

# Adoption Resources

\*If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Adoption Department by phone: 410-235-8826 or by email: [adoptme@mdspca.org](mailto:adoptme@mdspca.org).



## Getting Your Newly Adopted Pet Use to a New Home

When you first bring your new pet home, it will need time to adjust to its new surroundings. The more in tune you are with your pet's needs and wants, the easier the transition will be.

While every pet is different, many go through similar experiences. The more familiar you are with these experiences, the easier the transition will be.

Living in a shelter is stressful for any animal; it's full of sights, sounds, smells and tastes that are strange to new arrivals. Many pets were used to having the run of the house and/or yard, but in a shelter are confined to a cage for much of the day.

Regardless of whether a pet has been removed from an unsafe situation or it has found itself in the shelter due to the death or relocation of its beloved owner, it will feel sad and scared. When you adopt a pet, you are providing it with a stable, loving home. But keep in mind that moving to your home will be another big change for your pet and will leave it feeling apprehensive and nervous.

What can you do to help facilitate your pet's transition to its new home?

### 1. GIVE YOUR NEW PET ITS OWN SPACE.

Whether it's a small crate or an entire room, your pet needs a quiet place to retreat from you, other people and any pets you may already have. Make their retreat comfortable by stocking it with treats, toys and perhaps a blanket. Remember, dogs often think of their crate as a den and find it soothing.

### 2. STIMULATE THEIR SENSES ONE AT A TIME.

Wait to invite friends and family over to meet your new dog or cat. Give pets time to get used to your family first, then introduce it to your other pets. Remember, animals have a powerful sense of smell, so allow your new pet ample time to sniff around your home and get accustomed to the smells there. Try to limit loud noises when you first bring your pet home and remember to put away items you do not want them to chew. It can be hard to guess which items dogs and cats might find tempting, so to keep your new pet safe, put potentially dangerous items out of reach until they become more relaxed and predictable.

### 3. INTRODUCE THEM TO YOUR OTHER PETS SLOWLY.

Keep your pets leashed when you first introduce them or put a barrier between them such as a gate or screen. This helps minimize injuries. Give your pets time to get used to each other. Don't force or rush their relationship — this could have unintended, long-lasting consequences.

### 4. KEEP YOUR PET ON A SCHEDULE.

While it can be fun to be spontaneous sometimes, schedules are comforting in new situations. A new pet is not unlike a new baby, and both find comfort in predictability. A new pet may associate the sound of your alarm clock going off with going outside to go to the bathroom, or the sound of the can opener with receiving food. Try to feed and exercise your pet on a regular schedule. Once they become accustomed to it, you may try slight deviations and introducing new activities. But take it slowly, so as not to overwhelm them.

### 5. START TRAINING IMMEDIATELY.

The sooner your animal knows how to behave, the happier both of you will be. One of the main reasons pet owners give for surrendering their animal is their inability to control them. Animals look to us for guidance and leadership. Stock your house with nutritious treats before you bring your new pet home and use them as rewards for good behavior. Your pet will quickly learn what is expected of it. Always refrain from punishing an animal, especially after the fact — they won't understand. Only use positive reinforcement. Reward your pet right away for good behavior so that they connect the two experiences.

A new pet's adjustment period typically lasts about two weeks, but every pet is different, so yours might take more or less time. Carefully observe your pet during this initial stage, and if they seem nervous, cut the lesson or activity short and allow them some quiet time.

Following these simple steps can help your new pet quickly become a happy, healthy member of the family.