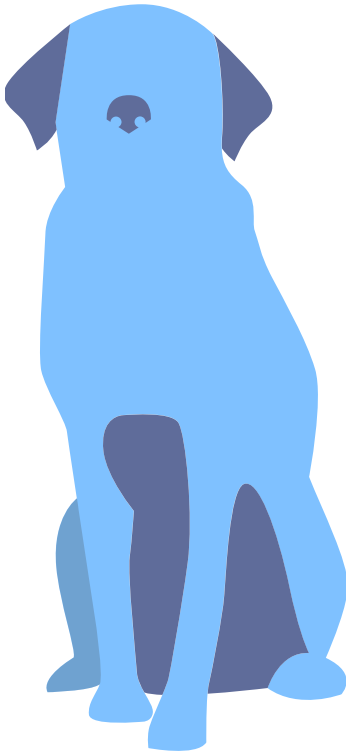


SETTLING YOUR RESCUE DOG



AIREWORTH DOGS IN NEED
REGISTERED CHARITY NO.
1162052

Welcome...

Thank you so much for deciding to make a rescue dog a part of your life! Whether you are reading this as an ADIN foster carer or as an adopter, the process you go through to introduce a new rescue dog to your home will be very much the same.

This guide is designed to be quick and easy to follow. We'll have a look at the following -

- Food & Drink
- Sleep
- Equipment
- The first 24 hours
- The first week
- Further along
- Specific problems

If after reading this you are looking for more comprehensive information we would recommend the following - getting in touch with your ADIN contact (our Adoption co-ordinator if you have a dog on TTA, or your DLO if you are fostering an ADIN dog) and reading 'Your Rescue Dog' by Sally Gutteridge (often available as a free PDF).

It's so exciting when we get a new dog, isn't it? But we often need to take a deep breath and leave the excitement for later. Right now we need to be calm and collected, ready to introduce our rescue dog to their new home. Sometimes we can tell you exactly what to expect, only for your experience to be completely different, and sometimes we have no history on the dog at all and are just as curious as you to see what the future holds.

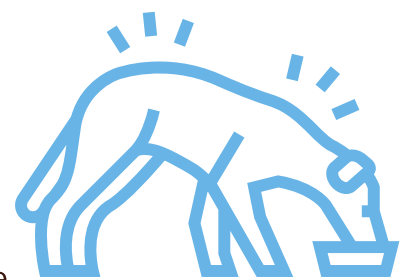
At this point, a helpful mindset would be to have absolutely no expectations, or low expectations. This isn't to say that every rescue dog is difficult to settle, but if we take this approach we set them, and ourselves, up to succeed. There is no single right way to do this, as all dogs are individuals, but we hope this guide will provide you with the foundations you need.

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The move, new smells, noises, people and sometimes other pets can be quite a lot to take in. If we manage our rescue dog's environment we can help them to deal with these changes and gradually build their confidence.

Food and Water

- If possible continue with the same food the dog has been used to. This is one less change to the dog's life and decreases the risk of an upset tummy. If you are wanting to change their food consider doing this gradually in the following weeks.
- Consider providing food in small portions 3-4 times a day. This will help combat the blood sugar spikes and drops throughout the day.
- Place food down for the dog and walk away. Some dogs like you to be in their eyesight and some may prefer to eat alone.
- Chewing is a natural method of stress reduction - ensure your dog is provided with a range of chews with varying toughness and texture (and avoid rawhide).
- Offer water in multiple locations and consider placing some in an open space rather than against a wall for dogs who are nervous about turning their back to the room.



Safe Spaces to Sleep

- Offer a number of places for the dog to sleep. They may want to be near you, or know you are near by if they need you. Alternatively they may feel safer in a covered space, such as down the side of furniture, under a table or in a crate.
 - Giving your dog the choice will help them settle and ultimately increase their confidence.
- Consider if we have given you history on the dog's previous sleeping arrangements and how you can provide this or an alternative. If you wouldn't be happy with a dog sleeping on your bed for example, can you place their own bed in your room, with the aim of gradually moving them out of the bedroom if you'd prefer?

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The Home Environment and Equipment

- Consider introducing 'Dog Appeasing Pheromone' products, such as diffusers and collars. These replicate the pheromones that bitches give off to their puppies, and can relax adult dogs too.
 - When controlling the areas you do not want the dog to go in, remember that many dogs quickly learn to open doors! Consider using safety gates to block off rooms. Sometimes a 'house line' is also helpful - this will allow you to guide your dog away from places they shouldn't be, without having to take hold of their collar or raise your voice.
 - When first letting your dog out in the garden it would be advisable to clip on a long line, and always observe them outside. They sometimes find ways out that you didn't know were there!
 - Use the equipment best suited to the dog; we may advise a harness, halti, muzzle, long line or double clip lead with your dog. Please feel free to ask us about any of this if you're not sure.
 - Whilst the dog is on Trial to Adopt or in Foster, we ask that you keep them on a lead whenever you are not in a secure area.
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The First 24 Hours

The most important thing is to take everything slowly.

- Ensure you have your boundaries set - are you allowing the dog on the furniture, upstairs, in the bedroom etc.
- Keep walks to an absolute minimum, using them for toileting only, then returning home. This is especially important if you have been told that your dog is reactive or fearful to things in the outside environment which they may encounter (ie. other dogs).
- Don't try to do any training with your dog at this point (although gentle toilet training/guidance is fine).
- Don't have any visitors - make this time all about you and your dog, and making them feel as safe as possible.
- Let your dog settle where they want to. It may feel a bit anti-climatic if they don't want to climb on your lap for cuddles and kisses, but it's not personal! Let them initiate the contact, so you can be sure they are comfortable with this.

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The First Week

- Keep things simple, don't panic about social interaction or training - they are better dealt with once your dog has settled into the home.
- Keep walks short distance and slow in speed, allowing for plenty of sniffing. Make this quality time to build your relationship and your dogs confidence.
- Allow your dog to take things at their own pace, it's likely been an exhausting few days for them.
- Offer your dog gentle mind stimulating activities such as food scatters, a lickimat, snufflemat or cardboard box searches. You could change your location to a different room or the garden if they seem happy with these activities.
- Offer lots of calm, relaxing time. If they seem happy in your company then lead by example (dogs watch our body language and take cues from us!)
- If your dog seems settled after a few days consider allowing a visitor or two. Make sure the visitor knows to let the dog initiate any contact rather than them going and petting the dog.
 - If your dog is still nervous consider introducing the scent of the new person first by placing an item of their clothing in the room your dog spends most time in.

Further Along

- Keep up the observation of whether your dog is stressed or relaxed and remember to move along at their pace, ie. you may want to introduce a new environment such as the beach, but do this in short bursts, or at times you expect it to be quiet.
- Keep the focus on building your relationship in the first month, rather than on training classes or high energy activities.
- Remember that the dog is still learning at this point and the best thing that you can give them is patience. Do less in the beginning, allowing your dog to lead and gradually build up activities such as walk and play.
 - Every dog is different in regard to the amount of time it takes them to feel comfortable and relaxed with new activities. Remember that however long it takes is not a reflection on you.

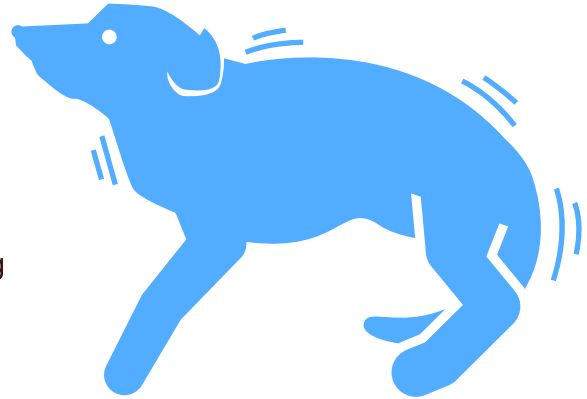


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Is your dog overwhelmed, over-excited or unable to cope?

If you see the following behaviours your dog may be signalling that they are unable to cope with the current situation -

- Struggles to relax
- Mouths
- Humps/ mounts
- Rags the lead
- Becomes obsessive, ie. with balls/chasing
- Starts being destructive
- Increase in barking
- Starts to be reactive



So what should you do?

These behaviours tell us that the dog is not coping very well with what is currently happening in their environment. Please don't be tempted to increase your dogs exercise or stimulation at this point. Instead, reduce the activity, backtrack with what you've been doing and give your dog more time to process what's happening. It may simply have been a case of doing too much, too soon. As always, if you're not sure get in touch.

Problematic Behaviour

Your rescue dog may have some specific problems to work through, however until they have got used to their new home it is often better to 'manage' these (ie. avoid other dogs if dog-reactive, use a head halti if they pull on the lead, ensure someone is always home if they have separation anxiety), rather than try to put any changes into place. Sometimes, whilst a dog has been in a foster home we may have consulted a qualified professional for advice on the dog's behaviour, and will pass on any advice and guidance they have provided.

We will not be discussing any specific behavioural techniques or training here, as this really does need to be discussed with a qualified behaviourist who will work with you to understand the dogs behaviour and explain any management or training techniques.