

The First Weeks

*If you are unsure about what lies ahead of you, **here are the do's and don'ts** which might help you through the first weeks and to avoid bigger mistakes. Read them carefully. Better read them twice. And tell every family member as well!*

Have you ever been alone in a foreign country where everyone speaks a different language and sticks to funny rules? How overwhelming every little detail was? How confusing? How tiring? THAT is exactly how your new dog is feeling!

Collection Day

You must have the following:

- your dog's id tag with your name and phone number (the microchip won't read until registered)
- slip lead
- collar and lead
- harness
- crate for the car or a harness which can be attached to the seatbelt

When you get your dog, it is probably frightened and will bolt right away given the chance. The dog just lost its home and doesn't know all this is for its best. Think of him like a young horse prepared to dart away! No need to go to the toilet (the dog) – it will need to feel safe for that.

PLEASE use your slip lead and an ordinary lead when you collect your dog.

Put your dog right into the car and attach his id tag to him!

Unless you are on a very long journey try not to stop until you get home .

PLEASE DO NOT just let your dog out in the garden loose, we have no idea how high some of these dogs can jump, OR if last night a fox dug a hole ...

PLEASE keep your dog on a lead or some form of long line for a few days in the garden.

The dog will have no boundaries:

- if you leave a door open, it WILL go through it
- if you leave a window open, it WILL jump out of it
- if it can jump over it, it WILL

Do not feel in any rush to get your dog out on walks, be guided by your dog, if it's frightened give him time just to adjust to you, your home, your garden ... this is enough for him to be getting on with for now.

And PLEASE don't forget to register the microchip if your dog hasn't come over via a charity who may well have done it for you .. this is VERY important.

Meeting Resident Dogs

Go for a quiet walk with your rescue dog (double leaved) and let them meet in a quiet place. No real walk, just sniff and meet the other dog. Take your time and then bring both dogs back together.

Make make sure that both dogs don't have to be together for several weeks *alone* until they bonded.

Seperate both dogs from time to time so that both can calm down. A baby gate might help so that neither feels locked away and they still can see and hear the other one.

Seperate them during feeding times. Your new dog might have had to fight for food. When given treet, also only when seperated. This period might last a few weeks but don't give either dog a reason to hate the other.

Take away all toys of the resident dog until the dogs bond. Until then play with the resident dog and the toys seperately while the new dog gets a nice treet.

General Do's

Get your microchip updated in your country.

Leave a short lead on when you are at home, so you don't have to grab its collar. This might frighten him.

During the first week give the dog lots of space and regular periods of quiet times and no visitors.

If visitors come, ignore the dog. Wait till your dog wants to interact with your visitor. If your dog likes visitors, it will approach them in a friendly way. But even still, don't make a lot of fuzz. The first week is not the time for everyone to come over and meet your new dog.

Have them on a long lead in the garden. They might panic! Think they might have seen only the shelter in their whole life. For them it's like being thrown onto another planet.

Take your dog outside every two hours to go to the toilet. Every hour if it's a puppy. This will increase success rates and you can praise your dog.

Secure your dog on walks with *a harness and a lead plus a flat collar and a lead*. Maybe a slip lead as a back-up if something goes wrong.

Ignore the dog a bit – it is not used to attention and will find attention stressful.

Consider attending an obidience course with your dog. It helps bonding and creating an animal which behaves well in human society.

General Don'ts

Don't allow the dog to follow you everywhere around the house. It puts them

in place and also prevents separation anxiety.

Beds and sofas are no go's because it can instigate resource guarding. Once your dogs obeys, you might allow them to accompany you.

Don't give in to every attention demand by them. This is insecurity behavior and can lead to separation anxiety and owner possessiveness.

Though your dog may be a bit smelly, resist the temptation to bathe it immediatly. Wait until the dogs trusts you to touch him. Feet are very sensitive.

Don't take your dogs for walks during the first days. There is so much information and stress they need to get used to, it is just stress for them. They will be plain tired from getting used to their new enviornment.

As you never know what experience your dog had with colars, they might be terrified if you pull the lead. Practise in the garden first for the first days, then move to streets when you feel they know nothing bad is happening to them.

Don't let your dog off the lead for several weeks. Sometimes this takes much, much longer and with some you'll never be able to let them run free (This might also happen if you get a pedigree dog). Only, only if you are 100% certain that your dog will come back even in the case of some unexpexted distractions, you might give it a try. Maybe there is a high-fenced (2 m) property or a dog school to try first.

Don't risk the life of your dog!

What to expect for the first weeks

The dog will need time to settle in.

Assume that your dog does not belong to those few dogs that adjust with lightning speed.

There will be problems – so read the above again and again.

Boundaries, structures and consistencies make dogs feel safe and this is what they need now – not someone who wants to give them everything right now they never had (and not miss).

Important Points to remember

Get all the necessary equipment before the dog arrives.

Keep your (and everyone else's) behavior consistent.

From Day One leave the dog alone, starting for 5 to 10 minutes. Provide a safe place for that. That way the dog will learn it is normal that you are not there.

There will be problems. Get information about local dog trainers and schools before you get the dog. This way you know who you can call.

Possible Problems

- Resource guarding
- Separation Anxiety
- House soiling
- Demanding Attention
- Snatching at food
- Escaping
- Running off
- Fear of new people (growling / reactivity)
- Fear of other dogs (growling / reactivity)
- Counter surfing
- Bin Raiding
- Not liking a lead being put on
- Pulling on the lead or not wanting to move when the lead is on
- Stress behaviours (Chewing / Shredding)
- Digging

Equipment that will help

- Slip lead
- A long training line (15 – 30ft/5 -10m)
- Baby Gate(s)
- Harness
- Crate
- Plenty of tasty treats
- Treat bag

Equally importantly of course ENJOY ! These Greek dogs and cats are the most gorgeous souls ever and given time and patience will be the most amazing companions