



Friends
for
Animals
of Metro Detroit

DOG ADOPTION MANUAL

Updated 4/15/2023

Congratulations on adopting your new best friend!

Pets give us more than what's humanly possible. In return for a lifetime of unconditional love, loyalty and friendship, there are some important things you need to do to keep them safe and happy. Here are some tips to start you out on the path to success. Although a dog may or may not have exhibited any of the following behaviors detailed in this manual, be aware that change is difficult for animals. Often you will see behavior change as they become comfortable and confident in the home, or you may see the opposite - where it's overwhelming and they may display fearful behavior. The best bet is to go slow and steady, and work on training the second you arrive home. It is very helpful to have your household set up prior to bringing a new dog home, much like baby proofing a house prior to bringing home a child. We have also partnered with Maddie's Pet Assistant to help you settle into a good routine. This manual does not replace professional counsel if needed.

House Training

- First thing to do upon adoption is to make sure the collar and leash are secure.
- If you have a long car ride home, it's a good idea to potty your dog before getting in your car.
- When you get home, take the dog to your yard or where you would like your dog to go potty. Keep the dog on a leash. If the dog has not gone after 5-10 minutes, bring them inside with you.
- Watch for your dog's signals that he/she might have to potty, such as sniffing along your floor or corners of walls and furniture. Some dogs pace and whine when they have to go.
- Try to potty the dog every few hours, and treat adults as if they are puppies. Even though he/she can hold it longer, excitement and stress can cause accidents and/or boundary marking.
- Be consistent and get him/her on a schedule that works with yours.
- Reward your dog when they get it right with food, treats, toys and whatever level of praise he/she is comfortable with.
- For ease of cleanup, you can keep your dog on a leash and potty him/her in the same area every time he/she goes out. You may also name the behavior such as "go potty".
- We recommend using a crate to confine the dog at night, at least in the beginning, to help the potty training be successful.
- There will be accidents - use a high quality enzyme spray to remove all odors. Clean it very well! If the odor lingers, it will encourage him/her to use the same spot indoors. Watch whatever cues he/she might have given prior to the accident.
- Never discipline a dog for accidents as they will develop fearful behavior. Contact the shelter at 313.943.2697 if you are having trouble.

Crate Training

- Introduce the dog to the crate. Make sure the crate is the adequate size for the dog. Put their favorite bed or blanket in it along with a bowl of water and some toys. It's good to use enrichment toys in the crate.
- Add a trail of their favorite treats into the back of the crate.
- Go slow! If the dog is uncomfortable with the crate or shy, let him/her go in and eat the treats with the gate open and allow him/her to come out when he/she wants.
- If the dog is shy with the crate, repeat the above several times until they are comfortable. As he/she adjusts to it, close the door and crate for 5 minutes and let them out. Always reward them and give lots of praise.
- As he/she adjusts to 5 minute increments, crate him/her and leave the room. If you hear whining, jumping, pacing, etc. wait a short minute and come right back.
- Increase the time you are out of sight until he/she is comfortable.
- Pheromone spray or plugins help a lot (check out pet supply stores or Amazon.com), or you may also try a thundershirt (<https://thundershirt.com/>)
- If the dog is fine with the crate, allow him/her to crate for 20-30 minutes and let him/her out. Crate the dog whenever you are not able to directly supervise him/her or if the dog is stressed.
- Each dog is different and trains at their own pace. Go slow and always reward desired behavior.
- Contact the shelter if you are having trouble. 313-943-2697

Destruction of Household Items

- Dogs shred for many reasons: teething, curiosity, boredom, stress, anxiety, soothing.
- Keep all items out of reach.
- Regardless of the reason for chewing, you are going to work on impulse control. This will also work for jumpy and mouthy excitable dogs.
- Redirect the dog when you find him/her chewing on inappropriate items.
- Use a favorite toy or treat to distract him/her and reward when he/she looks at it.
- Throw the desired object away from what he/she is chewing on. Reward for going after that object.
- When the dog shows interest in that object again, say "leave it". When he/she looks away, give treats and or a favorite toy.
- When your dog is good at redirecting, next teach him/her to "drop it" or "out". What you are doing is trading a high value treat or toy, which prompts them to drop what they have. Name the behavior with the chosen command as they drop it. Timing is crucial so they associate the behavior with the command you give.

- Work on the above impulse control behavior with regular toys daily. That will reinforce the desired behavior and the command. When the dog is good at this, you will now have him/her learn to ignore objects using high value treats. Redirect him/her to look at you with the treats while saying “leave it”.
- Use lots of praise and rewards in the beginning to make it fun, and the dog will enjoy playing these games with you.
- Call the shelter any time you are having trouble.

Fearful Behavior

- Note what triggers your dog to display fearful behavior, avoid triggers when training.
- Work on the dog building confidence with things that bring him/her comfort.
- When your dog is relaxed and happy, work on “sit, stay, down and come” to help keep him/her engaged. Lots of praise on the level he/she enjoys and treats he/she really likes.
- When he/she is good at the above, work more on “stay and come” which will build what is known as recall. Make sure you and your dog are having fun to help the dog build trust and confidence.
- You can practice “stay and come” at a bedroom door so your dog learns to perform those behaviors outdoors and at exterior doors. You may also practice on a long leash in your yard to keep the dog safe.
- If your dog reacts to things on wheels, people, motion or objects, avoid those until your dog builds trust and confidence. If you are out walking and come upon something that scares him/her, you can walk in the other direction until you are able to distract your dog from what he/she is afraid of. Use lots of appropriate praise, treats and toys to help. Work in small doses. For example, if your dog is fearful in general of going on walks, go for very short walks until he/she builds confidence.
- Work with your vet to rule out medical issues and see if any prescriptions may help.
- Work with a force free trainer who only uses positive reinforcement to help build the dog’s confidence.
- Only introduce one new thing or person at a time so the dog does not become overwhelmed.
- Dogs that are fearful are likely to be escape artists. Always supervise him/her when outdoors - you may need to leash walk even in the yard. Keep first floor windows closed and locked when you are not home. Play soothing music or have the TV on.

Fear of touch:

- This can be fear of things like petting, grooming, nail trims, teeth brushing - slowly introducing them to grooming tools without actually grooming. Let the dog approach and investigate the nail trimmer, brush, towel for wiping feet, etc on their

own and offer treats or canned food when he/she approaches on their own. As with any training, keep it short and sweet, and end on a happy note so the dog is not overwhelmed.

- Slowly increase the amount of time the dog is exposed to grooming tools.
- If the dog will allow it, touch him/her with the brush or other tools, but do not groom unless they are completely comfortable. If at any time the dog growls, freezes or backs away, stop and resume another time.
- When the dog is comfortable with that, begin grooming. It can help to use a LickiMat (<https://lickimat.com/>), or put peanut butter or spray cheese on the wall or wherever you need the dog's head to be, but be sure not to have it near your face. You may also use a muzzle for safety.
- If your dog is still quite uncertain, try grooming at your vet or a professional groomer to see how to safely do it yourself.

Fear of being petted

- Allow the dog to approach you and reward that behavior.
- As your dog feels comfortable with that, you can introduce petting in small amounts. Make sure to monitor body language. If at any time your dog becomes uncomfortable, stop right away. It can take weeks or even months for a dog to trust you enough to be petted.
- Monitor children at all times, as they do not always know when to stop.
- For fear of people or large groups of people, or put them in a crate or bedroom when company is over. Only introduce one new person at a time, until the dog is comfortable. Avoid large crowds in public as that is terrifying for a dog that is fearful of people.
- It is recommended to work with a force free trainer for fear of people.

Fearful of Dogs/Reactivity

- It is common for fearful dogs to express reactivity such as barking or jumping at fences while on leash.
- Make sure you have worked on building trust, confidence and recall before addressing these behaviors.
- Prior to leaving your yard for a walk, leash him/her and work on the dog coming when you call (recall) and eye contact. When your dog is calm and responding to you, you may proceed with your walk.
- Focus on getting eye contact during your walk using treats or a squeaky toy. That way, before you approach another dog even in the distance, your dog is more interested in paying attention to you. Give lots of praise and treats.
- If there is a certain dog that is very difficult to walk by, avoid that area until your dog is confident to safely proceed. It is also good to teach your dog to "sit" everytime you

stop during a walk. This makes it easier for you to achieve eye contact and engage the dog's focus.

- You may need to practice leash walks in a fenced area until he/she is good at this. Safety first!
- For barking and jumping at fences, use a long leash, 12' or so. Use your dog's favorite treats and toys. A squeaky helps distract them and throw some treats away from what he/she is reacting to.
- If your dog is too frustrated, it's time to go back inside. Squeak your toy or whatever gets your dog's attention and call them into the house. You can gently guide them with your long leash.
- Do not put your hands or body close to your dog's face when he/she is reacting as he/she cannot tell the difference between you and what he/she is reacting towards and that can lead to bites.
- It is recommended that you work with a force free trainer for very reactive dogs

Introducing Your New Dog to Your Dog(s)

- Keep the new dog separate in the beginning, we recommend crating in a separate room.
- We recommend mutual leash walks in the beginning to help keep the dogs from becoming territorial. If your adopted dog has recently been spayed or neutered, this is mandatory so he/she can heal up properly.
- As the dogs enjoy each other's company, increase the amount of time they spend together.
- Feed separately and pick up raw hides, bones and treats when the dogs are together in a room.
- Keep play time short and sweet, make sure to always end on a good note.
- Too much fun and wrestling can lead to overstimulation, a gentle verbal correction can help tone it down. It's best to have a second person on hand to assist with playtime until they are comfortable.
- Do not leave the new dog loose in your house, unattended until you are sure they will get along. This can take weeks or even months. The slower you go, the better they will get along.
- Make sure your current dog(s) do not feel overwhelmed by the new dog.
- Even if the meet at our shelter went very well, things can change in the home. If you are unsure of anything, please contact the shelter for advice.

Introducing Your New Dog to Cats

- Unless we know a dog came from a home with cats, we have no way to know if this dog will be ok with your cat(s).

- A dog might have liked the cat(s) he/she lived with previously, but your cat(s) are not the same ones he/she knew. Prepare for them not to get along for everyone's safety.
- Prior to bringing your newly adopted dog home, confine your cat(s) in a room.
- Keep your new dog on leash. After pottyng your dog, we recommend crating right away anytime that you are not able to directly supervise dog/cat interactions.
- Let the animals settle in for a few days before introducing them directly. Remember that change is hard on all animals, so give them time to adjust.
- Keep the cat in a room with the door closed. With the dog on a leash, approach the door. If the dog has no interest you can proceed to meet on leash. If the dog is reactive at the door, you will have to do some additional training.

Other Tips

- Properly identify your pet. Your new pet already has a registered microchip to help them become reunited should they get lost, however, this is not a tracking device, it just holds your information. Consider purchasing a GPS tag or collar that will track your pet in real time if they go missing. Please purchase a tag with your contact information or you can write your phone number on their collar with a permanent marker.
- Feed your pet a nutritionally balanced diet, including access to fresh water.
- Keep your pet indoors. Never leave your pet unattended outdoors.
- Get regular checkups at least once a year at your veterinarian. Heartworm test every year and it's a good idea to have a regular blood panel performed.
- Give your pet plenty of exercise and playtime. Regular exercise helps maintain a healthy body weight and provides mental stimulation. This also strengthens the human/animal bond.
- Train your pet using positive reinforcement. This helps you shape the behaviors you would like your pet to do and strengthens the human/animal bond.
- Follow local laws for licensing your pet and vaccinating them for rabies.
- Be patient, go slowly and be consistent. Make sure the expectations you have of your pet are reasonable and follow through with training. If you experience behaviors you cannot handle, contact a behavioral trainer or veterinarian for professional counsel.
- It can take weeks or months for a new animal to adjust to their surroundings and settle into a new family.

Poisonous Foods and Household Items

Many household products can be toxic to animals. Remove any rat or mouse poisons, antifreeze and windshield wiper fluid from your home before bringing a new pet home! Store cleaning products and the items listed below out of reach of pets in a secure location:

- Chocolate
- Caffeine
- Grapes/raisins
- Macadamia nuts
- Mushrooms
- Onion and garlic
- Rhododendron
- Castor beans
- Lilies
- Tulip bulbs
- Marijuana
- Sago palm
- Azalea
- Peanut Butter with Xylitol
- Xylitol

If you suspect your dog has ingested something toxic, contact your vet immediately.

Dog Diet

The dog you just adopted is currently getting Purina ProPlan Veterinary Diet EN Gastroenteric (which is a prescription diet that you can not get at the store) mixed with a teaspoon of canned Pedigree wet food. We will provide you with a sample bag of the EN dry food so you can mix that half and half with the new food of your choosing, in order to safely wean them off their current food.

Dog Vaccine Schedule

Check with your veterinarian to see what they suggest but we suggest following this schedule for puppies and your adult dogs yearly.

- 6-8 weeks:
 - Distemper
 - Parvovirus
 - Bordetella
- 10-12 weeks:
 - DHPP (vaccines for distemper, adenovirus [hepatitis], parainfluenza, and parvovirus)
 - Leptospirosis
 - Bordetella
- 16-18 weeks:

- DHPP (vaccines for distemper, adenovirus [hepatitis], parainfluenza, and parvovirus)
- Leptospirosis
- Rabies required by law
- 1-year booster (annual vaccines):
 - DHPP (vaccines for distemper, adenovirus [hepatitis], parainfluenza, and parvovirus)
 - Leptospirosis
 - Bordetella
 - Rabies required by law

HOW TO COPE WITH ALLERGIES TO PETS

Limit pet's access around the house

- Limits the areas dander will spread to.
- No pets in the bedroom until symptoms subside.
- Limit access to furniture or cover with sheets that can easily be washed.
- During high allergy seasons, keep pet in an area of the home that does not have carpet, until symptoms subside

Herbal Supplements and Natural Remedies

- Be sure to take a quality vitamin, particularly vitamin C.
- Ask your doctor what herbal supplements are safe for you to take.
- There are holistic drops that help boost immunity to dander allergies.
- Steam up your bathroom with hot water and stand in for 5-10 minutes to relieve congestion.
- Use a vaporizer to alleviate congestions
- Saline nasal spray may be recommended by your doctor.
- Over the counter eye drops are helpful for itchy eyes.
- Ask your doctor if Neem cream would benefit your skin if you get hives.

Air Purification

- Invest in a quality air purifier for rooms you spend the most time in. A portable one is easy to move around the house.
- Use quality filters in your furnace such as HEPA filters.
- Change filters monthly.

- Keep windows closed during peak mold/pollen times to relieve seasonal allergies which can make dander allergies more intense.
- Keep furnace and AC units very clean and vacuum as needed to reduce dust.

Clean Regularly

- Vacuum frequently to remove dust, pollen and mold.
- Dust with a damp cloth or microfiber to trap more dust and keep it from blowing in the air.
- Wash pet toys and bedding weekly or as needed.
- Vacuum upholstery weekly or as needed, especially under cushions and in crevices.
- Wash your bedding frequently or at least tumble in the dryer on high for 20 minutes.

Grooming

- Weather permitting, groom outdoors! This prevents shedding and dander buildup in your home. Not recommended for cats unless they are secured in a harness.
- During inclement weather, wear a mask to reduce breathing in allergens.
- Use a quality brush to remove excess fur, this keeps it from floating around the air.
- For dogs, bathe monthly to prevent dander build-up.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after each grooming, try not to touch your eyes or face.
- If you are having persistent dander allergies, it's a great idea to take a steamy shower after grooming to clear up your sinuses.
- Wear a smock during grooming or some old clothes that you do not mind getting dirty and don't wear frequently. Change after a grooming session.
- Take your pet to a professional groomer! Let us know if you need recommendations. Pets love spa days too.
- Keep nails trimmed to prevent scratches.
- Try dander sprays for cats and dogs, they are made specifically to safely remove dander from your pet's coat and can be used frequently, in between baths.
- Do not bathe your pet too frequently as it dries their coat out and causes more dander.
- Ask your vet about skin supplements for your pet, to help reduce dander.

Flooring

- Hardwood and laminate floors are easier to keep clean.
- Damp mop bare floors daily to reduce allergens.
- If removing carpet is not an option, vacuum daily.
- Check with a carpet company for more tips on keeping carpet clean.
- Use runner rugs and small carpets in areas you frequent the most to keep your carpets clean.

Hot Beverages

- Hot tea/juices can help open sinuses up and relieve your itchy throat.
- Avoid dairy products in your beverage when your allergies are the worst.
- If you can have honey, it coats your throat and has a lot of immune boosting properties, check with your doctor.
- Peppermint tea can provide extra relief.
- Avoid highly caffeinated beverages during peak allergy times, caffeine can exacerbate symptoms.
- Plain hot water with lemon also provides relief.

Whichever methods you try for reducing allergies, it can take a month for you to adjust to your new pet. The most important thing is to reduce the amount of dander in the air with good filtration. Keep your house clean. Don't allow pets in your bedroom or on furniture until you adjust. The slower you go with allowing your body to adjust to a new pet, the less severe your symptoms are likely to be. Check with your doctor or veterinarian before taking any type of supplements or over the counter medicine or giving your pet any supplements or medications.

Maddie's Pet Assistant

Maddie's® Pet Assistant (MPA) is a free app developed by Maddie's Fund® to provide you with support after you bring a dog or cat home. Whether you are a seasoned foster caregiver, or just adopted your first pet - the app will provide help and maybe even teach you a few new tricks.

For example:

Dog has a cold? Pup pooped where he shouldn't? Let's see what the experts say!

Introducing a new pet to your current pets? We've got you!

Need tips for your counter-surfing dog? Or constantly barking pup? Advice is on the way!

If you indicate a concern in one of our check-in surveys, you'll receive an immediate response in the app and in email, with tips, advice and resources crafted by shelter medicine veterinarians and behaviorists to help you resolve the issue. It's all about support. You can also receive vaccination reminders, track your pet's weight, post questions to a community forum and more – all through the app! So, what are you waiting for?

Download the app through the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#) and register for an account today!



Contact us at 313-943-2697 or metrodetroitanimals.org with any questions.