



Welcoming Your Adopted Dog Into Your Home:

Before You Bring Your Dog Home:

- **Gather Needed Supplies** - Leash, Collar, ID Tag, Crate or Gates, Bed, Bowls, Food, Treats, Toys, Grooming Supplies, Waste Bags, Enzymatic Cleaner.
- **Dog-Proof your house** by looking for and removing hazardous items and valuable items that the dog could chew.
- **Setup your house for the dog's arrival.** Determine where the dog's crate, bed, and bowls will be placed. Decide where food, treats, and supplies will be stored. Determine the house rules for the dog and make sure all family members know what they are (e.g. Are there rooms the dog is not allowed into? Is the dog welcome on furniture?).
- **Decide what the dog's schedule will be** for walks, play, training, feeding, and potty time and who will be responsible.

The First Day Home:

- **Determine ahead of time where the dog will ride on the way home.** It's best to have two people if possible; one to drive and the other to pay attention to the dog. Bring towels just in case the dog gets car sick. If an appropriate sized dog crate can fit in your car, this is the safest way for your dog to travel.
- **Bring the dog straight home** – try not to run errands on the way.
- **No welcome-home parties.** Limit/discourage visitors for the first few days so that your new dog isn't overwhelmed. The first few days should be a time for your dog to get to know and bond with you and other immediate family members.
- **When you arrive home let the dog sniff around** the yard or outdoor area near your home on a leash. Bring your dog to your designated potty spot and reward the dog with a treat for going there.
- **Introduce your dog to your family members outside**, one at a time. Keep it calm and low-key. Let the dog be the one to approach, sniff, and decide how much he wants to interact. Offering a treat can help the dog to associate family members with good things (food!). No hugging, kissing, picking

up, staring at, or patting on the top of the head during the initial introduction – these things can be scary for some dogs.

- **Stay close to home initially.** No major excursions. You need to learn your new dog's behavior before you can predict how it will respond to different stimulus. Establish a walk routine in an area you are familiar with. Structured play in the yard is also a good form of exercise, bonding, and training.
- **Bring your dog into the house on a leash and give it a tour of the house.** Try keeping the mood calm and relaxed and redirect any chewing or grabbing of objects with a "leave-it" and offering an appropriate toy.
- **Bring your new dog outside often.** Dogs don't generalize as well as we do, so even though your dog may have been house trained in its previous home, your dog needs to learn your house rules, which includes a house training refresher.
- **Make sure your new dog gets ample "quiet time"** so that your dog can acclimate to the new surroundings. Be observant of the dog's responses and go at the dog's pace.
- **If you have a resident dog(s), have the initial meeting outside** (one dog at a time if you have several). Don't rush it. Keep the leashes loose with no tension. Make sure they meet in a food-free, toy-free zone. **Don't leave them alone together until you are absolutely sure it is safe to do so. Watch and manage all interactions between the dogs initially.**
- **If you have a resident cat(s), keep the cat secure until you know how the dog will react to it.** Use doors, gates, and leashes to prevent contact initially. Don't give the dog the opportunity to chase the cat. Make sure the cat has escape options. Keep initial encounters brief. Manage all interactions.

Establish Daily Routines:

- **Sleeping** - Initially the crate or bed should be in the room you would like the dog to sleep in eventually. The area should be safe, dog-proofed, easily cleaned, cozy and quiet, with familiar scents. Don't put your new dog in an uninhabited area like the garage or basement.
- **Feeding** - Check with your vet about what the recommended food and amounts should be for your dog based on breed, size, age, activity level, and health. If possible, feed two smaller meals per day rather than one large meal. You may need to reduce the meal size to allow for treats during training.
- **Walks** – Keep to relatively quiet places at first. Avoid interaction with other dogs and unfamiliar people until you and your dog are comfortable. Walk your dog on the provided front clip harness to encourage good manners and to minimize pulling on leash.
- **Chew Toys/Interactive Toys** – Use of the crate and appropriate toys are great ways to keep your new dog out of trouble. Management of your dog and the environment prevents problem behaviors. Chew toys are a great way to direct your dog's attention to appropriate toys, and away from objects that you don't want your dog to destroy. Interactive feeder toys (toys that you can hide food and treats inside of) help your dog to use its mind and tire them out, mentally. With a new dog, avoid rough and tumble, slapping, wrestling, and chase games when playing with your dog.

- **Prevent separation anxiety** – Use the crate and an interactive feeder toy in combination with leaving for short periods and coming back several times a day, starting with your first day with your new dog. Don't make a big fuss of coming or going.

Relationship Building:

Patience- Have patience with your new dog's behavior, level of training, and the time it takes to establish a bond with you. Give your new dog time and space to adjust. Commit time the first few days to get to know your dog's habits and personality. Establish a routine for the dog and balance interaction and down-time. This is a period of trust-building, so don't scare or yell at the dog or try to force close contact. Watch your dog's postures and expressions. Learn to read him. It may take even up to several months for you to get to know your dog's true nature. And don't forget, your new dog is trying to do the same with you!

Training- Physical and mental stimulation are necessary parts of your dog's well-being. Continued training helps your dog settle into a new home, teaches your dog how to fit in to a new family, and strengthens the relationship between you and the dog. Once your dog has settled in and you are familiar with your dog's responses, we encourage you to take advantage of the free training options offered for graduates of the Pups N Pals program at the Halifax Humane Society.

Remember to manage your dog's environment so that you set him up to succeed. Be proactive, not reactive. In other words, prevent inappropriate behavior from happening, and then you won't have to correct it.

The following sections are training tips and exercises to incorporate into day-to-day life with your dog. During the Prison Pups N Pals program, your dog received consistent training for seven weeks. He or she has learned to respond to a variety of cues including sit, down, stand, stay, heel, wait, drop it, leave it, relax on a mat/bed and touch. Dogs are, however, not robotic and behavior can change from situation to situation. With that in mind, it is very important that you also invest the time to work with your dog to establish good behavior through positive reinforcement training.

We also encourage you to take advantage of the offer for all dogs who have graduated from the Prison Pups N Pals program to enroll in a free four-week "Obedience Fundamentals" class at the Halifax Humane Society in Daytona Beach.

These classes will help teach you what your dog has learned and will set you up for success with your dog during your life together.

If you are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity with your Prison Pups N Pals graduate, please contact the Animal Behavior Department at Halifax Humane Society, by calling (386) 274-4703 Ext 326.

In the meantime, see the sections below to get you and your newly adopted dog off on the right foot:

Capturing Calmness and Desirable Behavior:

Too often we pay little attention to our dogs throughout the course of a day until they do something undesirable that catches our attention quickly. Here is a much better approach that will teach your dog to be calm and relaxed in a variety of situations, including around the house:

When you see your dog doing absolutely NOTHING, that is the moment you want to reinforce him with attention and treats. For example: you notice your dog lying quietly on the floor or a dog bed while you are folding laundry - quietly deliver a treat that dog to reinforce calm behavior! Remember, behaviors that are reinforced will be repeated.

Helpful Tips:

When reinforcing your dog for doing nothing, you need to get the treat to him before he thinks to look at you. This is because you want to “take a picture” of that calm behavior he is doing at that exact moment in time with the reinforcement, so that exact behavior will be repeated in the future. If your dog turns to look at you as you feed him a treat, you will be “taking a picture” only of a dog that is excited about the food that he is about to eat. Feeding him a treat while he is looking for his treat will not actually reinforce the calm behavior you had hoped for, so wait until your dog is not thinking about the food again, before giving your dog the treat.

You can get the food to your dog while he is not looking at you, by having food already prepared in your hand, so that you don’t make a noise before you move to feed your dog. Try keeping several “treat stations” throughout the house on shelves out of your dog’s reach so it available to grab easily when you need it.

SMART x 50 Training (Rewarding desirable behaviors):

The “Get SMART protocol” refers to:

**See
Mark
And
Reward
Train**

The goal of this training is to capitalize on the numerous desirable behaviors and animal performs over the course of an average day by:

1. Noticing them
2. Pointing them out to the animal (“mark” the behavior with “Yes!”)
3. Then give the animal a reward in order to increase the strength of those behaviors

Practically speaking, SMART x 50 is a simple way to get started on noticing the behaviors your dog already does that you’d like to see more of.

How to Do SMART x 50 Training:

- Count out 50 small, healthy, high value treats each day
- Keep them with you in your pockets or a treat pouch so you remember to use them throughout the course of the day. Alternatively, you can keep several “treat stations” throughout the house on shelves out of your dog’s reach so it available to grab easily when you need it.
- When see your dog doing something polite, cute, or useful, mark the behavior (“Yes!”)
- Give your dog a treat
- Use up 50 treats per day (depending on how food motivated the dogs is, these “treats” can certainly be pieces of their normal dog food/ kibble)

The beauty of SMART x 50 is that you can do it anyway you want. Just do it! You can choose one or two particular behaviors over the course of a week and see for yourself that your dog ends up doing MORE of those specific behaviors or you can look more generally for various behaviors you like. For example, when working with clients with a brand new baby in the house, I tell the parents to even start with any behavior that is simply not annoying. If it’s 2:00 PM and your dog’s behavior is not annoying you, go see what he’s doing and mark and reward. This is the behavior you will want more of when you are busy with the baby!

If 50 treats doled out for desirable behavior throughout the day sounds overwhelming, you can still start somewhere - do SMART x 25 or SMART x 10!

Noticing and reinforcing the behaviors you want to see more of will never hurt typically gives better results than seem possible from such a simple approach. However, a young or energetic dog will also need help building a repertoire of specific behaviors to go with different contexts — what to do when a person is eating, what do to when the doorbell rings, what to do when the leash comes out, etc.

Some of this will come from training and some will come from how the dog’s handler sets up his options. For example, it’s perfectly fine to use a leash to prevent jumping up when the dog first meets a new person. This gives you the opportunity to see, mark and reward calmer and more attentive behavior at a bit more distance without allowing the dog to rehearse the undesirable jumping behavior.

SMART x 50 will always be helpful, but it needs to be in conjunction with meeting the dog’s needs and setting him up for success. Give it a try!

Coming When Called:

People often inadvertently teach their dogs to NOT come when called. For example, many people wait until they really need the dog before they call him. That usually means that in the dog’s view of things, the “fun” is over. If the dog obediently comes to the owner, his leash is promptly attached and he's on

his way home. This is not a good outcome from the dog's perspective so on each successive outing, the dog delays coming when called because by delaying, he is prolonging his off leash fun. When the owner repeatedly calls the dog and he does not come, then the dog is learning that he doesn't have to come - or at least he doesn't need to come until he is called umpteen billion times. The dog has now learned that ignoring the owner is infinitely more rewarding than obeying the owner. This is definitely a lose-lose situation. If the dog comes, he is punished for coming because his off leash fun is curtailed. If the dog doesn't come, he is learning not to come and he is being self-rewarded for ignoring the owner.

Another outcome of the above situation is that the now frustrated owner feels he needs to punish his dog for not coming when called. Because the owner does not know how to punish the dog while it is running away, the owner punishes the dog when he eventually returns. The next time the dog will take even longer to come back because not only does it end the fun but it also now means outright punishment from the owner if he does comply.

Instead, be proactive and set up situations that lend themselves to you practicing a recall that you can immediately reinforce using food or a toy, and then let the dog resume what he was doing previously. You want to reinforce the dog for coming and checking in with you when you call her away from something she was previously doing.

When you call your dog to you or away from a distraction, run excitedly away from her praising the entire time – give your dog a reason to chase you! If she complies, reinforce with a piece of food (or several) - bonus if you can scatter the food on the floor or toss the food for her to chase. After she has eaten the food, give a release cue and let her go back to what she was doing previously if she wants. It seems a little counter-intuitive, but by doing so you are reinforcing that checking in with you is a great thing and doesn't mean "loss of freedom" for the dog. It also means that the distraction will become less and less exciting to her - after all, you are giving her *permission* to go chase and play!

To practice your recall cue:

Start around low-level distractions to build up a strong reinforcement history of responding to the cue "come." Call your dog to come and RUN away from him, praising the whole way. Crouch down to your dog's level and keep your hands close to your body and do not reach out to your dog as he approaches. Verbally praise and dole out several treats by scattering them near you. Allow your dog to eat the treats as reinforcement, then release your dog ("okay!") and allow him to resume what he was doing previously (playing, sniffing, etc).

Think of your recall cue like a savings account. Each time you call your dog to you and reinforce him heavily when he is successful, you make a "deposit" and make the cue stronger. Similarly, if you call your dog to come and he does not respond, or if you call your dog to come but then do something the dog perceives as unpleasant when he arrives, you make a "withdrawal," therefore making the cue less strong. Your goal is to keep the "come" cue "account" as strong and reinforcing as possible. This will mean your dog will happily come to you when it really matters!

Teaching Solid Stays:

Having graduated from the Pups N Pals program, your dog does have an understanding of both a “sit-stay” and “down-stay” cue. It is beneficial to continue to practice these cues throughout your dog’s lifetime to ensure consistency in all situations and around distractions.

STAGE ONE – Building Duration

- Before working to build duration with a stay behavior, first ensure that your dog has a solid understanding of the cue itself (“sit” “down” or “stand”). Before working on duration, make sure your dog responds promptly to the cue in a variety of settings at least 95% of the time. Start the process by putting your hand in front of you with the palm facing your dog and hold it there for a few seconds before marking and rewarding.
- Reward your dog’s attention and stillness with a treat delivered to their mouth while they are still “frozen” in position.
- Again take a step back and reward your dog for maintaining position.
- Once you have your dog’s focus, gradually lengthen the time that you expect your dog to remain “frozen” before marking and feeding until she is staying in one spot for one minute.

STAGE TWO – Add Distance

- Ask your dog to stay and take a step back.
- If your dog moves, lure her back to the original waiting place and repeat the exercise.
- If your dog stays in one place, walk back to her and reward with the verbal praise and a treat.
- Repeat this process a number of times until your dog is really good at staying in one place; only then, increase the amount of steps you take backward until you can walk at least five steps away and back to her without her moving.

STAGE THREE – Increase Distance

- Repeat the first two steps while gradually increasing distance. Do not go too far too fast, but if your dog is responding well, you can make the distance as far as you want.
- If she breaks her stay at any point, go back to the previous distance and build up gradually.
- At this stage you are still facing her while backing away.

STAGE FOUR – Vary Your Body Position

- Dogs like to follow us when we walk away from them, so as soon as you ask your dog to stay and turn your back on her, she is likely to forget everything she has learned and follow you. That is why it is important to practice the 'stay' by turning your body and walking away from your dog as well as walking to her side or around her in a circle.

STAGE FIVE – Proofing the Stay Cue

- Can your dog stay in one place while toys are being thrown around him, when people run past, when she hears a knock on the door, or when there is another dog playing nearby? Verifying all of this is called *proofing* a behavior. When any learned behavior is taken to a more stimulating

environment or situation, it makes it a lot harder for a dog to comply, but every dog can get to this point with practice and properly timed reinforcement.

Automatic Sits as a Default Behavior:

When dogs offer a “sit” behavior *without* an explicit cue or command, it's called an “automatic sit,” or a “default behavior.” Default behaviors such as automatic sits teach the dog to constantly check in and give their handler focus and to offer desirable behaviors, even in difficult or distracting situations. It aids all other training, and it is the first step towards consistent good behavior and impulse control.

Throughout the Pups N Pals training program, your dog was trained to offer automatic sits as a way of “saying please” before receiving a toy, food, treats, playtime, attention, and walks.

Incorporate Automatic Sits into your dog’s normal daily routine:

- Walk briskly and then abruptly stop. Hold out your hand in front of the dog's nose in case he doesn't immediately stop. Then, wait for a Sit.
- As soon as the dog sits, immediately mark (“Yes!”) and reward with a food or toy reward, then and take another few brisk steps.
- Abruptly stop again and wait for a Sit. Repeat this many times and move briskly forward, backwards, and side-to-side.

Practice Automatic Sits before giving the dog any toy, food, play, attention, and walks, and make an effort to also practice in different environments and locations. Over time, you can use food or toys rewards only sporadically. By teaching this as an automatic, offered behavior, you'll notice a marked increase in the dog's ability to focus and learn in difficult situations.

Teaching a Reliable “Drop” Cue:

Teaching your dog to drop items from her mouth is a useful and necessary skill, especially for city dogs. There are so many hazardous things on the street, it is easy for your dog to pick up something that is bad for her. You may have tried to teach your dog a cue that means she should drop items, but you might find that your dog is reluctant to respond when the item is very high value. If this is the case, it is possible that your dog thinks “drop it” means you are going to take something away from her. It is important when training this cue to allow your dog to have a toy or treat that is safe for her to keep, because in the beginning you absolutely do not want to take the item away! For this cue to be reliable in real-life situations, you want to teach your dog that “drop it” does not mean you are going to take the item away, you just want her to let go of it for a minute.

You want to think of your “drop it” practice as deposits in the bank; over time you can trade your dog, or give your dog a reward for letting something go from her mouth, this is a deposit in her bank. This way if you find yourself without anything to trade and your dog grabs a chicken bone on the street, you have

enough deposits to make this withdrawal! You should not believe that simply because you gave your dog an item this means you should just be able to take it away at any time; this is not true for any of your human relationships, and you probably like your dog better than a lot of humans!

“Drop it” as a cue for your dog should only mean she has to release what is in her mouth. To properly train this cue, without poisoning it, you must practice with a toy or item your dog can safely continue to chew on. To begin get several tasty treats and allow your dog to begin to chew on a treat or toy.

1. Walk near your dog and drop a treat near her toy as you pass, you don't have to say anything. Repeat several times, until your dog looks up at you eagerly as you approach, or even follows you.
2. Approach your dog and reach for the toy, but instead of taking it, leave a treat behind. Repeat this several times until your dog is excited for you to approach.
3. Say “drop it” to your dog, just once, then approach, trade her for a treat, and walk away, leaving her with the toy! This is key; DO NOT TAKE THE TOY AWAY!
4. Repeat step 3 until your dog will respond to the “drop it” cue before you present the treat, but still reward her at the end! Remember these rewards are your bank deposits, so keep on saving up!
5. Each day, or each new practice session, start from step 1, even if it takes you less time to progress.

Default "Out" or "Release" Behavior with a Toy:

This quick, easily taught 3 step method works best for dogs with a very strong drive for tugging and no desire to let go. If your dog won't stop tugging even when you wave a very high value treat in front of him, this method is for you.

Step 1: Immobilize the toy. Your dog loves the action tugging creates. If you no longer provide resistance to your dog's tugging, this lessens her enjoyment and will usually provoke a response—like releasing the toy. I like to trap the tug toy with both hands against my thigh.

Step 2: Give your cue. Say it immediately after you have stopped tugging with your dog. Examples of cues you could use: "out," "release," "drop it." With this exercise, I start using the verbal cue with the very first repetition I attempt with a new dog.

Step 3: Mark ("Yes!") and restart the game. As soon as your dog lets go of the tug toy, IMMEDIATELY mark and restart the game by giving your cue to take the toy (mine is “get it”) and moving the toy AWAY from your dog. Moving the toy away from your dog is critical as this will instantly stimulate her prey drive and make for a very satisfying reward—another game of tugging. Your dog will learn that the quickest way to a great game of tug is a fast release of the toy when cued by the handler.

Troubleshooting:

Q: My dog took a while to let go of the toy.

A: That's okay. Some dogs may take several seconds to let go of the toy; just wait for them to let go, and IMMEDIATELY mark and give your "get it" cue and move the toy away from them.

Q: I can't immobilize the toy because my dog is too big and stronger than me.

A: You can try using a leash to prevent the dog from pulling away from you, but you must find a way to immobilize the toy or this method will not work. You might try using a toy with less "give" if you are having a hard time immobilizing.

Wait at Door:

Teach the dog to "wait" at the door. Wait is different than stay. Stay means to stay in one spot in one position; wait simply means "don't move forward."

When you go to open a door the dog is typically there waiting for you to open it. Have some small high value treats available. You should be closer to the door than the dog is. Say, "wait" and slowly begin to open the door, no more than the dog's shoulder width. If your dog is not trying to move forward, mark "Yes!" and toss a treat towards or behind your dog. If the dog goes to run out the door, begin to "fan" the door back and forth - you are using the movement of the door (not the leash!) to deter his forward motion. When he pauses and/or takes a step backwards from the door, again mark "Yes!" and toss a treat towards or behind your dog. Work on you walking through the door, using the door and your body to block the dog's exit, then practice the same technique from the other side of the door. You can practice at a variety of different doors, including your dog's crate door.

Remember, the goal is for your "Wait" cue to be different than your "Stay" cue. It is tremendously helpful to have BOTH of these behaviors in your dog's repertoire.

Loose Leash Walking:

Loose Leash Walking (LLW for short) means exactly that – walk calmly on a loose leash. There are a variety of methods for accomplishing LLW but the basic idea is the same. If the dog cooperates by keeping a loose leash, something that the dog wants will happen (treats, the chance to proceed forwards, etc.) and if the dog does not keep the leash loose, then either something undesirable happens (moving the dog away from what it wants) or nothing happens; the dog neither moves forwards nor away (the handler stands still). Since most dogs want to go forwards, standing still falls in the category of "undesirable" for almost all dogs.

Now, if you are in the process of house training a puppy or new rescue dog, or if you simply need to get from point “a” to point “b” without wasting time or messing around, then I’d strongly encourage you to have a method for managing your dog while you work on training your dog consistent LLW. Because realistically, when your puppy has to go potty you need to get your puppy outside – fast! This is not usually the best time for penalty yards.

“Managing your dog” means to deal with the practical aspects of a situation when you cannot or will not address the underlying training issue. An obvious example is keeping your dog on leash before you have a reliable recall. The leash will not teach your dog to come when called when he is off leash, but it will prevent your dog from running off while you work on it. There’s nothing wrong with good management while you work on your and your dog’s training skills!

One of the best management methods for not getting dragged around while you train LLW involves utilizing a front clip (no pull) harness or a training device such as a Weiss Walkie leash/harness. While it is true that pressure collars such as prong or choke chains can sometimes accomplish the same short-term result (management), there are some notable concerns with the use of pressure collars, in particular for dogs that struggle with fear or aggression. To avoid potentially negative side effects and behavioral fall-out, I’d recommend avoiding these collars and instead using a front clip/no pull type of harness for management while you work on the training aspects of loose leash walking. For now – combine management (no-pull harness) with good training, and this will result in long term behavior change in your dog!

Remember, training a dog is fun, but it also takes patience and consistency!

If you are interested in taking advantage of the opportunity for a free “Fundamentals” training class with your Prison Pups N Pals graduate, or if you have any questions or concerns about your dog’s behavior, please contact the Animal Behavior Department at Halifax Humane Society, by calling (386) 274-4703 Ext 326.

And until we speak, enjoy your new family member, and happy training!