



UNDERDOG
RESCUE

FOSTER GUIDE

March 2017



WELCOME! THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING TO BE A FOSTER HOME.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE AN UNDERDOG FOSTER FAMILY?

Fostering includes making room in your family for a new member, making time to take foster pets to adoption days and/or vet appointments, and making a safe and supportive environment for animals that may have had traumatic pasts. Beyond that, we've learned that our most successful foster families are those who understand the natural constraints of small volunteer-based organizations. We run our rescue as lean as we can to put every available resource into saving as many animals as we can. Help is always welcome and flexibility is enormously appreciated. Underdog Rescue can provide foster homes with food and crates for the animal to use during their stay. On average, our sponsored pets remain in our care for 1-5 months.



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FOSTER CARE AGREEMENT

PRINT NAME _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

DWELLING ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____

ALTERNATE PHONE _____

TERMS OF CONTRACT/CONSENT:

1. I hereby acknowledge my consent to receive any dog agreed upon by Underdog Rescue and Placement, Minnesota, Inc. and myself.
2. I understand that the animal(s) shall remain the sole property of Underdog Rescue and Placement, Minnesota, Inc., and must be returned to Underdog Rescue upon request.
3. I agree to return said animal(s) upon request or if I am no longer able to adequately care for them.
4. I agree to provide the animal(s) with good and loving care, including but not limited to food, water, shelter and medication when required. I also agree that I will not smoke inside my home or car. Furthermore, I understand it is my responsibility to maintain control and possession of all animals belonging to Underdog Rescue. If, while in my control, said animal is lost and irrevocably missing, harmed and/or harmed to the point of death, I will reimburse Underdog Rescue for the unrealized income of the animal's adoption fee.
5. I understand and acknowledge that I do not have any right or authority to keep or place foster animals in other homes or with other individuals, nor do I have the right to take into custody any animal on behalf of Underdog Rescue, unless receiving explicit permission from Underdog Rescue and Placement, Minnesota, Inc. to do so.
6. I agree to hold Underdog Rescue and Placement, Minnesota, Inc. harmless from any direct or consequential damages arising out of this foster care arrangement.
7. I agree that Underdog Rescue and Placement, Minnesota, Inc. requires at least 72 hours notice to find alternative care for the animal(s) in my care. However, all scheduled vacations require a one-week notice to Underdog Rescue for new foster care arrangements.
8. I understand and acknowledge that I must follow Underdog Rescue's vet care protocols with any foster dog in my home and if I choose to bring the animal(s) to a veterinarian of my choice prior to approval, I will be responsible for any associated costs.

SIGNATURE OF FOSTER CARE GIVER _____

SIGNATURE OF UNDERDOG RESCUE REPRESENTATIVE _____

PRINTED NAME OF UNDERDOG RESCUE REPRESENTATIVE _____

DATE _____



CARE:

To provide appropriate care of foster animal for the length of stay in your home.

FOOD:

Underdog will provide the proper food for your foster unless you can provide it yourself. If you choose to buy your own food, it must be approved, 4- or 5-star kibble or canned food, or raw food. You must notify Lacey at least one week in advance when you will need more food. Ideally we would like to coordinate this with an adoption event you will be attending.

TREATS:

Junk food treats should not be fed to your foster dog (i.e. Beggin' Stripes, Milk Bones, rawhides, etc.). Refer to page 8 for examples of appropriate treats. AGAIN – NO RAWHIDES!

SAFETY:

You must provide a safe environment for your foster pet. See pages 23–26 for tips and information.

PET BIOGRAPHIES:

It is extremely important to keep your pet's bio updated. Potential adopters want as much information as they can get about the temperament, training and endearing qualities of the pets. As the foster, you are the best source for this information. To update your foster dog's Petfinder bio, either email Lacey or fill out the online form below.

www.underdogrescuemn.com/foster-home-pet-profile-form/ Password: ISaveLives (case sensitive)

FOSTER UNTIL ADOPTION:

We hope that our foster families will commit to continuing to foster until the pet is adopted. Often foster families are the first stable and loving home for the pet. It is in the pet's best interest to build a stable relationship.

MOVING OR TEMP FOSTERING:

In the event that you are unable to continue fostering, we require at least 72 hours before moving an animal if things are not working. For scheduled vacations, we need 7 days notice if the animal needs another foster home while you are away.

Please email lacey@underdogrescuemn.com or post in the Facebook foster group when your foster needs a temporary home.

ADOPTION EVENTS & MEET AND GREETES:

We ask that foster homes be available for routine vet visits and adoption events, including one-on-one meet and greets. These individual meet and greets should be scheduled within 3 days of the request from the adoption coordinator.

Please visit our events page on our website to find out where and when the adoption event will take place:

www.underdogrescuemn.com/events

Each foster family needs to commit to attend at least two adoption events each month as these are the best opportunities for the dog to potentially find forever homes. If there is a month where you cannot commit to two events, contact your assigned Foster Mentor to discuss alternate ways to get your foster to the events. If your foster has not been vetted yet, please do not bring him/her to events.



SOCIALIZING:

We ask that you make every effort to continue socializing your foster pet. Some ways that you can ensure good socialization is to bring your foster dog on daily walks, to dog parks, and shopping in pet-friendly businesses.

MEDICAL CONCERNS:

If your foster pet becomes injured or ill, all vet work must be approved by Shannon prior to going to the vet. Do not take your pet to the vet without permission or you may be responsible for the costs.

In the event of a true medical emergency, text “911” to both Shannon and Lacey. Call Shannon first; if she doesn’t answer, then call Lacey. **Shannon McKenzie:** 952-239-9595 | **Lacey Klucas:** 651-366-2150

Non-Emergency Medical Care: Email or call Lacey

ADOPTING YOUR FOSTER:

It is possible you might fall in love with your foster and decide to adopt, and that’s OK. If you want to adopt your foster, you must submit an application and will pay the full adoption fee. You will not receive preference over other approved applications already received.

GROOMING:

Depending on the breed of your foster dog, regular grooming may be necessary. Daily/weekly brushing is helpful to avoid matting and also helps your foster learn to trust you. Do not cut your foster dog’s hair yourself unless given permission to do so. If your foster needs to be professionally groomed, you can either take the dog to your own groomer or schedule a time with one of our grooming partners (email Lacey or find the list in the Facebook foster group photo albums).

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED TO FOSTER

We rely on the generosity of our fosters to provide the comfort items and basic supplies that every pet needs and deserves. We cannot reimburse you for these items, but save your receipts - they may be tax-deductible.

- Beds, Blankets, Towels
- Bowls (Water and Food)
- Brushes
- Nature’s Miracle
- Shampoo
- Nail Clippers
- Paper Towels

UNDERDOG GEAR:

We encourage our volunteers to show support by wearing Underdog Rescue gear. T-shirts and sweatshirts can be purchased at certain adoption events.

FACEBOOK:

If you have a Facebook account we can add you to our foster volunteers group. You can use this to connect with other volunteers. We encourage our volunteers to ask questions and share any tips or success stories they may have. Request to join the group here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/517446851631783>



FOOD & CRATES:

Underdog Rescue will provide food and crates for the animal to use during their stay if you are unable to provide your own.

PLACEMENT:

Underdog Rescue will work hard to find permanent placements for pets in a timely manner.

BEHAVIORAL ISSUES:

We will make every effort to resolve behavioral issues as deemed necessary by Underdog Rescue staff.

SUPPORT:

We urge foster homes to connect with other volunteers for support and advice. Our Facebook group is a great place to do that. Request to join the group here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/517446851631783>

ADOPTION COORDINATORS

Adoption coordinators will help with all things related to an adoption.

- Communicating with Directors
- Reviewing and contacting applicants that apply online
- Setting up home visits and sending out reference checks
- Coordinating plans for finalizing adoptions

FOSTER MENTORS

Foster mentors are the point of contact for any questions about your foster dog and any other fostering needs. Mentors can help make sure your foster's bio is posted, that the foster dog is attending events, and that photos are posted right away. They can also help with any other questions, including training, food, behaviors, etc.

CONTACT INFORMATION

LACEY KLUCAS: lacey@underdogrescuemn.com | 651-366-2150

Contact Lacey regarding any foster pet needs, such as food & supplies and medical concerns.

SHANNON MCKENZIE: underdogrescue@petml.com | 952-239-9595

Contact Shannon for emergencies.

EMILY BAIRD: emily@underdogrescuemn.com | 612-718-0365

LAURA FLAHERTY: laura@underdogrescuemn.com | 763-242-3052

Underdog Rescue hours:

9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday

10 a.m. until 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday

Response time may be up to 48 hours on non-urgent issues.



ACCEPTABLE FOOD BRANDS & TREATS

PLEASE READ THE INGREDIENTS! www.dogfoodadvisor.com/best-dog-foods/best-dry-dog-foods

GOOD FOOD BRANDS

- Orijen/Arcana
- Raw Bistro
- Woody's Pet Food Deli
- Bravo!
- Primal
- Fromm
- Zignature
- Earthborn Holistic
- NOW Fresh
- Nature's Variety
- Canidae
- Lotus
- Cocolicious (canned only)

*Note that this list is not all inclusive. Ask us if you have questions

GOOD TREATS

- Recreational raw bones: marrow bones, knuckle bones, feet
- Bully sticks, pizzles, flossies
- Zukes
- Honest Kitchen
- Bravo!
- Dehydrated liver and lung treats
- Quality grain-free kibble
- Apples, carrots, bananas, peas, etc.

THINGS TO AVOID!

- Rawhide of any kind
- Anything with:
 - * Corn, wheat, or soy
 - * Preserved with BHT or BHA
 - * By-products of any kind
 - * Meat and bone meal
 - * Artificial colors and flavors
 - * Sweeteners like high fructose corn syrup
- Junk food treats such as Beggin' Strips or Milk Bones
- Any food on www.dogfoodadvisor.com that rates below 4 stars



All dogs and puppies have been thoroughly evaluated for temperament, activity level, and medical soundness to the best of our ability at the time of adoption. Often dogs' personalities will change as they adjust in foster/adoptive homes. Adult dogs are vet checked, up-to-date with immunizations, microchipped, heartworm tested and spayed/neutered prior to placement. Puppies are vet checked and up-to-date on age appropriate immunizations. Most puppies are adopted intact with a spay/neuter certificate which is included in their adoption fee, and if not already microchipped will receive one when they are altered.

Adoption Fees typically start at \$395 and range up to \$595 or more

- These fees are based on incurred vet work, and keep in mind the long-term financial needs of particular breeds.
- Completing an application does not guarantee a hold on the dog.
- We will only place dogs in homes within 60 miles of Minneapolis, MN
- We will not place our animals in homes with intact animals.
- A home visit is required for all dogs.

ADOPTION PROCESS FOR DOGS

Potential adopters may apply for your foster after meeting him at an adoption event or seeing his listing online. The more events your foster attends, the better his chances of being adopted.

The Adoption Coordinator (AC) for your foster will review the application and contact you if it is approved. If the applicant has not met your foster yet, the AC will either ask you to set up a one-on-one meeting, or if your foster is scheduled for an adoption event in the next few days, may let you know to expect to meet the applicant at the event. One-on-one meetings need to be scheduled within three days.

The AC can give you information about the application (e.g., if they have kids or other dogs). You should make sure the AC knows if there are particular requirements for your foster (e.g., he should only be placed in a home with other dogs). If you schedule a one-on-one meeting, do so wherever you feel most comfortable – in your home, the applicant's home, or at a neutral location, like a pet store or dog park. You might also want to consider the environment that will be least stressful for your foster.

After the meet and greet, the AC will welcome feedback from you about the meeting. If everything went well and the applicant wants to move forward, the AC will schedule a home visit and request reference checks. The AC may determine that your foster should attend the home visit and will coordinate that with you. In some cases, the AC may plan to complete the adoption at the time of the home visit. If not, and the home visit is approved, the AC will contact you to schedule a time to complete the adoption and transfer your foster to his new family.

The AC must be included on all email communication with potential adopters. If you need to communicate by phone, please keep the AC updated on what you've discussed.



Foster volunteers are required to attend a minimum of 2 adoption events per month. Christine (Christine@underdogrescuemn.com) will email active fosters monthly with a list of upcoming events. Fosters should reply to her with which two (minimum) events their dogs will be attending. It is very important to get these events posted to the dogs' profiles in advance so that adopters know which dogs will be at events.

Please visit our events page on our website to find out where and when the adoption event will take place:

www.underdogrescuemn.com/events

ADOPTION EVENT RULES:

- You must attend at least **2** adoption events each month. Please check the website for current times and locations.
- Please do not bring your own pets to an adoption event. They are for foster dogs only.
- Whenever possible, please arrive 30 minutes prior to the event start in order to help set up and get your pet ready to meet potential adopters. While at the event, please help out as needed with cleaning up accidents, greeting visitors, and keeping dogs safe. If you are able, we always welcome help cleaning up after the event.
- We request that you stay at the event with your foster as often as you can. Adoption events are very busy and we can use everyone's help. There's no better person to talk to potential adopters about your foster than you. If you need to leave during the event, please make sure another volunteer has any helpful information about your foster. You must return promptly at the end of the event. We often need to be done by a specific time.
- If someone is interested in walking a dog, a volunteer must accompany them, or we need collateral (a driver's license) to hold until the dog is safely returned. A volunteer needs to check that the harness and leash are secure before the dog leaves the adoption area. In some adoption event locations, we are limited to walking dogs outdoors only, so be sure you know whether or not it is acceptable to bring a foster into the main store area. Only adults may walk dogs. Children need parental supervision when interacting with dogs.
- Keep in mind that not all dogs like other dogs. Please keep your foster on a close leash when entering an event. Make sure they respect other dogs' special needs. If you have a dog that does not like other dogs please inform others to minimize problems. Retractable (flexi-) leashes are not allowed.
- People love to ask lots of questions at adoption events. It is so helpful to have volunteers there to help, but if you don't know an answer, please don't guess. There are usually several Adoption Coordinators there who can help answer the question.



Although fostering is one of the most rewarding things you will ever do to help save animals, it does not come without risks. This section will hopefully give you some ideas of what types of risks to expect while fostering through Underdog Rescue.

FALLING IN LOVE

This is one of the greatest fears of many new fosters. New foster applicants often say, “but how do you not fall in love with every one of them?” The answer is different for everyone and each foster deals with it in his/her own way. One good tip of advice is to always remember, as each foster comes and goes, you were there to bridge that gap between unwanted and homeless to loved and forever home! It’s an amazing feeling that will never go away and the more times you can foster, the more lives can be saved.

HEALTH/INJURY RISKS TO RESIDENT PETS

This risk cannot and should not be over looked. Most fosters have pets of their own, as the love for animals brought them to fostering. They love their pets as their children and of course want no harm to come to them. We do our very best to ensure that all dogs going into foster homes are free of diseases that would be contagious to other animals. It is however, not guaranteed, as illnesses are sometimes unpredictable. Most of our rescued pets come from lives of suffering and awful living conditions. Many have traveled many miles to find their final home here in Minnesota. Some may bring with them parasites, kennel cough, and other health issues. With our experience rescued pets also can hide their illnesses VERY well. They have learned survival techniques and know that the weakest do not make it. Some dogs also do not come into rescue with up-to-date vaccines. We do our best to make sure they are vaccinated prior to being placed in a foster home. If this is a concern of yours, please be sure to confirm vaccination prior to placement in your home. In most cases, if your pet is current on vaccines/titers, there is no risk. Even with multiple deworming, parasites can take a long time to overcome in a previously unhealthy puppy mill dog. In the meantime, it is always a best practice to pick up and dispose of feces immediately, in the yard as well as your home. Lastly, dogs are pack animals. In most cases it takes time for new dogs to fit into the current household pack. New foster dogs should not be left unsupervised with resident dogs until a good pack dynamic is achieved. Please read the section on how to introduce new dogs to your household pets for a smooth transition.

RISKS TO PEOPLE

We rescue many, many fearful dogs from puppy mills. Please always take extra caution when getting to know your foster dog, especially around children and often men. Many will fear bite as they do not know how else to protect themselves from what they fear. Learn to read dog body language; study it and constantly observe.

DAMAGE TO YOUR HOME

As most pet owners should know, pets make messes and can damage things. Most of our dogs are not potty trained when entering into a foster home for the first time. They have lived in cages for their whole lives and need you to teach them where they should go potty. Many do not know what objects like electrical cords, shoes, clothes, or kids toys are and may start to explore once they are comfortable. Exploring can lead to damage to household items and injury to themselves so we recommend you always keep a close eye on your foster dog especially while it is learning about life in a real home.



To keep this as simple as possible, this handout will outline how Underdog Rescue views canine nutrition, but much of this information can be applied to feline nutrition in most circumstances.

Nutrition is a vital part of raising a healthy dog. Nutrition feeds the animal's body with essential minerals and elements that give it the energy to live life to the fullest. "You are what you eat," so let's make it good!

Many commercial products available today have many species **inappropriate** ingredients such as meat by-products, corn, wheat, soy, color dyes, preservatives, spray-on rancid fat, and even high fructose corn syrup. Most pets fed an inappropriate diet will not suffer from the effects right away; they will most likely survive, but will they THRIVE? The signs and symptoms to eating a low quality diet may be minor at first; maybe some dry, flaky skin, weight gain or recurring diarrhea that goes away with conventional treatment. Eventually, most inappropriately fed pets will develop a disease, be it cancer, diabetes, irritable bowel disease, chronic allergies or kidney disease, etc.

Dr. Karen Becker has a very good video on how to choose an appropriate food for your pet.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTWHxvjl_as (part 1)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=zdDPi-1Yjy0 (part 2)

To help you choose an appropriate commercially-prepared food, please visit Dog Food Advisor www.dogfoodadvisor.com. From this website we recommend foods that are rated with 4 or 5 stars. Make sure to **always read ingredients** before you buy something that your dog is going to consume. Remember that ingredients are listed in order of weight. Look for foods with at least two or three of the first five ingredients being from a protein source with the number one ingredient being a protein source.

For example: "Ingredients: Bison, chicken, chicken meal, peas, pea flour" (chicken meal is considered a meat concentrate and contains nearly 300% more protein than fresh chicken). Also be sure to look at the carbohydrate sources to avoid any inappropriate foods like corn or soy. Watch the video above (part 2) for great details on reading pet labels.

All new adopters **must** agree to feed a premium, commercially-prepared food or balanced homemade raw or cooked diet prior to adoption. No grocery store brands are acceptable; Science Diet, Iams, Eukanuba, Pedigree, Beneful and Purina brands are on the list of unacceptable brands.



Diet decisions are not a matter of right or wrong. If you understand what is ideal, you can then create a feeding program that will help move your pet closer to the healthiest diet options. In general, the more real food your dogs and cats eat, the healthier they will become.

From Dr. Marty Goldstein www.drmarty.com/what-should-i-feed-my-pet-for-best-health/

Commercial dog and cat foods come in a dizzying array of shapes, colors, textures, and qualities. We have attempted to compile a list of recommended foods in terms of their wholesomeness, lack of additives, high digestibility, and availability. While this list cannot be all-inclusive it is meant as a starting point for selecting a quality food.

For animals with specific health issues this selection should be discussed with your veterinarian.

Our opinion is that the ideal diet for your pet is a fresh, well-balanced, home-prepared diet. While this is not a feasible option for everyone and is not without a few contraindications, if you are interested in a home-prepared diet you should discuss the options with a veterinarian who is both open to and has experience with these diets.

RAW DIETS:

There are a variety of commercially available preparations of raw meat, bone, fruits, and vegetables, ground into patties or cubes and frozen. These approximate the quality of a home made food and are well balanced. Recommended: Woody's Pet Food Deli, Raw Bistro, Primal, Bravo!, Stella & Chewy's, Vital Essentials, Nature's Variety.

FREEZE-DRIED MIXES:

Recommended: Bravo!, Sojos, Chewy's, Primal

CANNED AND DRY FOODS:

Recommended: Orijen, Acana, Fromm, Zignature, Earthborn Holistic, Cocolicious (canned only)



When you bring home your new family members, you naturally want to shower them with love and affection. You pledge to give them the best food and give them many treats. Although this can certainly feel like love, you may also be putting your new dog at risk for obesity and an unhappy life.

Obesity can cause many serious health problems in pets of any age. Too much weight stresses bones and joints, strains the heart and other internal organs, crowds the lungs, and turns a simple walk around the block into a major chore. In fact, overweight dogs suffer much the same risks and consequences as overweight humans.

Finding and maintaining your dog's ideal weight can significantly extend your pet's life. Did you know that dogs that maintained a healthy weight lived 1.8 years longer than their overweight litter mates? That's a bonus of nearly 2 extra years of life... just for keeping your dog close to his ideal body weight!

Sometimes it's hard to read the charts stating how much food your dog should be consuming. Please remember this is just a guideline. Just as there are weight ranges for humans, dogs also have weight ranges. You may need to adjust the amount of food given depending on your dog's activity level.

The best way to figure out a healthy weight is to look at your dog. Does he have a waist when viewed from above? Is the abdomen raised, and not sagging, when viewed from the side? Feel your dog. In general, you should be able to easily feel the ribs, but not be able to see them, depending on the breed. Check out the link below for a visual guide.

www.dummies.com/pets/dogs/how-to-evaluate-your-dogs-weight/

If you still want to treat your dog, that's great! Just remember to adjust his food intake at meals or try some tasty low calorie treats. Many dogs enjoy apples, blueberries, watermelon, green beans, carrots, lettuce, squash and sweet potatoes, just to name a few.

SOURCES:

dogfoodadvisor.com

Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, Vol. 220 No. 9, May 1, 2002, pp. 1315-1320

avmajournals.avma.org/doi/abs/10.2460/javma.2002.220.1315

petmd.com



- **Bone Adventure:** 612-920-2201, 5045 France Ave. S. www.boneadventure.com
- **Calhoun Pet Supply:** 612-824-1094 corner of 36th and Bryant Ave. S. <http://tinyurl.com/p9zxd3e>
- **Chuck and Don's Pet Food Outlet:** 612-926-8161 chuckanddons.com
- **Bentley's Pet Stuff:** 763-476-7372 1115 Vicksburg Lane N, Plymouth www.petstuff.com
- **Linden Hill's Natural Home Store:** 612-279-2479, 2822 West 43rd (Mpls) www.lindenhills.coop
- **Lulu and Luigi:** 952-929-1200, 3699 Joppa Ave (St. Louis Park); 651-287-2030, 2168 3rd St (White Bear Lake); 952-249-0330, 812 Lake St N (Wayzata) www.luluandluigi.com
- **Mama Schrof's Raw Diet:** www.rawdogfoodmn.com
- **Suburban Feed and Supply:** 952-935-2700 1404 Main St (Hopkins) <http://tinyurl.com/q4a4krn>
- **Twin Cities Natural Food Coops** (many)
- **Urban Tails :** 612-879-0709, 2106 Lyndale Ave S (Minneapolis) www.urbantailspet.com
- **Woody's Pet Food Deli:** 612-208-0335 3008 W 50th (Mpls) www.woodyspetdeli.com

To learn how to make/prepare raw foods yourself, contact Lacey at lacey@underdogrescuemn.com



Ideally, first time meetings should occur on neutral territory. However, well-socialized dogs, like puppy mill dogs that have spent their entire lives in close contact with other dogs, are often just fine meeting almost anywhere.

DOGS TO DOGS

The number one rule when bringing a new dog into a household that already has dogs is to do it gradually. The worst mistake people can make when adding a new pack member is to just bring the dog into the house. To the dogs that were already there, this is an intrusion on their territory by a stranger. To the new dog, being thrust into an unknown environment leaves it without any rules to follow or boundaries to respect.

If there is any concern about the dogs’ personalities it is usually good to have them meet by going on a walk. At the start of this walk, you will take the lead with your existing dogs, while your friend or family member follows behind with the new dog. After a while, it’s time to drop back and let your original dog sniff the new dog’s rear, but don’t let them meet face-to-face yet, as that can lead to fights. Resume the walk with the original dog in front, and then let the new dog have a sniff. Gradually, you can bring the entire pack together, with the dogs walking on the outside and the humans in-between. When they are in a calm state and walking together without incident, then it’s time to bring the pack home. The one essential difference with multiple dogs is that your original dogs enter the home first with you, and then you bring the new dog in. This allows your original dogs to “invite” their new pack member into the territory.

THE FIRST COUPLE OF WEEKS AT HOME

It’s crucial to avoid squabbles during the early stages of your dogs’ new relationship. Pick up all toys, chews, food bowls and your current dog’s favorite items. When dogs are first forming a relationship, these things can cause rivalry. These items can be reintroduced after a couple of weeks, once the dogs have started to develop a good relationship. Give each dog his own water and food bowls, bed and toys. For the first few weeks, only give the dogs toys or chews when they’re separated in their crates or confinement areas. Feed the dogs in completely separate areas. Pick up bowls when feeding time is over, as some dogs will compete over bowls that recently contained food. Keep the dogs’ playtime and interactions brief to avoid overstimulation and overarousal, which can lead to fighting.

Confine the dogs in separate areas of your home whenever you’re away or can’t supervise their interactions. Give your new dog his own confinement area. When the dogs are separated, it might be a good idea to let them get to know each other through a barrier, like a baby gate. Your new dog should be gated in his confinement area, and your current dog should be free to move around and visit when he wants to. Finally, once your dogs have become a pack, it is important that you let them establish the hierarchy among themselves, with you and the other humans in the house as the pack leaders, of course. It can be a natural tendency for us to show favor to the dogs that have been in the pack longer and try to make them the dominant dogs. However, dogs don’t work this way, and if you try to force a submissive dog into a dominant position, it will make the submissive dog very anxious and insecure, while making the dominant dog resentful. Your new pack will let you know which dog is dominant and which one is submissive (or they will take equal positions on their own), and they will be happier for it if you allow them to make this one rule for themselves. **Remember: Work with Mother Nature, not against her.**

www.bestfriends.org/resources/introducing-dogs-each-other

www.humanesociety.org/animals/dogs/tips/introducing_new_dog.html



DOGS TO CATS

Many dogs and cats get along very well, however, keep in mind that dogs and cats, like people, need time to get to know each other. If they've never seen each other before, they probably won't be instant friends. Since cats take awhile to accept new cats, your cat might not accept a new dog as quickly as you'd like. It might take years for a trusting, mutually agreeable relationship to develop between a cat and dog that live together. Across a few days, rotate which animal has freedom and which is confined to allow each animal plenty of time to investigate the other one's scent. Sometimes the dog should be confined to a crate or another room (or taken to another location if he can't be left alone) to allow the cat time to roam free and investigate the smell of the dog. When no one is home, the dog or cat must always be securely confined so unsupervised interactions are not possible. Once the dog is calm (or at least not obsessed with the cat) and the cat is calm, eating and using the litter box normally, you allow both animals to be in the same room at the same time, but keep the dog securely leashed. Continue with this type of introduction until the dog is calm and ignores the cat, and the cat is calm, eating and using the litter box normally. Continue indefinitely until both the dog and cat seem happy and relaxed around each other. Unsupervised time together can occur after the cat and dog have been supervised around each other for a significant period of time (a month or so) and you are positive they will not hurt each other.

www.bestfriends.org/resources/how-introduce-dog-cat

www.americanhumane.org/animals/adoption-pet-care/dog-behavior/introducing-dogs-to-cats.html



Even if the dog is house-trained, or making good progress, they will regress. We do not know how long the adjustment period will take. It really depends on the animal. More importantly, it depends on your ability to maintain structure and routine. Watch your pet for cues. The more opportunity they have to do the right thing, the fewer accidents they will have in your home. We suggest that in the first couple of days/weeks in your home, your new pet be considered a puppy. Use the crate as a way to encourage proper potty habits. Rotation and routine are vitally important.

THIS IS ONE EXAMPLE OF ROTATION & ROUTINE PROCEDURE FOR A DOG IN THE FIRST COUPLE DAYS

Get up in the morning, take the dog from its kennel and go immediately outside. You should physically go with the dog (even if you have a fence), and reward the dog for pottying outside (something really tasty). If your dog has gone potty successfully (typically, only urination, but provide extra time for possible defecation), then he has earned time out of his crate (close doors so access to all areas to your home is limited). This is when you may move forward with getting ready for work; however, if the pet will be unsupervised (i.e. when you are in the shower) we suggest re-kenneling.

After you have fed your dog breakfast, you will take the dog back outside. Reward success! Again, free time until you have to leave the house for work. We suggest that all dogs be crated or confined when you are away from home. This is the safest option from both you and your new pet.

If you work from home, or it is a weekend, a successful potty outside earns the dog 2-3 hours of kennel-free time. Set a timer or alarm. When the time comes, take your pet outside for a potty break. Reward success, and more free time in the house! If the dog didn't go, then it is time for the crate. Depending on the breed (small breeds cannot hold it for more than 6-7 hrs), crate time may vary. Start with an hour confined. Repeat the potty break procedure. Again, if successful = free time; no success = crate time.

This continues at all times when you are home. Make sure you are rewarding all successes promptly, and not correcting mistakes when not done in your view.

During the adjustment period (up to several months), we suggest that your new dog sleep in a closed kennel at night. You may reevaluate this once you know that your dog is potty-trained, and when routines and rules have been well established.

If you have a small breed dog, we suggest a confined area rather than a crate if you are away for 8 hrs or more. In this confined area, you will need to provide a potty pad. You will resume with the crate training when you are home. Be aware, some toy breed dogs never become outdoor potty trained. They all can become potty pad trained. If this is something you cannot be OK with, then perhaps a toy breed is not the right fit for you.

YOUR PUPPY MILL DOG MAY NEED TO LEARN:

- How nice it is to feel clean
- How to use potty pads
- That the great outdoors isn't so scary
- How to achieve house-training success



POTTY TRAINING: TIPS

FOCUS ON THE FOLLOWING:

- Confinement
- Strict supervision
- Frequent trips to the bathroom area
- Rewards for eliminating in the right place
- Interrupting mistakes

PROPER CONFINEMENT

Create a confinement area - a small, comfy place where your dog will feel safe. In addition to providing comfort, a small confinement area can be a useful training tool.

USING A CRATE

A crate may be an effective short-term tool for house training a new dog. Most dogs confined to a small area will naturally try not to eliminate because they don't want to soil in the place where they sleep. So putting your dog in a crate for short period of time (four hours or less) can prevent him from eliminating. Then, when you let him out of the crate, you can take him outside and reward him for relieving himself in the right spot.

Wire crates usually collapse for easy storage and portability, and they provide more ventilation than plastic ones. Plastic crates aren't as portable, but they're often ideal for fearful dogs. A plastic crate seems especially den-like, which may make your dog feel safer and more secure when he's inside. In addition, if you need to take your dog out of his plastic crate, you can simply remove the top and lift him out, sparing him the stress of being dragged out through a crate door. Some stores also sell soft crates made of mesh. Although they provide privacy for dogs and are the most portable, they aren't very durable. Some dogs chew through them and escape.

Although crate training can be great for many dogs, it might not be appropriate for dogs who came from puppy mills. Your dog was probably forced to sleep in his own excrement at the puppy mill, so, unlike normal dogs, he might not have the same reluctance to soil his sleeping area. If he doesn't mind sitting in his own mess, you may need to use a larger confinement area instead.

CREATING A LARGER CONFINEMENT AREA

If you need to leave your dog alone for more than four hours, if crate training is not an option, or if your dog is too fearful to go outside, you'll need to create a long-term confinement area. A kitchen with a linoleum floor, a small laundry room, or a bathroom works well for this purpose. You can use a baby gate or an exercise pen to block the doorway to the room and keep your dog safely confined. The room should contain a crate with a bed inside (leave the crate door open), toys and a water bowl. Create a bathroom area by placing a potty pad or newspapers on the side of the room furthest from where you've placed your dog's bed, food and water. At first, you may need to cover the entire floor with the pads or paper. When your dog begins to use just one corner of the room, you can gradually remove the unused papers, making the potty area smaller. When you aren't at home or can't closely supervise your dog, you must keep him in his crate or long-term confinement area to prevent mistakes. The more mistakes your dog makes, the harder it will be to successfully house train him.



NIGHTTIME CONFINEMENT

Let your dog sleep beside your bed so that he won't be lonely and you can hear him cry if he needs to eliminate during the night. He may feel most comfortable in a small place that reminds him of his former home, so it might be best to put him in a small, soft crate on or beside your bed.

STRICT SUPERVISION

Don't let your new untrained dog roam the house unsupervised. If you do, he'll probably relieve himself somewhere when you're not looking, and that spot may become his new potty area! When you're at home, keep your dog in his confinement area with a food-puzzle toy to keep him busy. Alternatively, you can try "umbilical cording." If he's brave enough to walk around the house, keep your dog with you on a leash attached to your belt. (You'll need to slowly get him used to wearing a harness and leash before you try umbilical cording.)

FREQUENT TRIPS TO THE BATHROOM AREA

Take your dog outside or to his indoor potty area every couple of hours. He'll likely need to eliminate immediately after meals, right after waking up and right after a bout of exercise or play. When you take your dog to the right spot, wait three minutes for him to relieve himself. If he doesn't eliminate, go back inside, and place him in his confinement area for 15 minutes. Then take him outside to try again.

It might help to keep a record of when your dog eliminates so that you start to see his pattern. If you figure out when your dog will probably need to relieve himself, you'll be able to take him out at appropriate times.

REWARDS FOR ELIMINATING IN THE RIGHT PLACE

When your dog eliminates in the right place, always praise him softly and give him a few delicious treats. Use something he doesn't get at other times, like small pieces of cheese, chicken or hot dog. You'll achieve success faster if you make it clear that eliminating in the right place pays off.

INTERRUPTING MISTAKES

Again, never leave your dog unsupervised unless he's in his crate or confinement area. Keep a close eye on him, and respond to any pre-potty behavior that you see—like sniffing, circling, pacing and walking with stiff back legs—by taking him outside fast. If you see your dog start to relieve himself inside, quickly but calmly lead or carry him to the right spot. If he finishes there, praise him enthusiastically.

HOW TO RESPOND TO MISTAKES AFTER THEY HAPPEN

If you don't catch your dog in the act but find an accident after it happens, don't punish him in any way. He can't connect punishment with something he did hours or even minutes ago. Scolding or rubbing his nose in his waste will only stress or frighten him. Instead, just clean up the mess and make a mental note to supervise more carefully in the future. Be sure to use an enzymatic cleanser designed for cleaning pet urine and feces. You can find them at most major pet stores. Using an appropriate cleaner will minimize odors that might attract your dog back to the same spot to eliminate again.

Don't be surprised if your dog has an accident and then lies down in his own mess, especially if you keep him in a crate. Although it may seem repulsive to you, he was forced to do that at the puppy mill, so it seems completely normal to him. As soon as possible after the accident, thoroughly clean him up. Former puppy mill dogs need to get used to the feeling of being clean. They'll eventually learn to like it! If a full-on bath is too traumatizing at first, use a mild puppy shampoo to spot-clean, or try using a dry shampoo or wipes sold at pet stores.



Bringing your foster dog or newly adopted dog home for the first time can be stressful for both you, the new dog, and any pets already living in your home. Take things slowly and try to be as relaxed as possible. Even picking the dog off the ground can be a scary thing for a puppy mill rescue dog. We recommend paying very close attention to the dog's reactions whenever it is necessary to pick up the dog as to avoid it jumping from your arms; keep a firm but gentle hold at all times. Also sit close to the ground when holding the dog whenever it is possible.

CAR SAFETY

Dogs should travel in your car in a crate (best option for small dogs) or strapped in a dog safe seatbelt and should never ride in the front seat of a vehicle. First, car accidents are unpredictable, even if you are a safe driver someone around you may not be. Second, when you open your car door to get your dog out of the car it might jump out of the car and either injure itself or run away. Third, it keeps the dog from distracting you while you are driving.

OUTDOOR SAFETY

Ideally dogs should be transported in and out of buildings either on leash or carried in a crate. We highly recommend crate transporting for any dog small enough to carry as this prevents anything bad from happening (be sure the crate is sturdy and securely latched and carry by the bottom of the crate if necessary). Something as simple as a car door shutting can startle your dog enough to have them leap out of your arms unexpectedly. Keep your dog leashed at all times when not in a securely fenced yard. If your dog is fearful, as many puppy mill dogs are, we recommend keeping them leashed until the dog trusts you, even in a fenced yard. There is nothing more stressful than letting your new dog go in your fenced yard and then it being too scared to let you pick it up to bring it back inside. A leashed dog is much easier to catch even if you let the dog walk around with a leash attached to it without holding the other end. We also recommend keeping a leash attached to your dog in your home until your dog can trust you for the same reason stated above. Using a tie-out can be very scary for a dog that has never even seen a leash. If you do not have a fenced yard, we recommend waiting for your foster dog to completely trust you before placing on a tie-out, and even then, dogs should always be supervised when on a tie-out, especially easily startled dogs like puppy mill rescue dogs.

INDOOR SAFETY

Many puppy mill dogs do not have the experience of how to safely jump down off of beds or furniture. They lack muscle/bone integrity and balance, which causes them not to be able to land safely. We have had several foster dogs break their legs simply from jumping off of a couch. A good rule of thumb is if they can't or don't get up on something by themselves, do not put them up there. Initially your dog might not know what to do with toys but the time may come when they start to explore around your house to find things to chew on as they become more comfortable. Be sure to keep all power cords out of reach, garbage cans should be secured, small clothing like socks and underwear should be kept out of reach, etc. Also be sure to keep them a safe distance from hot objects such as your oven or fire place as they have never been exposed to these things and could unknowingly touch it and get burned.



ESCAPE ARTISTS!

Canines are naturally curious creatures at the best of times – a door opens, and they’re going to want to get to the other side. It’s just common sense to remind family members to be very careful going in and out so that your new mill survivor doesn’t slip past and get outside unsupervised.

However, there is also the possibility of your mill dog suddenly and unexpectedly suffering a panic attack from any of the new, strange, and scary things inside your home, and his instinct will be to flee. He may race directly to his crate or “safe place,” but he also may scoot out any door that is ajar, claw through a window screen, or, in rare, extreme cases, hurl himself through plate glass.

Even if he is in his own secure backyard, the sound of thunder, a firecracker, a car with a loud muffler or stereo, a neighbor child on a skateboard, or something as innocuous as a large bird shadow, can send him into blind, frantic flight. He might go over a fence, under a fence, through a fence, or even disappear under a deck or storage unit when your back is turned. And once he gets there, chances are he’s going to be too scared to come to you, even if he wants to.

Vigilance is the key – get down on dog level and try to see your home and yard from his perspective. Block off obvious escape routes; imaginatively-placed baby gates can add one more level of security inside the home. Outside, be sure to block off any place that your dog can go under a fence, triple-check that the fence is secure all around and the gate latches properly, and remove anything the dog may be able to jump up on to go over the fence. Then, when your mill survivor is outside, SUPERVISE him constantly for the first few weeks (if the dog shows any inclination to seek out escape routes, even longer).

Accidents happen, and dogs do get out of their homes and yards. If your mill survivor becomes lost, don’t panic. He needs you to be calm and methodical about getting him back. Immediately contact Underdog Rescue for advice, assistance and resources. Tell anyone you have helping you search also to be calm, call the dog’s name confidently and in a happy voice, and don’t try to approach the dog him/herself.

Studies show that timid dogs do not wander far from their homes. They will seek shelter under bushes, shrubs or porches; so when you are searching for them, look close and look low. Be imaginative. One mill dog escaped her foster home and was found days later within two blocks, holed up in a clump of shrubbery. Her foster mom had probably walked past her a dozen times. She was glimpsed snatching up food that a neighbor left out for her, but she would not allow anyone to approach her, not even her foster mom. This is typical; no matter how much the escapee likes and trusts you, chances are, he will be too afraid to come to you. Sometimes, he’ll allow himself to be drawn out of hiding by a canine friend; sometimes, he’ll come to food or treats. Sometimes, a livetrapp borrowed from a shelter or rescue will be the only way to recapture him. Just remember when trying to convince your escapee to come to you to be calm and confident. He needs you, the pack leader, to project strength and security.

Dogs DO pick up on our emotions, but those animals who haven’t lived with people don’t know how to interpret those emotions. He may think your worry is anger directed at him; by the same token, your calm demeanor might also be contagious. Remember how you had to sit by him and talk to convince him to allow you to touch him? Try it again, only with a trail of treats leading from his hiding place (or as close as you can get without spooking him anymore) to you. When he does come to you, let him know what a good dog he is! Never, NEVER scold him for running away!



WHAT IS A PUPPY MILL?

From the ASPCA: “A puppy mill is a large-scale commercial dog breeding operation where profit is given priority over the well-being of the dogs. Unlike responsible breeders, who place the utmost importance on producing the healthiest puppies possible, breeding at puppy mills is performed without consideration of genetic quality. This results in generations of dogs with unchecked hereditary defects. Some puppy mill puppies are sold to pet shops—usually through a broker, or middleman—and marketed as young as eight weeks of age. The lineage records of puppy mill dogs are often falsified. Other puppy mill puppies are sold directly to the public, including over the Internet, through newspaper ads, and at swap meets and flea markets.”

DO PUPPY MILL PUPS DISPLAY BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS?

Sometimes. Fearful behavior and lack of socialization with humans and other animals are typical of puppy mill dogs. Puppies born in puppy mills are typically removed from their littermates and mothers at just six weeks of age. The first months of a puppy’s life are a critical socialization period for puppies. Spending that time with their mother and littermates helps prevent puppies from developing problems like extreme shyness, aggression, fear and anxiety.

HOW ARE ANIMALS TREATED AT PUPPY MILLS?

Puppy mills usually house dogs in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions, without adequate veterinary care, food, water and socialization. Puppy mill dogs do not get to experience treats, toys, exercise or basic grooming. To minimize waste cleanup, dogs are often kept in cages with wire flooring that injures their paws and legs—and it is not unusual for cages to be stacked up in columns. Breeding dogs at mills might spend their entire lives outdoors, exposed to the elements, or crammed inside filthy structures where they never get the chance to feel the sun or breathe fresh air.

HOW OFTEN ARE DOGS BRED IN PUPPY MILLS?

In order to maximize profits, female dogs are bred at every opportunity with little to no recovery time between litters. When, after a few years, they are physically depleted to the point that they no longer can reproduce, breeding females are often killed. The mom and dad of the puppy in the pet store window are unlikely to make it out of the mill alive—and neither will the many puppies born with overt physical problems that make them unsalable.

HOW MANY PUPPY MILLS EXIST IN THE US?

At any given point in time, there are typically between 2,000 and 3,000 USDA-licensed breeders (commonly referred to as puppy mills) operating in the United States. However, this number does not take into consideration the number of breeders not required to be licensed by the USDA or the number of breeders operating illegally without a license. Because so many of these breeders are operating without oversight, it’s impossible to accurately track them or to know how many there truly are. The ASPCA estimates that there could be as many as 10,000 puppy mills in the United States.

HOW MANY DOGS DOES AN AVERAGE PUPPY MILL HAVE?

The number of dogs in a puppy mill can vary significantly. Some puppy mills are relatively small, with only 10 breeding dogs. Other breeders run massive operations with more than 1,000 breeding dogs! Because not all puppy mills are licensed and inspected, it’s impossible to know the true average.



TAKING IN A PUPPY MILL SURVIVOR

A very special dog is now becoming part of your life. This brave little survivor has endured unpleasantness we can only imagine, and has emerged a very unique individual who is now counting on you for help in overcoming that horrible experience. It takes a very special person to do this — and if you're ready and willing to take on this challenge, it will be life-changing for both you and your new companion. So many of the people who have undertaken this journey before you have reported that it was the most rewarding thing they have ever done — and the odds are that it will be for you, too. Over the next year or two, you will watch a dog who has been deprived of virtually every known pleasure begin to first explore, then enjoy, a life that offers her these pleasures. The words that adopters before you have used most often to describe their dog's change include "blossom," "bloom" and "coming out of her shell." You're almost certain to be seeing your dog's changes in the same light. But it may not be an easy road for you and for your new canine companion. Puppy mill dogs have had their world turned upside down. Everything is different and new. This is often overwhelming for the dog, and helping your dog adjust to this new world can be challenging and may test your patience as it has never been tested before. But nothing good in life comes without some effort, and helping a psychologically beaten dog heal is one of life's greatest goods.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING YOUR FIRST DAYS TOGETHER

It's not uncommon for an unsocialized dog to hide under a couch or table for days or even weeks at a time, only coming out to eat and drink at night. Remember, the more patient and gentle you are, the faster your puppy mill dog will come around. Here are some helpful tips to start you off on the right foot:

Give your new dog a crate covered with a blanket as a "safe haven." If she seems fearful, choose a plastic crate instead of a metal one. If you need to take her out of the crate, you can simply remove the top of the crate instead of pulling her out through the crate door. If your dog seems extremely fearful, you can set up a "safe room." A kitchen, bathroom or laundry room works well for this purpose. To keep your dog in her safe area, you can use a baby gate or an exercise pen (a metal playpen for dogs, available at most pet stores). Put an open crate, food and water on one side of the room and some newspaper or a few potty pads on the other. When your dog isn't in her crate or safe room, it's a good idea to attach a lightweight leash to her harness and let her drag it around the house. If necessary, you can use the leash to get her out from under furniture if she hides. Letting your dog drag a leash will also help her get used to how the leash feels when it's attached to her harness, which may make on-leash walks easier. If you like, you can allow your dog to sleep beside your bed in her crate. This will help her get used to your presence, and she can quietly bond with you while you both rest. If your dog is small, try putting the crate on a table near the bed so that she can easily see you.

Because they're usually housed with other dogs all day and night, puppy mill dogs often trust new dogs before they trust new people. So if you already have a friendly, outgoing dog, he'll be a great comfort to your new dog, as well as a valuable role model. After initial introductions, make sure that your dogs have opportunities to spend time together. If you don't have another outgoing dog, try to borrow one from a friend or neighbor.

Please do not have a big party to "socialize" your dog as soon as you bring her home. Give your her at least a few days to bond with you and settle in before introducing her to strangers. When she seems more comfortable with you, she can start meeting new friends, one or two at a time, in quiet, familiar environments.



HOW TO HELP YOUR DOG ADJUST TO HIS NEW LIFE

When most people picture life with a dog, they imagine long, scenic walks, parties with lots of friends and playing with other dogs at the dog park. These activities may be possible with your new dog someday, but please remember to be patient. It may take a while to get there.

Introducing the Leash Indoors

At first, most puppy mill dogs tend to panic and try to run home if you attempt to walk them on leash outside. This is why they need to be slowly introduced to leash-walking indoors before venturing out. Before you get started, we recommend that you purchase an over-the-head harness for your sensitive puppy mill dog. ASPCA behavior experts have found that fearful shelter dogs tend to react better when their leash is attached to a body harness instead of a collar. Many unsocialized dogs panic and thrash around when they feel a collar tighten around their neck, and a harness is less likely to cause this reaction.

Allow your dog some time to get used to you and her new home before trying to attach the leash to her harness. When she seems comfortable with her new surroundings, take her and some delicious treats, such as chicken, cheese or liverwurst, to a quiet room. Gently attach the leash, and then immediately feed her a few tiny treats. Keeping the leash loose, start to slowly walk around the room. Continue to feed your dog treats as she follows and walks beside you.

The Great Outdoors

When you're sure your dog feels comfortable wearing a leash and harness indoors, you can start to gradually introduce her to the world outside. If she's comfortable in a carrier, it may help to take her to a quiet place, like a nearby park. Then you can lift her out of the carrier and let her sit on your lap or explore while wearing her leash and harness.

In addition to the use of a harness, we recommend using a martingale collar for extra security. This type of collar will gently tighten around the dog's neck in case of emergency if the harness were to fail. Use a longer leash attached to the collar and a shorter leash attached to the harness so the majority of the time all pressure is on the harness. If your pup were to get frightened and back out of it's harness, then the collar is there to save the day and keep your pup from getting loose.

After a few low-key trips to the park, you can try taking your dog on a walk. The following tips will help keep the new activity as stress-free as possible:

- Walking with another dog may increase your dog's confidence. Consider borrowing a neighbor's dog if you don't have one.
- Make sure that your dog's walking equipment is completely secure.
- Make sure that your dog wears a well-fitted collar with identification tags at all times. If she doesn't have a microchip, consider getting one implanted, and keep the microchip information up-to-date.



INTRODUCING YOUR DOG TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY

In time, your dog will likely bond strongly to her primary caretaker, but if she's an older puppy mill dog, there's a good chance that she'll remain fearful of strangers for a long time—perhaps forever. It's your job to keep her safe from invasive human contact. Don't let strangers you meet on the street pet her or pick her up. If your dog learns that you'll keep her safe, she'll be far less anxious on walks.

When you bring new people into your home, you'll find that it's often easier to have them play “hard to get” when meeting your shy, fearful dog. A friendly human greeting (direct gaze, leaning over, reaching with hands) is actually quite threatening in dog language. Instead, have guests make themselves small by sitting or crouching, avoid eye contact and just let your dog approach on her own when she's feeling comfortable.

One great way to get to know a shy dog is to sit on the floor while reading a book and scatter treats all around you. This way, the dog can approach as much as she likes and is repeatedly rewarded for her bravery. Have willing friends and family try this technique. When a person wants to meet your dog, ask him not to pet your dog until she looks completely comfortable and seems eager for him to touch her. If he rushes things, he could undo all your hard work! When your dog will readily take treats from the person's hand, he can try a gentle scratch on the chest and, if your dog still seems at ease, work up to scratching under her collar. These are non-threatening gestures to most dogs.

TRAINING A SHY PUPPY MILL DOG

Did you know that yawning, looking away and lip-licking are signs that a dog is worried? If your dog shrinks away from something she encounters, try associating that thing with her favorite treat or toy, over and over, until she's no longer scared. For example, if your dog is afraid of traffic, go to a quiet park where you can see cars far away. Right after each car goes by, give your dog a tiny piece of chicken or cheese. (Don't feed her treats at any other time during training; she should only get the goodies right after she notices a car.) When your dog eagerly looks up at you for her treat the moment she sees a car appear, you can move a little closer to the road and continue training. As long as your dog stays relaxed, move a little closer each day. You can do the same thing if your dog is afraid of strangers, with treats coming from you at first. (Your dog doesn't have to receive treats from strangers for this procedure to work. As soon as she sees an unfamiliar person, you give her a treat. With consistent repetition, she'll still associate the treats with the appearance of strangers.)

Some sources say that you should never comfort a shy dog because doing so will “reinforce” the fear. This is nonsense. Please go ahead and do whatever it takes to make your dog more comfortable! Some dogs take great comfort from human contact, and if gentle petting helps your dog calm down when she's anxious, feel free to pet her. If she's becoming more confident, you're doing the right thing.

When you think your dog is ready for a group training class, consider enrolling. Agility training and obedience classes that use positive, food-based training techniques may help build your dog's confidence. Avoid classes that involve punishment, as this kind of class will intensify rather than improve fearful behavior.



CHALLENGES YOU MIGHT FACE WITH YOUR PUPPY MILL DOG

Keeping your new dog's history in mind will prove useful as you help her adjust to her new life. Because she came from a puppy mill, she spent all of her time in a cage. She was forced to urinate and defecate in it, so she probably learned to lie in her own waste because no clean surfaces were available to sleep on. She probably never had the chance to interact with people other than her caretakers. Because your puppy mill dog wasn't exposed to any new people, animals, sights, sounds or experiences during her critical socialization period (between three to twelve weeks of age), she'll likely act as though everything in the world is terrifying. Who can blame her? Until recently, she had no idea that a world outside of her cage existed. At first, your home will be a very strange and scary place—almost like another planet! Eliminating outside, wearing a harness and leash, going on walks and meeting strangers will all be new and potentially stressful experiences. It may take your dog a long time to get used to these big changes, especially if she's an older dog whose habits are well-formed. As her new pet parent, you'll need to calmly and patiently assure her that the world is not such a scary place and that you and other humans are worthy of her trust. If you take things slowly and go at her pace, you'll reap the reward of watching your shy dog overcome her fears.

WEBSITE RESOURCES

www.aspca.org

www.bestfriends.org

www.humanesociety.org

www.thepuppymillproject.org

www.dosomething.org

GET INVOLVED

www.animalfolksmn.org

Mission: To protect animals and help prevent animal neglect and cruelty by creating a modern system of animal protection in Minnesota. This will be accomplished by working collaboratively with state and local authorities so as to help 1) improve governance and "systems" that oversee animal issues and 2) improve enforcement of animal laws, including the creation of new law or rules if needed.

Vision: For the State of Minnesota to be the recognized leader in animal protection and welfare.