

## Getting to know your new dog

**Congratulations!** You've adopted an adult dog from a rescue group or shelter. This is the beginning of a great adventure for you and your new pet. Here are some tips to help you navigate the first days, weeks, and months of your life with Spot or Daisy.

**Right now, you're probably excited** and hopeful as you bring your dog home. And you should be! No one will love you more than your rescued pet.

**Keep in mind**, though, that all new pets – especially fully grown pets that have been in a shelter or foster care – need time to adjust. Spot won't automatically know that he now has a forever home with you, so he may be anxious, frightened or over-excited. Daisy won't grasp the rules and habits of your home until she's been there a while and benefited from your direction. Spot and Daisy may have been house-trained in a previous home but may not generalize this behavior to a new place.

**All dogs – just like people** – need time and coaching to be their best. IT WILL GET BETTER! Be patient, think long-term, and remember the 3s.

### THE 3s OF ADOPTING AN ADULT DOG: What to expect

- **THREE DAYS: Your dog should start warming up to you.**

During the first three days, provide a quiet environment. Don't introduce your pet to all your friends and family at once. Keep to a regular schedule for eating, sleeping and walks. Offer a small treat when Spot does something desirable. Ignore bad behavior: yelling or touching may simply reinforce it. Coach any children in your home to be gentle and respectful with the dog; emphasize that Daisy is not a toy but a living being. Ask your dog to 'sit' before giving him his food bowl, opening doors and leashing up.

- **THREE WEEKS: Your dog is beginning to fit in.**

Daisy is learning the daily routine. This is when to reinforce good behaviors on a regular basis. Consistency and repetition are key. Don't worry if you feel frustrated or worried. Problems are bound to come up with new pets that are in situations they've never experienced before. Ask a training expert if you have specific concerns. You may want to sign up for a basic obedience class with a certified dog trainer.

- **THREE MONTHS: The dog is at home in your household.**

By this time, most dogs know they are "home." With a good behavior plan, the right training, patience, and – important! – a sense of humor, you and Spot or Daisy are on your way to a rewarding and loving life together.

**Remember: You are never done developing a relationship with your dog!**

#### Sources

Dr. Patricia McConnell : [www.patriciamccconnell.com](http://www.patriciamccconnell.com)

Petfinder.com: "Tips for the First 30 Days of Dog Adoption"

DogsOutLoud.com: "So you've brought home a new dog ... now what?"