



The PEDIGREE® Adoption Drive

CARE GUIDE

A handbook for healthy pets
from your friends at PEDIGREE® Brand.

He's home!

You've found him and adopted him. Now that he's home it's your personal mission to keep him happy, healthy, and loved. From diet to exercise, training to socializing, grooming and more; you'll find heaps of info in our handy Care Guide.



The PEDIGREE[®]
Adoption Drive

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Diet for a healthy dog

Now that you've just brought your newly adopted adult dog home, you're trying to figure out what a healthy diet means for him. The good news is that even without knowing his full "eating history" you can still plan a well-balanced diet. Here are some of the factors to consider when making this choice.

Whether it's a puppy, adult, or senior dog you're considering adopting, the newness soon wears off, and then you're left with a loving companion for, hopefully, many years to come.

Every dog needs energy

Like all animals, every dog needs fresh water, protein, carbohydrates, fats, minerals and vitamins. Proteins, fats and carbohydrates provide energy; minerals are essential for nerve and muscle function and vitamins help regulate your dog's metabolism, help convert fat and carbohydrates into energy, and assist in forming bone and tissue..

Stage of life

The energy requirement and the amount he needs to eat depends on how active he is - for example, if he's working, kept either indoors or outside, and if he's ill, elderly, or still growing. If your dog is less active as he gets older, you may need to reduce his food ration a little (or put him on a lean or weight loss food) so that he doesn't become fat. Pregnant and lactating dogs also have a greater energy requirement.

Canned or dry?

Choosing between canned or dry dog food largely depends on the individual dog. Though dry may be more economical and convenient, canned - most dogs would probably agree - might be a tastier option. There are benefits to each. A combination of canned and dry could be the way to go for your new dog. If in doubt, consult your vet.

How much?

Once you've chosen a dog food, weigh him and then read the feeding guidelines provided on the package. Of course, each dog is unique, so use your judgment and adjust his feeding accordingly if you notice any dramatic weight changes. If this happens, speak with your vet.

No table scraps

As much as you want to give your dog a treat, avoid feeding your dog table scraps - it encourages begging and because most table scraps are too fatty for your dog's digestive system, it can cause vomiting, diarrhea and ultimately obesity or other health problems down the road.

Vitamins and supplements?

Avoid over-supplementing your dog's diet with vitamins and minerals. Excess dietary supplements cause nutritional imbalance and medical disorders. Some vitamins and minerals are toxic in high dosages. If you feel your dog needs supplements, talk to your veterinarian first.

Exercising your dog

One thing to keep in mind when adopting an adult dog is deciding how much exercise he needs when you first bring him home. If you don't have his physical activity/ health history, it's wise not to push him too hard on his "work-out" in case he has an injury or a chronic health problem that could be aggravated by athletic-style jumps or marathon runs.

Ease him into it

For the purpose of developing an exercise plan, ask your vet to provide a physical exam of your dog that includes a look at his cardiac and circulatory systems, and rules out any skeletal or joint disorders. Based on the test results, your dog's size, his breed and age, your vet can advise how much activity your dog needs.

While waiting for test results, ease your dog into exercise that's appropriate for his current activity level. Take him for a moderately paced walk or for a swim. Observe how active he is and how long he can sustain higher activity levels for. Be sure to watch for any unusual signs of fatigue or trouble breathing. If he wants to stop, by all means, let him.

Consider his size and breed

If you have a small dog, he may be getting all the exercise he needs just by scampering around the house and going on moderate walks. Larger dogs, on the other hand, often will just hang out inside. Sometimes they move around the house with their owners, sometimes they don't. But the house is usually too small for them to get most of the exercise they need.

Something else to consider is what your dog was bred to do. Is he a lap dog, bred to sit around and look pretty all day? Or is he a hunter or retriever who would rather be outside staking out a squirrel or rabbit?

Personal training 101

Once you have the "go-ahead" from your vet to start a new exercise routine, start him off with gradual conditioning, just as you'd do for yourself. This is far better for him than just jumping into a strenuous program. Dogs need to strengthen their muscles, joints, cardiac systems and even their footpads.

There are a few reasons why your adult dog loves getting outside. First, to "correspond" with other dogs, by both sniffing and marking hydrants, trees, newspaper boxes etc. Second, to actually meet his friends face-to-face or nose-to-butt...and third, to have some serious chase-time.

In order to let him enjoy all aspects of being outdoors, cross-train him. First, warm him up with a slow-paced casual "social" walk. Then, at the dog park, let him frolic and connect with his pals. Once he gets into high gear, pull out the Frisbee or ball and give him a good work-out playing fetch or jogging with him around the park. Be sure to follow your vet's recommendations on how long your dog should sustain high-impact activity. Then give him a final "cool-down" with a few final sniffs on the return home.

Older “athletes”

If your adopted dog is older, you need to encourage him to get up and go out every day. Don't push him too hard, though. Walking is better than running. But also don't let him get fat. Just like with humans, as your dog gets older, his body slows down, and he'll be more apt to put on weight. Moderate exercise will help stave off joint problems and ease arthritis, as well.

Easing your adopted dog into a suitable exercise plan, no matter what his age, not only improves his overall health, it can also help his temperament, too. The phrase “a good dog is a tired dog” is a truism, especially when first getting to know your newly adopted dog. After all, consistent exercise can help your dog release stress as he adjusts to his new living situation.

All about training

Successful training of your older adopted dog is really like a “pawshake.” You meet your dog halfway by observing and understanding his behavior, and with the proper training techniques he'll learn what your limits are. The more you do your part, the more effective “the shake” and rewarding your relationship will be.

Make sure there's a match

For training to be truly successful, it's critical to identify and make a personality match when choosing your dog. If you see yourself and your family as energetic, assertive and friendly, then finding an energetic, assertive, and friendly dog makes the most sense.

Keep in mind that no matter how positive the shelter environment strives to be, “given-up dogs” feel the effects of not getting the emotional and physical stimulation they need. These environments do not foster normal behavior and often lead to the development of unwanted behaviors such as barking, digging, and chewing, which are often caused by boredom, too much energy, loneliness, stress, lack of leadership, or medical problems.

It's important to get as much information as possible on the dog's history, in order to make a sound choice and to help your potential dog overcome these causes.

Unwanted behavior can be corrected

The good news is that most undesirable behavior can be corrected with proper training. The key to proper training is your commitment to consistently establishing limits with him and giving him lots of praise for good behavior over time. When you do this, you develop a steady trust and a bond with your dog, and he learns to view you as a strong leader.

Leadership is key

A big part of leadership is being aware of your own mindset. You are responsible for everything about your dog. The way you treat your dog directly impacts the way he behaves. The more you notice about your own behavior and how to correct it, the better the impact on your dog's behavior.

Suffice it to say, physical punishment should never be used. Aside from being cruel, it is ineffective in establishing the necessary bond and trust required for a dog to see you as a fair but firm leader.

Training basics

- It's a good idea to read a few reputable dog-training books in order to understand more than one perspective on dog behavior and training techniques.
- A wide range of training classes and methods are available, so it's important to do your homework in order to find the suitable method based on your dog's temperament.
- Start training classes (at home, in an obedience class, or with a private trainer) after you've lived together for two weeks or longer.
- Bring a sense of humor to the training and make sure both you and your dog are having fun. If you are not, determine why and consider other options.
- Training a dog to sit/stay, down/stay, etc., is important in establishing your role as leader.
- Reading and understanding your dog's body language is an important part of his training.
- Be sure to give him lots of verbal and physical praise and affection when he properly completes a command.
- Reward even the slightest sign of effort your dog is making to meet your increasing expectations.
- Doggie treats can be used to reward good behavior during training sessions, but after the learning has taken place, reward him only occasionally with treats while keeping the praise consistent.
- Consistency is essential in dog training - especially with commands and corrections.
- Use a quiet, steady voice with a firm "No!" to reprimand your dog, followed by a simple command like "Sit," then praise him with "Good Dog!" to reinforce the bond.
- Train once a day, when you have free time, in a quiet area free from distractions. Limit each session to 5-10 minutes - and keep it fun!
- Training needs to continue until the dog can listen and respond, even when he's distracted or excited.
- Train him in a busier environment only after your dog understands the command entirely. Realize that you may need to start from scratch, since dogs are situational learners.
- Watch your dog's progress and ensure he does his training "homework" each day. The typical time frame for training is a few months of weekly classes to several months - depending on your dog.
- If the dog has shown difficulties in any training situation, try again with lower stress situations, and build his exposure very gradually. Always aim to keep it enjoyable for him at all times.
- Try to understand why your dog may be behaving badly. If he is barking, ask yourself why and address the cause. Investigate behavior such as defecating in the house, whining or chewing - it could stem from a medical problem he could be experiencing. Call your vet and arrange for a check-up.
- Dogs learn at different rates - depending on the breed, age, and aptitude of the individual dog.

Housebreaking 101

Remember, dogs don't inherently know they're supposed to go to the bathroom outside and, more importantly, that they aren't supposed to inside! If your new dog isn't fully housebroken, he'll need to be taught.

Here are some general tips:

- When inside, closely supervise him. When he can't be directly supervised, confine him to a small area, exercise pen, or crate. This should be followed until he's gone at least 4-8 weeks with no accidents.
- Always accompany him outside to eliminate.
- Take him out frequently, especially after eating, sleeping, and play activities.
- Immediately reward outdoor elimination with praise and treats. This should be done as soon as he's finished. If you wait until you're back inside, he'll think the reward is for coming back inside. Keep a jar of treats by the door so you can easily grab a few on your way out.
- Provide an area for elimination that's protected from rain and bad weather.
- If caught "going" inside, startle him with a loud noise and immediately take him outside to finish eliminating. Again, reward him immediately.
- Clean soiled inside areas with enzymatic cleaners. These can be purchased at pet supply stores.
- Avoid punishment; it's rarely effective.
- Provide him with plenty of regular exercise, including leash walks, to help eliminate excess energy and provide positive interaction.

Take notes while you're at the shelter. It can only take one wrong answer to make him the wrong dog for you; and you the wrong owner for him. Again, if you're not 100% sold, go home and ponder your notes until you're absolutely sure that he's the one.

Training an aging dog

If your adopted dog is deaf, you must teach him to "Sit," "Stay," or "Come" with new visual (hand) signs or physical touching. However, teaching an older dog hand signals is not an easy task. But there are alternatives.

According to the Deaf Dog Education Action Fund, there are many ways to train a deaf dog besides hand signs, including vibration collars, clicker training, and more. If you're the owner of a deaf dog, these training methods are well worth looking into.

If your adopted dog is blind, his senses of hearing and smell will take over. Many blind dogs thrive with the proper support. Help him avoid hazards by not moving the furniture and create guides by using carpet runners and by spraying a scent on vertical surfaces like door edges, door frames and furniture.

In order to effectively train your newly adopted adult dog you need to show him that you can lead him by being firm and consistent in correcting his behavior. But you also need to be aware of your own behavior and you need to give him lots of praise, affection and...fun.

After all, that's why you have a dog, isn't it? With a strong "pawshake" like this established, he might just become the best dog you've ever had.

Great grooming tips

You and your newly adopted dog should get into a good grooming and cleaning routine as soon as possible. Here's why: Regular grooming helps keep him clean and healthy - and looking and feeling his best. It also gives you a chance to spend some quality bonding time with him while he gets used to your touch. Finally, it helps establish some basic ground rules in your relationship.

What to look out for with a new dog

Your new dog may not be used to you or being groomed, so be patient and gentle; he may be scared. When you first get him home, check the condition of his coat and skin, and look for any abnormalities such as swellings, wounds, or evidence of parasites. If you notice anything out of the ordinary, call your vet for advice.

Healthy coat, healthy dog

The condition of your new dog's coat can tell you a lot about his health. If it's dull, brittle and listless, it's likely that he's not getting the proper vitamins or nutrients he needs in his diet.

Talking to your vet about your dog's diet, and spending a few minutes combing and brushing his coat, can make a huge difference to his appearance - and his overall well-being.

Regular grooming not only removes dead hair and dry skin, it also distributes your dog's natural oils and helps keep parasites and skin disease at bay.

How often should you groom?

Regardless of the length of your new dog's coat, you should begin a brushing routine. Longer-haired breeds will need more frequent brushings than shorter-haired ones. And you may need to brush more often if your dog spends lots of time outdoors, because you'll have to remove any mats or burrs you find.

Grooming basics

The type of brush or comb you use on your new dog depends on his coat and what you want to accomplish. For instance, if you're just doing general purpose brushing, a comb or pin-head brush is recommended.

You can also get brushes and blades that help remove dead coat and hair mats (but these are too harsh for general purpose brushing). There are even special brushes for making fringe hair look fluffy. When you purchase your grooming tools, be sure to read the packages carefully so you know their exact purposes, and how to use them properly.

For short-haired breeds, start off by brushing in the wrong direction first, then in the right direction. If your dog has a dense undercoat, you need to work a bit more intensely. A long coat with dense undercoat needs to be combed and brushed gently but firmly. Some breeds - Poodles, for example - need to be trimmed on a regular basis. Most terriers, however, don't need regular haircuts. While you're brushing your dog, keep an eye out for any unusual lumps, bumps, or changes in the condition of his coat or skin.

Checking your dog's ears and eyes

When you're grooming, you should check that your dog's eyes and ears are clean, clear, and free of excessive discharge. If his eyes aren't clean, you can gently clean them with moist cotton. Use a different swab for each eye. If his eyes are red, or there's a lot of discharge, consult your vet for advice.

If your dog's ears are dirty, you can wipe them with a small pad of dry cotton. But don't probe beyond the area you can see, and don't poke anything solid inside; the ear is very delicate and easily damaged.

Lots of dark wax or discharge in the ear can be a sign an infection. And sometimes matted hair on the outside of his ear is an indication of an infection within (because he's been scratching it). Again, visit your veterinarian for advice and treatment.

Check your dog's mouth regularly

Mouth care is a key component to the maintenance of overall canine grooming. Removing plaque and tartar on a regular basis helps protect him from bad breath, sore gums, tooth loss, and even organ infections.

His teeth should be clean and free from plaque and tartar, and his gums should be a healthy pink color. As he ages, deposits may develop around the base of his teeth near the gums, which can lead to bad breath, mouth pain, gum disease, and infections. Eventually this can cause his teeth to fall out.

Brushing your dog's teeth on a regular basis helps prevent tartar from building up. Use a special canine toothbrush or a child's toothbrush, along with toothpaste designed for dogs. You can also give him snacks with an abrasive texture that are specifically designed to keep his teeth clean while he chews.

At the clinic, your vet can clean your dog's teeth to remove the tartar, remove any loose teeth, and polish the teeth to slow down the return of deposits. Maintaining his dental health requires daily to twice weekly home care.

Don't forget his nails

Dogs who regularly walk and exercise on cement and other hard surfaces are less likely to need attention, as their nails typically wear down to a good length. But if your dog exercises mainly on grass or soft surfaces, his nails may grow longer and need trimming.

Pay particular attention to the dewclaws if he has them, since they tend to grow around in a circle, and may pierce his paw pad. This hurts and can cause infection and worse. You can trim the nails yourself, but you have to do it properly with canine clippers. If you don't know how to do this, ask your vet or a professional dog groomer for help.

When's bath time?

Your new dog may not need a bath when you first get him home. Dogs only need bathing when they are dirty or on the advice of your veterinarian. If he does need one, make sure that you do it indoors or in nice weather to avoid chills. And use only products which have been designed for use on dogs. Never use a domestic detergent or disinfectant.

Have a tub or other container half filled with warm water - not too warm - and have a ready supply of warm water for rinsing the dog. You'll need a mild canine shampoo - or your vet may recommend a special type for your dog.

Gently lift him into the container. (If he's too heavy, get someone to help you or bath him outside or in a walk-in shower.) Then use a clean bottle or shower hose, to pour the warm water over him, from the back of the neck downwards, doing the head last.

Apply shampoo to the body and legs first. Rub it well in to the coat to give a good lather and make sure his whole coat has been shampooed. Rinse the shampoo from him by pouring warm water on his coat or by gently hosing him down. Remember to rinse him thoroughly, as residual shampoo can cause skin irritation.

Your dog will probably shake himself vigorously, which will remove most of the water from his coat. Use an old clean towel to dry off the remaining water. When he's dry, give him a nice, gentle brushing.

Socializing your dog

Socialization describes the process by which your dog learns to relate to people, other dogs, and his environment. Your newly adopted dog may already be socialized to a large extent, but he can still learn new behaviors and routines and will, in fact, continue learning throughout his life.

The first month is critical

The experiences you give your new dog during his first few weeks at home with you are critical for his and your future, and will have a long lasting effect on his behavior throughout his life.

So make sure that you have time to invest in an intensive socialization program during his early weeks with you. You're laying the foundation for your dog's behavior later on in life, and an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Besides, it's great fun and will help you get to know your newly adopted dog very well, very quickly.

Where do I fit in?

Dogs are pack animals that need a leader. It's important that your newly adopted dog recognizes you as the pack leader and knows his place in the "pack" when you bring him home. He may naturally choose to follow, or he may try to lead.

But, in the canine-human pack it is imperative that the dog understands that he has lower ranking than any human, including children. This understanding can be achieved through effective training.

Through training, your dog will learn to understand what his human companions expect of him, and where his place in the pack is - so he'll be better able to fit easily into his new environment. And the better you understand your dog's behavior, the more rewarding your relationship will be.

House rules

Everyone in the household (including visitors) needs to know what the rules are now that the new addition has arrived. For example, is he allowed on the couch? Whatever the answer, these rules should be adhered to at all times.

Clear behavior guidelines will help your dog understand what's expected of him so he can settle into his new home. Most dogs take about a month or so to feel comfortable in a new home - establishing and following a routine are the best ways to make this happen.

New situations

Identify those situations and environments where your dog will need to be comfortable. These may include riding in the car, meeting the mailman, having contact with the children next door (and children in general), walking through a dog-filled park - to name just a few. You'll want to prepare your dog for all eventualities, so that whenever he encounters anyone or anything new, he'll react with pleasant curiosity rather than fear or aggression.

New people

It is essential that your new dog be fully comfortable with all sorts of people, especially children. You can gauge his comfort level (and help increase it) by introducing him to a variety of people. When taking him for a walk, take some tasty snacks with you and ask people to toss him one.

Your dog will soon learn that people are friendly. You can incorporate some basic training into this by teaching him to sit before people give him a snack. This will prevent him jumping up at strangers.

Children may be seen as a different species (compared to adults) by dogs, as they move differently, speak differently, and react differently. So start slowly by spending time in and around children's parks where your dog will learn the sights and sounds of children playing. Start by having just a few children around your dog, then build up to a larger number.

New dogs

Hopefully, he'll get along famously with other dogs, but if he's had limited exposure, he may not. Aggression is a common symptom of a lack of contact with other dogs. Of course, the best way to remedy this is to have your leashed dog interact frequently with other leashed dogs.

Obedience classes provide a good opportunity to socialize him with dogs and people in a controlled setting. The more chances your dog gets to meet new friends, the better behaved he'll be. Of course, he shouldn't be allowed to run at the dog park until he gets along with other dogs.

To get your dog feeling more comfortable around his canine counterparts, start with dogs that you already know are trustworthy. If your dog behaves himself, reward him for his polite behavior in the presence of the other dog. Gradually work up to rewarding the dog for being close to the other dog, getting closer and closer each time.

Your local park is a great training ground. Take a seat on a bench and keep your dog on his leash sitting right next to you. Every time another dog passes by, give your dog a treat and lots of praise. Once you repeat this process several times, your dog will come to associate other dogs walking by with getting something good to eat.

If, after all of this, you find your dog is still having problems around other dogs, you may want to consider taking him to a trainer who specializes in this area. Ask your vet to make a recommendation.

Home Health Checklist

Taking the time to really observe your adult dog - and record any troubling symptoms - is a proactive way to keep on top of his health concerns. Our handy Home Health Checklist helps you provide your vet with vital information to aid in the diagnosis and treatment of your dog.

If he could only speak to you with more than a “ruff” about his changing health needs, taking care of him would be a cinch. Instead, your constant alertness and responsiveness to his health as time goes on is more important than ever.

Keep a health journal

Keeping a journal of symptoms or behavior changes can help you provide your vet with comprehensive and consistent information that will help in the effective diagnosis and treatment of your dog.

Here's a checklist of some common symptoms that arise in aging dogs. Print it out and make it part of your dog's Health Journal. Bring your journal to all scheduled and emergency vet visits.

| HOME HEALTH CHECKLIST | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Symptoms: | Date & Duration: | Comments & Notes: |
| Loss of appetite | | |
| Diarrhea or loose stool | | |
| Excessive thirst/urination | | |
| Urinary incontinence | | |
| Difficult or painful urination | | |
| Vomiting | | |
| Blood in urine | | |
| Blood in stool | | |
| Fever | | |
| Shaking or shivering | | |
| Gastrointestinal bleeding | | |
| Weakness/lethargy | | |
| Aggression | | |
| Coughing persistently | | |
| Fainting/collapsing | | |
| Trouble swallowing | | |
| Excessive salivation | | |
| Restlessness and pacing | | |
| Sneezing | | |
| Seizures | | |
| Weight loss | | |
| Labored breathing/breathing problems | | |
| Bloated abdomen | | |

It's important to watch for multiple symptoms that may present in your dog, in order to help your vet determine a path for the correct diagnosis.

When tracking your dog's health in a journal, remember to mark down the date you began noticing a symptom in order to inform your vet of how long it has been present. Whatever you do, don't simply chalk up your dog's symptoms to old age. These symptoms might actually be treatable and therefore, the quality of your dog's life could improve.

Move to twice-yearly checkups

Of course, it's important to take your older dog for regular checkups - once every six months is recommended after seven years of age - in order to keep track of emerging symptoms. Share your journal with your vet; once they perform a physical exam and take appropriate tests, ask your vet to help you develop a plan for monitoring your dog's condition, in response to the diagnosis and treatment.

Record these new results in your journal as well, for easy and consistent follow-up on subsequent visits.

Additional resources

For more information about dog ownership and the adoption process, check out your local library or visit www.pedigree.com or www.americanhumane.org.