time, in quiet, familiar environments.

Because he was housed in an uncleaned small cage for his entire life house training may be challenging. Be prepared to take him outside often. Traditional house training methods may not work as well as they would on your average shelter dog. Positive reinforcement, consistency and most of all patience are going to be the building blocks for success.

Make yourself the most positive aspect in his life. Feed him lots of yummy treats for making contact and socializing with you. Remain calm and reassuring in all situations. Through positive association and stability a loving bond can be formed.

If you run into issues or feel overwhelmed, training and behavior counseling will be available to adopters through the AWA's free drop in sessions. Please feel free to contact the behavior coordinator, Liz, at (856) 424-2288 ext. 114 or behavior@awanj.org.