

The Dog Adoption **Bible**



Before, During, And After Rescuing A Dog

Carlotta Cooper

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Rescuing A Dog**

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Introduction

We live in a time today when dog ownership is near an all-time high in the United States. Some 43.3 million homes own at least one dog as a pet – 36.5 percent of American homes. That translates to 70 million pet dogs, according to the American Veterinary Medical Association's (AVMA's) *U.S. Pet Ownership & Demographics Sourcebook*, 2012 Edition. Rich, poor, the middle class; people of all ages; men and women – everyone seems to love dogs. But even with this popularity there are still about 2.7 million animals per year put to sleep in animal shelters. Some of those animals are feral cats and other animals, but some smaller percentages of these animals are dogs, many of which are adoptable and seeking a loving home. These estimates come from the 2011-2012 American Pet Products Association *National Pet Owners Survey* and statistics provided by The National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy.

The situation is much better than it has been in the past. In the 1960s and '70s some 20 million cats and dogs were euthanized annually in the U.S. Even in the early 1990s there were still high numbers of unwanted animals being euthanized annually in shelters. But the last 20 years have seen the success of public education regarding spaying and neutering pets and now there are many fewer unwanted kittens and puppies each year than previously, which has allowed the number of animals killed in shelters to come down. However, there are still many wonderful dogs in shelters looking for families.

In addition, the number of dogs euthanized has also fallen thanks to the efforts of dedicated and amazing volunteers throughout the country. Shelters depend on not just their staffs but also on volunteers to pet animals, walk dogs, help clean kennels, and assist with anything else that needs to be done. Along with public and private shelters, rescue groups have done great work to save countless dogs and help them find new homes. This is especially true with purebred rescue groups who led the way in setting up rescue organizations several decades ago before this movement became well-known or popular with the public. Contrary to what some in the rescue world believe today, many of these early rescuers were dog breeders who acted simply because of their love of dogs and their sense of duty. Today there are multiple rescue groups in some areas for mixed breeds; and some purebreds now have many rescue organizations to help dogs.

The good news is that if you would like to rescue a dog or get a dog from an animal shelter you probably have more options today than at any other time. Not only do you have options, but the situation is relatively organized (depending on the source). You should be able to deal with a reputable group and you have a good chance of taking home a healthy dog.

You should note that there are some risks attached with rescuing a dog or getting a dog from a shelter. It greatly helps if you know what to consider before deciding

to get a dog; what kinds of shelters and rescues exist; what kind of questions they might ask you; what to look for in a dog at a shelter; how the dogs might behave; and what you should do with the dog once you take him home. Those are the kinds of things we can tell you in this e-book. We will walk you through the steps to help you know what to expect before, during, and after adopting a dog.

If you have a big heart and lots of love to share with a dog, keep reading and we'll get started. You'll soon know all the ins and outs of adopting a dog.

Chapter 1: Are You Ready To Get A Dog?

Dogs are a big responsibility

If you are thinking about getting a dog it's important to remember that a dog is a living, breathing animal. Yes, they are cuddly and cute, especially when they are young. But they also take work! It's especially important to keep this in mind with a rescue dog. Most rescue dogs have already been discarded by someone once, for some reason. Maybe the dog's first owner found they didn't have time for the dog? Or the dog was too much trouble? If you plan to get a rescue dog, it's particularly important that you understand that you are taking on a big responsibility. Rescue dogs often require some extra time and attention. The last thing you want to do is send the dog back to the shelter again.

Things to consider before you get a dog

Before getting a dog you should ask yourself the following questions – and be honest about the answers:

Do you have time to care for a dog?

Dogs need exercise, grooming, and lots of attention. You have to remember to feed and water your dog. A dog has to be potty trained, which takes time. A dog needs to be obedience trained and taught some manners. These are just the basics of owning a dog. Do you have time for these things?

Can you afford a dog right now?

Dogs require food and vet care. They need things like heartworm preventive and flea preventive on a regular basis. Even if you get your dog for free, dogs cost money because of the ongoing expenses associated with their care. Sometimes it's better to wait until you're in a better financial position to care for a dog.

If you have a family, is everyone on board with getting a dog?

Getting a dog may sound like fun to you, but what about your spouse? Or, maybe your kids are promising to feed and care for a dog. They might, but it's also possible that these jobs will fall on you, so you should be prepared. Before you bring a dog home it's best if the whole family supports the idea, if possible.

These questions aren't meant to discourage you from getting a dog if you really want one. However, you should give some thought to your circumstances before you bring a dog home. Sometimes dogs are returned to shelters because they're not a good fit for someone's lifestyle or family. One of the ways to try to avoid this problem is by thinking honestly about your situation before getting a dog.

Chapter 2: What Kind Of Dog Should You Get?

Before taking a trip to a shelter or meeting with rescue volunteers, it's a good idea to consider what kind of dog you would like. Or, put another way, what kind of dog would fit your lifestyle. Choosing a dog that matches your personality and lifestyle will make it much more likely that you and your dog are a good fit for each other and that the adoption works out well.

Size

The size of a dog is often a matter of preference, but there are situations where you might need a larger or smaller dog. In general, smaller dogs do well in cities and can adapt to living in apartments easily, but there are exceptions. Some large dogs make good apartment dogs, too. Retired Greyhounds are owned by many city dwellers and can live in apartments. They require a good run several times per week but they are very relaxed and quiet in the home. Some smaller dogs do not make good apartment dogs. For example, Beagles are small (up to 13 or 15 inches tall at the shoulder) but they are a hunting, baying hound breed. They can be very vocal and your apartment neighbors will not appreciate them. Beagles will do better if they have a house and a yard so they can make noise without bothering people.

Small dogs typically require less exercise than large dogs. For this reason, large dogs are often recommended for suburban and country living. A medium-sized dog can usually adapt to living anywhere. When you meet a dog in a shelter, try to estimate how big he will be when he is an adult. There is some truth to the old saying that a puppy with very large paws will be a big dog as an adult.

Big dogs eat more; their vet care costs more; even their toys cost more. So, if you get a big dog, be prepared to pay a little more each year. Small dogs can cost less in some ways, but they can also need things like sweaters in cold weather. Small dogs do tend to have longer lives than large dogs.

Coat

Coats can be tricky to guess, especially if you are looking at young puppies. In general, dogs have short, long, and wirehaired coats. In reality, they can have coats that are a mix of these textures, or curly or wavy or woolly coats; or a coat that feels like human hair. For instance, Labradoodles can have multiple coat types – and not all of them are good for allergy-sufferers.

If you have an allergy to dogs and you would like to get a dog from a shelter, you may have difficulty. Just visiting a shelter will probably be hard for you since most

of the dogs will probably cause you to have an allergic reaction. Instead, consider contacting a purebred rescue for one of the breeds that is known to be good for people with dog allergies. You can meet available dogs individually to see if the dog causes a reaction. Breeds that are considered good for people with allergies include:

- Bedlington Terrier
- Bichon Frise
- Chinese Crested
- Irish Water Spaniel
- Kerry Blue Terrier
- Maltese
- Poodles (Toy, Miniature or Standard)
- Portuguese Water Dog
- Schnauzer (Miniature, Standard or Giant)
- Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier
- Xoloitzcuintli (Mexican Hairless)

Otherwise, when considering a dog's coat, ask yourself if shedding will be a problem. Contrary to what most people believe, longhaired dogs are not more prone to shedding than shorthaired dogs. In fact, some of the biggest shedders are shorthaired dogs such as Labrador Retrievers (and Lab mixes) with hard, dense coats.

If you are interested in adopting a longhaired dog, ask yourself if you have time for lots of grooming. Of course, you can always keep the coat cut short if you prefer.

Temperament

Temperament is one of the issues that you should consider carefully before getting a dog no matter the source. What kind of temperament would you like the dog to have? The dog you choose will become your best friend and you will probably be spending hours everyday with this dog. Do you want a sweet, gentle dog? A feisty, peppy little dog? A noble, brave dog? A merry, happy dog? Of course we probably want our dogs to be all of these things but, how would you describe the dog you are hoping to find? This is something to consider before you go to the shelter.

Above all, it's important to get a dog with a **good** temperament. A dog should not growl at humans or make an offer to bite or attack. There might be dogs at the shelter or in rescue who have issues with aggression but you should leave these dogs for professionals or experienced dog owners who either know how to work with them or who will be working with dog training experts.

One word of caution when dealing with shelters and rescues. Many of the people

who work with shelters and rescues are honest and want to see the dogs in homes where they will have the best chance of success, even if this means admitting the dogs' faults. However, you might also meet some staff and volunteers who, out of sympathy for the dogs, try to put a positive spin on every dog. They might describe every dog as "friendly and happy," for example. Or tell you that the dogs don't have any issues. No doubt they tell people these things in the hopes of placing the dogs into good homes. However, they are doing a disservice to both the dogs and to the people who adopt them. There will almost always be problems when people aren't honest about shelter and rescue dogs and their issues. So, if you meet people at the shelter or rescue who seem to describe every dog as friendly or happy or tell you that the dogs don't have any problems, you should probably be suspicious. At the very least, you should keep asking questions or talk to someone else who can give you more information. Remember that not everyone who works at a shelter knows everything about every dog.

If you feel that you aren't getting an accurate picture about the dogs at a shelter or rescue, it might be a good idea to go to another organization that will be more honest with you. You are looking for a companion that you could spend the next 15 years of your life with. You need to work with people who are knowledgeable and who will tell you the truth about the dogs, especially about their temperaments.

Activity level

Along with a dog's temperament, you should try to gauge his activity level. This can be hard to do if you're looking at puppies. Puppies tend to play hard and then sleep hard. It's all or nothing. Even if you're meeting a young adult dog or a mature dog it can be difficult to judge their activity level at a shelter since it's not a natural environment. The dog probably feels inhibited and may be scared. You can try to spend as much one-on-one time as possible with the dog. Pet him and talk to him. Try to put him at ease. Talk to the shelter workers or the volunteers and see if they can clue you in about the dog's activity level and other things about him.

If you live an active lifestyle you will be looking for a dog who will enjoy doing things with you. For instance, if you like to hike or jog, you might want a dog who will enthusiastically go with you on your outings. If you prefer to stay home, look for a dog who likes to curl up next to you while you read or watch TV. Most dogs can adapt and learn to enjoy doing whatever you want to do, but there are exceptions. If you have an active dog he can go slightly nuts if he is cooped up a lot and doesn't get plenty of exercise. This could manifest when he destroys your furniture and starts having some behavioral problems. Likewise, if you take your quiet dog with you when you pursue your outdoor activities, he might not be able to keep up or enjoy them. So, try to find a dog that matches your own activity level.

Age

Should you get a puppy or an adult dog? Truthfully, puppies are usually snatched up as fast as they enter a shelter, especially if they are small dogs. It can be hard to get a puppy from a shelter, but not impossible. Most dogs available for adoption are juveniles – young adult dogs. Sometimes they have been relinquished by their owners because of minor behavior problems. They might have been hard to house train, for example; they barked too much; or they jumped on people or destroyed furniture. These are all common behavior problems with young dogs and they can be stopped with some training.

Sometimes you also find older dogs at the shelter. They may have been lost or they come into the shelter for a variety of other reasons.

Dogs of all ages have their pros and cons. A puppy is a clean slate. They don't yet have any vices or behavior problems. On the other hand, puppies require a tremendous amount of time and work. They don't know anything and you have to teach them everything. Some people find that they are more work than they want. But they are adorable. No doubt about that!

Young adult dogs often need some training so they take some work, especially in the beginning. They are a project. But once you have their training underway, they usually make excellent pets.

Older dogs require time and patience. There may be vet bills involved as the dog gets older. At some point, possibly soon, the dog will die. You and your family need to be emotionally prepared for this. But they can touch your heart and make a great fit for less active individuals. Older dogs are not for everyone but they can be very rewarding.

You should decide how much time you have to devote to training and caring for your dog, especially in the beginning. This will help you decide the age of the dog you should get.

Male or female?

Do you want a male or female dog? They both make wonderful pets. There's a common belief that female dogs are bossier and possibly smarter than male dogs, while male dogs are sweeter and love to cuddle. But there are plenty of people who will tell you they have cuddly girls and smart boys. It's really up to you to decide which gender you prefer. If you are going to have your dog spayed or neutered then there is no risk of reproduction either way and most shelter facilities require all dogs to be spayed or neutered before adoption.

Child-friendly dogs

The last thing to consider is whether or not you have children. If you have kids you will want to look for a dog that's especially good with children. Golden Retrievers and Labrador Retrievers, in particular, are known for being great with children. Look for one of these breeds at the shelter or contact a purebred rescue group. People usually think that they should get a small dog for kids but big dogs are usually better. They are less likely to be harmed if a child tugs on them or falls on them.

Breeds that are often recommended for families with children include the following breeds:

- Golden Retriever (needs a yard)
- Labrador Retrievers (needs a yard)
- Pug
- Cavalier King Charles Spaniel
- Beagle
- Poodle (very adaptable; a great choice for people with allergies)
- Bulldog
- Bull Terrier
- Collie (needs a yard)
- Newfoundland (needs some room)
- Vizsla (good for active families; needs a yard)
- Irish Setter (good for active families; needs a yard)

All of these breeds have good temperaments and typically love children. However, whenever you are considering a dog for your family, be sure to find out as much as possible about the dog's previous history. Ask about his experiences with children. Has he been around kids before? You should let your kids meet the dog before taking him home with you. Once the dog is in your house it's hard to return him to the shelter if the kids start to bond with him. If you have any doubts about a dog you meet at the shelter or in rescue, pass on adopting the dog. Your kids' safety is too important to take a chance on any dog who might have questionable behavior.

You will need to supervise the dog when he's with your children for the first few weeks in your home, even if your kids are older. You should always supervise children under the age of 5 or 6 when they play with any dog. It's always possible for play to escalate and for a child or the dog to get hurt. A dog can react unexpectedly to something and bite a child. It's especially important that you **DO NOT** leave **any** dog unattended with a baby. No matter how much we love dogs or how much they are part of the family, it's important to remember that a dog is still an animal and sometimes they can behave in unexpected ways. Put your children's safety first.

Chapter 3: Finding A Dog

Research indicates that for many people today, finding a dog at a shelter is their first choice when it comes to looking for a dog. Adopting a dog from a shelter is popular for lots of reasons:

- You can help a dog who needs a second chance;
- You can choose from many dogs;
- You will probably be saving a dog's life;
- Many Americans identify with the mixed breeds in shelters;
- Many people say adopting a dog makes them feel good about themselves.

There is also a popular belief that mixed breed dogs are healthier than purebred dogs, so if you get a dog from a shelter, your dog will be healthier and live longer. This isn't necessarily true. Regular vet care and your dog's size probably have more to do with how long he will live than other factors. Small dogs, whether mixed breed or purebred, often have longer lives than very large dogs.

So, there are many reasons why people like the idea of adopting a dog from a shelter or rescue. The next question is how do you find a dog? Where should you go when you want to rescue a dog?

Types of shelters

There are many different kinds of animal shelters today, and even hybrid versions of shelters. More and more attention has been focused on sheltering in recent decades. Individuals and communities have come up with some creative ways to take in animals. Some shelters are more proactive than others when it comes to finding homes for animals. Animal control and shelter work is a difficult field.

Traditional Humane Society

The traditional humane society is often privately funded by donations, grants, and adoption fees. This is the original approach to sheltering animals. The public can bring in their unwanted animals and the humane society finds new homes for them with adoptive families. These traditional humane societies will have paid staff that is either full-time or part-time but they usually rely on a well-established corps of volunteers to help them. They can range in size from small to very large and they generally offer other services to the community such as humane education programs or disaster aid. They may also offer low cost spay and neuter clinics. In some areas, especially smaller cities, traditional humane societies may have a contract with the city to perform animal control work.

It's important to realize that these traditional humane societies, which have been around since the start of the humane movement over 100 years ago, are not related in any way to the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). In fact, many of these organizations, which operate on smaller budgets, often complain because people donate money to HSUS thinking that it will go to local humane societies and shelters. It does not. HSUS gives less than 1 percent of the money it receives to local shelters and humane societies. If you would like to donate to your local humane society or animal shelter, you should donate to them directly.

Animal Control Facilities

Animal control facilities or municipal animal control facilities are typically funded by the city government. They are the enforcement divisions for animal laws in a municipality. When dogs run loose, they are picked up and impounded at these facilities. If you are cited for letting your dog run off leash or for your dog's nuisance barking, you will be dealing with animal control. You probably remember them as the dog catcher and the "pound." Animal control is funded by the local government and paid by taxpayers. They have a paid staff and may or may not have any volunteers to assist with the animals. These facilities are usually required by law to take in every animal brought in by the public. Animal control facilities may adopt animals directly to the public or they may work with other local shelters and smaller rescue groups to try to find homes for animals.

Rescue organizations

Some rescue organizations were formed so they could work with animal control facilities to help dogs and other animals find homes. An animal control facility might be required by state law to hold a dog for 72 hours before putting him to sleep, if no one adopts him, for example. But a rescue organization is a private group. They do not have to follow the same state laws that apply to holding dogs for a specific time limit. Working with an animal control facility or a traditional humane society, the rescue organization can remove the dog from the shelter and, usually with the help of a foster home, keep the dog until a permanent home is found.

In the past, rescue groups were also formed by dog breeders specifically to rescue purebred dogs who needed help. These groups date back several decades and they are still in existence today, often working with AKC breed parent clubs. They assist when an owner is in ill health and can't keep his or her dogs; if an owner dies and someone needs to take the dogs; if an owner is experiencing financial problems; or if purebred dogs are simply unwanted and end up in a shelter. Most national breed clubs have links on their web sites so people can contact their rescue groups to find out about dogs available.

Both local and national rescue organizations often specialize in one breed of dog (or mixes that include one breed). They can develop good working relationships

with many animal shelters in a geographic area or state which makes it easier for them to help the dogs. These groups are usually made up of volunteers, though some groups can have one or two paid staff members. Rescue organizations are usually privately funded and get money for operations from donations, grants, and adoption fees. They don't usually have a building or kennel for the dogs. Instead, they rely on a network of volunteer foster homes. When they rescue a dog from a shelter, a volunteer houses and cares for the dog until a permanent home is found.

No-Kill Shelters

No-Kill shelters aren't shelters in the strict sense. They do not take in every dog that is brought in by someone from the public. They do not euthanize animals that can be adopted and they don't euthanize dogs when the shelter is full. The only animals that are euthanized are those which are terminally ill or considered dangerous. They can do this because they are selective about the dogs they accept. As a result, it's estimated that they are able to save about 90 percent of the dogs they accept. No-Kill shelters usually promote spay/neuter programs; adoption programs with off-site adoptions, marketing, and non-traditional hours of operation; retention programs that emphasize behavior and training programs for adopted dogs so they have a better chance of working out in their new homes; relying heavily on volunteers; and partnerships with veterinarians and businesses for donations and sponsorships. No-Kill programs have been very successful in many places but the concept is controversial because of the less adoptable dogs they don't accept which are then left for other shelters.

Craigslist and other classifieds

For the most part, if you want to rescue a dog then Craigslist and other classified ad sources are not a good option. Most reputable rescue groups will not advertise through these sources and neither will good dog breeders. If you inquire about a dog you find on Craigslist you also put yourself in some jeopardy if you arrange to meet a stranger.

It's also worth noting that dogs that are offered for free on Craigslist or for just a few dollars are not usually valued very highly by the people who get them. People tend to value things (and dogs) more when they have to pay something for them.

The exception to this kind of online advertising is PetFinder.com. PetFinder.com has been in existence for years and they feature nearly 14,000 shelters and rescue groups in North America. You can easily find shelters and rescue groups located near you. You can even search by breed, find volunteer opportunities, and learn more about fostering and other aspects of sheltering and rescue. It's a great site if you're looking to rescue a dog. However, PetFinder.com doesn't include every shelter and rescue in North America so there can be other groups

in your area that have dogs available for adoption.

Stray dogs

If you find or take in a stray dog most states require you by law to check with your local animal control facility or report the dog to them. Although you may be tempted to take matters into your own hands, don't assume that the dog has been abandoned or that he's unwanted. No matter how bad he looks, it only takes a couple of days for even the most adored dog to start looking scraggly and rough when he's lost. You should assume that someone is looking for the dog and wants him back. Someone may be heartbroken that their beloved dog is missing. If you take the dog to the shelter they can use their scanner to check and see if the dog has a microchip. A microchip is a small device implanted just under the dog's skin that contains the owner's contact information. You can have a microchip implanted – usually for about \$25 or so – by your veterinarian. Then you have to register the chip for a few dollars with a company that keeps track of the data. If a shelter or vet with a scanner scans your pet and finds the microchip, they can contact the data company and they will contact you to tell you where your pet is.

If the dog has a collar with ID, you can contact the owner directly. Do your good deed and help reunite the dog with his owner.

If the dog has no microchip or collar with ID, it's possible the shelter may allow you to keep the dog temporarily while you wait to see if someone comes forward to claim the dog. You can check lost and found pet sites online to see if someone is looking for the dog. Put up fliers in your area. Put an ad in the newspaper to say you found a dog. Do what you can to try to help the dog find his owner. If no one comes forward to claim the dog in a reasonable amount of time – say 30 days – you can ask the shelter about adopting the dog.

Do be careful with stray dogs, especially when you first approach them. Remember that a stray dog is lost, confused, and could be carrying diseases. Approach with caution. You have no idea if he has had any vaccinations, for example. If you have other pets, it's best to keep the stray dog quarantined and separated from your own dogs so he doesn't spread any infectious diseases such as parvovirus or rabies. If you bring the dog into your home for a few days or longer, you'll need to make sure the dog is checked out by a veterinarian, wormed, and vaccinated. If you have children, keep the stray dog away from them until he has been vaccinated and wormed.

Trainers

One good way to find a dog to adopt or rescue is by talking to a dog trainer. You can often find a dog trainer at your local pet supply store, at a local kennel club, at a dog training club, or by contacting a private trainer. Trainers are well-

connected and usually know all of the shelters and rescue groups in a community. They know who is taking in dogs, what kind of dogs they receive, and how good each organization is at matching dogs with potential homes. A good trainer can often recommend a shelter or rescue group for you. Or, a trainer might know of a dog in a foster situation that is looking for a home.

Many experts on shelters also suggest that you take a dog trainer with you when you visit a shelter or rescue to help you evaluate the dogs you meet. This is a particularly good idea if you are a first-time dog owner. An experienced trainer can tell more by looking at and meeting a dog in five minutes than you could probably tell by spending a week with the dog in your home. Such a trainer can help you choose the right dog for your situation. If you do ask a trainer to accompany you to a shelter or rescue, you should pay them for their time. The trainer is working and applying their expertise on your behalf.

Chapter 4: Why Do Dogs End Up In Shelters?

According to research from The National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy, the most common reasons dogs end up in shelters are:

1. Moving
2. Landlord issues
3. Cost of pet maintenance
4. No time for pet
5. Inadequate facilities
6. Too many pets in home
7. Pet illness
8. Personal problems
9. Biting
10. No homes for littermates

Approximately 60 percent of dogs in animal shelters are euthanized each year. This includes dogs that are considered “adoptable” and “unadoptable.” Unadoptable dogs can include dogs that are elderly, sick, dogs with serious aggression problems, or dogs that people bring to shelters specifically to be euthanized. You might be surprised to learn that some people take their dogs to shelters for euthanasia when they are elderly or dying instead of taking them to the veterinarian. Vets charge for euthanasia but the owner won't be charged anything for having the dog put to sleep at the shelter.

A large number of dogs in shelters include so-called “pit bulls” or bully breeds which have received a bad reputation, often undeserved, from the media. Many of these dogs make great pets and have done nothing wrong, but people are afraid to adopt them. There are also an overabundance of black dogs in shelters which are not adopted, especially Lab mixes. They simply aren't popular with the public though they make wonderful pets. Many people prefer to adopt small dogs rather than big dogs when they go to the shelter so there are probably more big dogs euthanized. Big dogs also tend to have bigger litters, so there are probably more big dogs in shelters anyway.

When a dog is lost, only an estimated 15 to 20 percent of these dogs are ever returned to their owner. Most of the dogs that are returned to their owners have a microchip, tattoo, or ID tag.

Most of the dogs relinquished to shelters come from owners who acquired them

from acquaintances and family members. About 15 percent of the dogs relinquished to shelters come from owners who acquired them from breeders. About 20 percent of the dogs in shelters come from people who obtained them from other shelters and rescue organizations. Regardless of a dog's origin, it's important to remember that it is the owner who decides to relinquish a dog, for whatever reason. The dog's breeder doesn't make someone turn a dog in to the shelter. If you get a dog from your friend at work, that person doesn't cause you to take the dog to the shelter. The owner is the person who makes the decision to take a dog to the shelter. Most people agree that more attention needs to be paid to the reasons why people relinquish dogs and what can be done to help them keep their dogs.

Chapter 5: Things To Consider When You Visit The Shelter

To be honest, many animal shelters are less than appealing, not just to dogs but also to humans. Whether you plan to visit a traditional humane society or an animal control facility, you will probably see a functional kennel area with concrete floors and kennel runs. The area may smell of disinfectant. Some dogs may poop in their kennels instead of going to the outdoor kennel run. You can also expect many of the dogs to look sad, though some dogs may be happy to see you.

Even the best run and cleanest shelters are a little like doggy jails. It's hard not to feel a tremendous rush of sympathy as soon as you arrive and see the dogs. You will probably want to take all the dogs home. That's normal.

It can be a good idea to start visiting the shelter before you are ready to adopt a dog. That way you will become more accustomed to the surroundings. Choosing a dog won't be such an emotional experience when you are ready for one. It's hard to choose a dog when you are overwhelmed with your feelings about the place.

You might also consider volunteering at the shelter for a short time before you are ready to adopt a dog. This will give you some experience with the dogs. You could have a better insight into how the dogs behave once they are at the shelter. It's also a good way to see the dogs as soon as they arrive. You might see a dog that you would miss if you waited. Many shelters are happy simply to have volunteers come and walk or socialize with the dogs.

You can learn a lot by visiting the shelter more than once and spending time with the dogs, even if you're not ready to get a dog yet.

The same thing applies to rescue groups. Even if you are not ready to adopt a dog from a rescue group yet, many groups are constantly in need of foster homes. They often need people who can drive a dog from one part of the state to another to meet his new family. It's also true that getting to know the rescue volunteers by helping them is a good way to get on the inside track when you're ready to make your application to adopt a dog. If you put in the hours to help with volunteering, it can pay off. Plus you will be helping the group and the dogs, as well as doing something you can feel good about.

Shelters and rescues always need help so think about helping them out. It's a good way to learn more about the entire adoption process.

Chapter 6: Key Tips To Choosing A Rescue Dog

You can't save them all: choose wisely

People who want to help rescue dogs often have tender hearts. As soon as they visit a shelter and see the dogs, they are faced with a terrible dilemma: they want to rescue all the dogs they see. Practically speaking, this isn't possible. If you live in a big city, your local shelter may take in several hundred dogs per week – or more. Try to remember that some of these dogs are lost and will be reclaimed by their owners. Some of them will be adopted by other people. And some of them are considered “unadoptable.” The best thing you can do is to take your time and meet some of the dogs that would be a good match for you and your lifestyle. You can provide a good home to the right lucky dog so choose wisely.

If you really want to help more, then you can come back and volunteer at the shelter or provide a foster home when one is needed. You can get involved with helping your local shelter or rescue groups in many ways. Talk to the shelter staff and ask about volunteer opportunities. But keep in mind that it's not possible to adopt every dog you meet. People who have problems controlling the impulse to take in more animals than they can reasonably care for may be labeled “collectors” or “hoarders,” and no one wants that. Instead, focus on caring for and having fun with the right dog for you.

Of course, if things work out with the dog you adopt, you might consider adding another dog to your home at some point if you can care for two dogs. But that's in the future.

Know what you want and what you can handle

If you have considered what kind of dog would be a good fit for your lifestyle (Chapters 1 and 2), then you should have some idea of what you are looking for in a dog before you visit the shelter. This will be a great help to you when you are suddenly confronted with lots of dogs in their kennel runs, all begging for attention. Many of the dogs you see will be cute. They will tug on your heartstrings. But it's important to remember that you're looking for a dog who will suit your personality and way of life. You want a pal who, with a bit of luck, could be your best friend for the next dozen years or more. Try not to fall for the cutest dog in the shelter, especially if he's not a good fit for your lifestyle.

For example, if you have a couple of cats at home, don't get a cute dog who hates cats! You'll end up returning the dog; or he could even injure or kill one of your cats. If you know you want a dog who can go jogging or hiking with you, try to avoid the sweet, appealing eyes of the Shih-Tzu mix who will never be able to keep up with you on your runs. If you live in a tiny apartment, it's probably best to

avoid the Saint Bernard who keeps trying to catch your attention. Yes, big dogs *can* adapt to living in small places but that big dog will drool, shed, and eat half your paycheck. (No offense to Saint Bernards intended.) He's better off going to live with someone who has more space for him, as well as a yard.

Most of the dogs you see in the shelter are friendly and they do want your attention. That's one reason why visiting a shelter is hard. But you have to hold out and keep looking for the right dog for you. Know what you want – what you **need** – so you will recognize the right dog when you see him. You also have to know what you can handle. Some dogs just aren't a good fit.

Make a list

Before going to the shelter, make a list. Jot down the most important traits you are looking for in a dog so it will fit your lifestyle. You can be flexible about a lot of things like color, breed or mix, and gender, for example. But there should be some things that you definitely know are important to you such as size and temperament. If you have other pets, make sure to inquire about how each dog you are interested in gets along with other animals. This is especially important if you have cats. If you have children, make sure you add to the list that the dog has to be good with kids. If you are planning to have children in the next couple of years, you will also want to consider how the dog gets along with children since they will be part of his life soon.

You should include everything on your list that is important to you. Make sure that you actually look at the list once you arrive at the shelter.

Dog behavior in the shelter environment

Many dogs in the shelter environment feel stressed. While some dogs may be friendly and outgoing, you're also likely to see many dogs exhibiting some of their worst traits. Stress and anxiety often brings out the worst in any of us and the same is true with dogs. In many cases a dog doesn't start to relax in a shelter until he's been there at least three days. Unfortunately, in many shelters the hold time for dogs is no more than 72 hours. This means that just as the dog is beginning to relax, his time is up. If he hasn't been adopted he will be put to sleep.

Some shelters have taken steps to try to overcome this problem. In some states the hold time is longer than 72 hours, for example, though for publicly-funded shelters this is more expensive for the community and the state. It can cost between \$10 and \$18 per day per dog to hold each dog, depending on the location of the shelter.

Some shelters also have volunteers who come in specifically to pet and play with the dogs. This also helps to relax the dogs and relieve some of their stress. They

can take the dogs for walks outside so the dogs aren't cooped up in the kennel runs all the time.

Some shelters also use some alternative methods to try to relax dogs such as playing music and using DAP diffusers – dog appeasing pheromones released into the air. These pheromones are like the pheromones released by mother dogs when they are nursing their puppies and they are very calming for dogs. DAP diffusers can also be used by owners for dogs with separation anxiety and other stress problems.

It's important to remember when you're at the shelter or rescue that some of the dogs you're meeting might have already been through a lot. For example, dogs have often lost their home and family, for whatever reason. They are enduring the current stress of living in a kennel situation which is new for many of the dogs. Some of the dogs may have been neglected or worse. Plus, many dogs in shelters have never received any kind of training. They could have been turned in to the shelter because they were considered to be “problem” dogs. All of these things can bring out the worst in a dog.

Temperament tests

Some shelters also use temperament testing as a way of assessing dogs. This allows them to determine problems the dogs may have, gain insight about the dogs they can share with potential adopters, and help the staff make a better match between the dogs and people interested in adopting a dog.

Temperament testing can be used to get past the stress a dog might be feeling and try to determine what the dog is really like. These tests are not 100 percent accurate. All of the stress a dog is experiencing can affect the dog's behavior during the temperament test, for example. Temperament tests also emphasize positive responses to strangers. Some breeds and dogs from some backgrounds will never be very outgoing with strangers so they may be at an unfair disadvantage with these tests. Yet these more reserved dogs could still make very good pets.

Temperament tests can also weed out some dogs that have characteristics that would be undesirable for some people but which would be perfectly fine for other people. A dog that is very tolerant of people grabbing at him or making sudden movements is perfect for a home with children. However, dogs who are not as tolerant of these actions can still make excellent pets in homes that don't have kids.

Dogs are born with a predisposition to certain behaviors and actions which makes up part of their temperament. However, their temperament is also affected by their environment throughout their life, especially during their early life. They acquire behaviors and traits that influence their temperament. Yet even puppies

within the same litter, raised by the same person, can have some variety in temperament. Some puppies will grow up to be bolder and more independent and some will grow up to be more reserved. Some puppies will naturally show more affection. Some puppies will be more intelligent than others. This is normal in any litter of puppies and it carries over into how the puppies develop when they are adults.

If you get a dog as a puppy you can help some traits develop with good socialization. Socialization helps dogs feel more at ease with humans and other dogs. It reduces stress and teaches dogs how to respond in common situations, especially in public. We'll discuss socialization more in a later chapter. Even adult dogs can benefit from being socialized, though the easiest time to socialize a dog is when he's a puppy. You should keep in mind when you visit the shelter or meet a dog with a rescue group that many of the dogs you see have not received good early socialization. This is a common reason for dogs to have behavior problems.

Dogs who already have some social skills with humans or who have received some socialization often do better in temperament tests. The tests measure the dog's temperament for things like stability, confidence, shyness, friendliness, aggressiveness, protectiveness, prey instincts, play drive, instincts toward self-defense, and his ability to distinguish between a threatening and non-threatening situation.

Along with assessing dogs to see if they are good candidates for adoption, temperament tests can be used to see if a dog would make a good therapy dog, assistance dog, search and rescue dog, or for other kinds of canine work. The tests gain added value if they are conducted by a specialist in canine behavior or a certified dog trainer, especially if it's someone who has experience with assessing shelter dogs. As mentioned, the tests are not 100 percent accurate and it's always important to be able to assess the results in relation to other factors.

Many shelters and rescue groups do not rely solely on temperament tests when making their decisions about which dogs are considered to be adoptable or how to place dogs. This is especially true when organizations have the option of using foster homes to keep dogs for additional time. They often feel that someone keeping the dog in a foster home has more time to observe the dog and make better judgments about the dog's temperament than what can be observed in a short temperament test. Dogs are more likely to reveal more of their true personality when living in a home for a few weeks than in a temperament test in the shelter.

All dogs have some personality quirks and preferences, whether they rise to the level of behavior problems or not. Not all shelters have the luxury of having foster homes available. In these cases the temperament test can be helpful in identifying issues a dog may have and how best to place the dog. Temperament

testing can be a good way to help shelters make better matches between dogs and potential adopters.

How to approach or meet a dog you're interested in

Shelters usually open mid-morning or sometimes a little later because the staff or volunteers need time to feed the dogs and clean the kennels in the morning. It's a good idea to call or check online to see what the hours of the shelter are.

Depending on the size of the shelter you are visiting, they could have a showcase area for the dogs they are particularly recommending for adoption. This area is probably near the front of their building. These dogs have probably been selected because the shelter feels that they have the greatest chance of succeeding in a new home. Chances are that the dogs are relatively young, healthy, and desirable in many ways. They are probably very cute and/or purebred. The turnover rate for these showcased dogs is very high, which is good for the shelter. It means they can get more dogs adopted. By all means, stop and view these showcased dogs if your shelter has them. You might find your heart dog immediately.

Smaller shelters might not have a showcase area. Many shelters don't. If this is the case, or if you don't see a dog in the showcase area that appeals to you, then ask to see the dogs available for adoption. Remember to take your list with you so you will remember what you are looking for in a dog. It's easy to forget when you start seeing so many dogs. At this point it's a good idea to walk up and down the kennel area, making one full trip at least once before you ask to see a dog. Try to get an idea of all the dogs at the shelter before getting hooked on one!

Chances are you will see a dog or two that appeals to you, especially if the shelter has a large number of dogs. At this point the sensible thing to do is to look at your list of desired traits and see if the dogs would fit your lifestyle **before** you go any farther in meeting them. Realistically speaking, most people will probably go ahead and start talking to the dog and/or petting him through the kennel. You're only human.

Some shelters, especially shelters which do temperament testing, will have a card posted on the kennel which provides some information about the dog's temperament and the kind of home he is suited for. The card may also say if the dog dislikes cats, if he's good with children, and other information. Different shelters provide different information, often depending on how much previous information is known about the dog. It's a good idea to ask the staff and volunteers for as much information as possible about any dog you are considering.

If you find a dog you like and he seems to fit your criteria, you should ask one of the shelter staff persons if you can spend some time alone with the dog. Most

shelters have a room for this purpose so potential adopters can get to know a dog a little better before making a decision.

When meeting the dog you should keep in mind that the dog has been living in a stressful situation. Follow these steps:

- Approach him from the side
- Do not make any sudden moves
- Keep your eyes averted and do not make eye contact, especially at first
- Do not try to pet the dog right away
- Place your hand on the floor for the dog to sniff or slowly offer your closed hand toward him
- Speak softly

All of these behaviors on your part are designed to show the dog that you are not threatening him in any way. Depending on his history and his level of anxiety, he may remain nervous or he might warm up to you right away. Try not to take it personally. If the dog is friendly you should continue to be calm and non-threatening. Keep your voice soft. When petting the dog, pet him under the chin instead of on top of the head, which can feel dominating to a dog. Don't make sudden movements. Let the dog guide your actions.

Obviously, most people are looking for a friendly dog who shows that he likes them. That's always a good place to start in the relationship. Some breeds or mixes are inherently more reserved than others, however. Some of the hound breeds, for instance, are never going to be as affectionate as some of the sporting breeds. They simply tend to be more aloof by nature. If you like one of these reserved dogs, don't let that behavior put you off. At the same time, if you prefer a very affectionate dog – one who will cuddle up to you and lick your face – don't get a dog that will never have that kind of personality. It's a good idea to think about breed traits before visiting a shelter so you know which dogs are most affectionate and which ones are more reserved.

You can interpret the dog's behavior as follows:

- **Dog comes to you wagging his tail** – friendly toward people in non-threatening situations
- **Ignores you and glances around** – Might be nervous
- **Growls** – aggressive; might not be adoptable
- **Seems worried but looks like he would like to come to you** – shy; would require patience
- **More interested in other dogs** – Might need a lot of work with an owner; short attention span
- **Avoids eye contact** – Scared, nervous

A dog that is playful is usually relaxed and willing to engage with people. That's

usually a good sign. Remember when meeting a dog that a wagging tail does not always signify that the dog is friendly. It's only friendly if the dog is relaxed. A stiff, straight, slowly wagging tail can signify that the dog is preparing to attack or bite.

It's a good idea to always be on your guard a little when you are meeting a new dog at the shelter. You don't know the dog you are meeting and you can't predict how the dog will react with complete confidence. No one can.

If you like the dog you spend time with and the meeting goes well, you should let the shelter staff know so you can all move on to the adoption process. On the other hand, if this dog is not for you, for whatever reason, you should not feel bad. Adopting a dog is a process and it's important for you and for the dogs involved that you take it seriously and find the best dog for your situation. It's much better to take your time and find the right dog than to take home a dog that's a bad match that you might have to return in a few weeks.

Special things to look for when selecting a dog

Along with the dog's temperament and his reaction to you, there are some other things you should notice about a dog when you are making your selection.

Health

One of the most important issues when choosing a dog is health. Health falls into several categories. Some issues are genetic; other issues are congenital, meaning the dog is born with them but they aren't genetic; and other issues are infectious or injury-related. The issues in this latter category are often determined by the dog's history and environment.

Many people assume that mixed breed shelter dogs cannot have any genetic health problems because they aren't usually intentionally bred, unlike purebred dogs. This is false. All dogs can suffer from genetic health problems. For example, if a dog's parents both have canine hip dysplasia, there's a good chance that the dog will also have dysplasia, regardless of whether the parents are purebred dogs or not. The same is true of many other genetic diseases. Mixed breed dogs are just as capable of passing on genetic illnesses as purebred dogs. The problem is that when you get a dog from a shelter, you don't usually know what kind of genetic diseases may lurk in the dog's family. A dog can have thyroid problems, allergies, genetic eye diseases, or many other illnesses.

You may be wondering about "hybrid vigor" and thinking that it should protect mixed breed dogs. The answer is no. True hybrid vigor occurs when very dissimilar things are bred together, such as a horse and a donkey. In that case the resulting animal – a mule – is sterile. Hybrids are often sterile. (A lion and a tiger produce a liger or a tigon which is almost always sterile.) Purebred dog

breeds are not very dissimilar genetically. When bred together, there is little genetic difference in the resulting offspring. They are the same species. Breeding these dogs together does not truly produce hybrid vigor. Even dogs and wolves are able to interbreed, as well as wolves and coyotes; and coyotes and dogs, though these matings do constitute interspecies matings. These animals are all subspecies of the same canine species *Canis lupus*. When a Great Dane and a Chihuahua mate, it's remarkable but they are still the same species. The only difficulties they might have to overcome are their respective sizes. Their offspring are certainly not sterile.

You won't have any way to know about the genetic health of the dog you like in the shelter in most cases unless the dog is clearly showing signs of a genetic disease.

Congenital illnesses refer to problems that a dog has from birth, though they might not show up until later in life. They can range from relatively minor issues like an umbilical hernia, which usually never changes throughout the dog's life, to things like a heart murmur which can become much more serious. Many congenital problems aren't detected until a dog is older and then it takes a vet to find them. You may not know when you select your shelter dog that he has one of these issues. No one would know that the dog might have one of these problems unless it is clearly obvious externally.

One thing you can look for when choosing a dog is any overt signs of illness. When choosing a dog, most people want a companion who will live a long and healthy life with them. This means you should observe the dog for signs of sickness. A healthy dog has bright, shining eyes. He should not have a runny nose or discharge from the eyes. The inside of his ears should look and smell clean. A dog with an ear infection will have red ears and he may scratch at them or shake his head. He might show that his ears are painful. The dog's fur should be smooth and glossy.

Understandably, you are looking at a dog in a shelter so perhaps he hasn't been well-groomed. He might not be looking or feeling his best. He could even be underweight. You might have to use a little imagination to see him as he will look when he's cleaned up, but he should still look and act like a healthy dog. However, if the dog shows signs that he is actually sick, you need to say no. Do not adopt a dog who is sick, no matter how sorry you feel for him. A dog in a shelter who is sick may die soon after you adopt him. Diseases like parvovirus and canine distemper spread rapidly through animal shelters. If you are considering a dog who shows signs of illness, there's a strong possibility that you could take the dog home and he would die very soon. You don't deserve that to happen to you. If you have another dog at home, the shelter dog could transmit the illness to him or her. Instead, inform the shelter staff. Do not ask to see another dog. It's likely that all of the dogs at the shelter could have been exposed and the shelter should be placed under quarantine. When you go home, be sure

to wash your shoes and clothes before visiting any other shelters or spending time with any other dogs – including your own. You do not want to spread disease to another dog.

Special needs dogs

You might find dogs in a shelter who have special needs. These could be dogs who are elderly or who have chronic health problems. They can also include a dog who might need surgery for a serious condition such as an orthopedic problem like hip dysplasia or a cruciate ligament tear. You might even find a dog with cancer who needs treatment. There are also dogs who might be missing a limb or who are deaf or blind. Dogs such as these often elicit a great deal of pity from potential adopters but not everyone is in a position to take them home or help them.

Before you volunteer to adopt such a dog it's important to consider what is involved. Not only will some of these dogs need much more care than the typical pet, but you will probably be expected to provide considerable veterinary care. Even minor surgery for a dog can be quite expensive. Chemotherapy or radiation treatment for a dog can cost nearly as much as it does for humans. There are cases where owners have literally had to mortgage their homes to find the money for these treatments. Even with such treatment, the prognosis for a dog with cancer may be only a year or two after the diagnosis is made. In some cases dogs may only live a few months longer, even if treatment is successful.

A dog with a missing limb stands a good chance of living out a long life and is usually able to adapt to his circumstances. A dog that is deaf in one ear should be able to live a normal life, though such dogs can be easily startled by loud noises at times. Some of them can become panicky in unfamiliar situations. You may have to work on separation anxiety issues with these dogs if they tend to cling to you. A dog that is deaf in both ears can still make a good pet if you are willing to train the dog using hand signals. You will need to be very careful with such a dog and make sure that he is safely confined at your home and in your yard. He won't be able to hear a car if he escapes from your yard, for instance, so he is at increased risk when you aren't with him.

This is not meant to deter you from adopting a special needs dog. They need people who want them and who will provide wonderful, loving homes for them. But make sure that you know what lies ahead before you adopt one of these dogs on impulse because you have a big heart.

“Puppy mill” dogs

Sometimes shelters and rescue groups receive groups of dogs that have come from commercial breeders. This can occur if the breeder has been shut down and the dogs taken by the authorities. The dogs can be dumped on shelters and

rescues, sometimes without much warning. This can leave shelters scrambling for room to house the dogs and rescue groups begging for temporary foster homes.

Dogs in this situation can be temporarily traumatized by the sudden changes they are experiencing but they are not usually true special needs dogs. Claims about health problems with these dogs are often exaggerated by the media. Some of these dogs may have lived in kennels but they can usually adjust to living in a home environment eventually. While the media often describes these dogs as unsocialized and makes claims that the dogs have never received any affection, the truth is that the dogs usually act scared at first because they have been taken away from their home by strangers and placed in a totally foreign environment at a shelter. Most of these dogs are ready for adoption in just a few days and they are quite friendly at that time. This is not because of any miracles worked by shelter or rescue workers but because the dogs have had time to relax and get used to their new environment.

Most of the dogs taken from commercial breeders are purebreds or “designer dogs” and they have been intentionally bred. You will not get any registration papers or a pedigree if you adopt one of these dogs but you will be able to find out a lot about the breed. You might have to pay more to adopt one of these dogs. It's worth pointing out that, because of more restrictive laws at all levels, many times home breeders, hobby breeders, and even show dog breeders are erroneously labeled as “puppy mills” today which is leading to more conflict between breeders and people operating animal shelters.

Chapter 7: The Shelter Adoption Process

Why shelters require an application process

You may be wondering why animal shelters require an application process. After all, in the old days, if you remember that far back, people could just go down to their local shelter and get a dog, right? You can still do that in some places, but that's usually in smaller towns where people tend to be more trusting.

Today most animal shelters in larger cities and virtually all rescue groups require an application process because they want to make sure that the dog they adopt to someone goes to a good home. It's also because some shelters and groups have had bad experiences with some adoptions. It's like anything else. It only takes one bad person to spoil things for everyone else. There have been people who lied to get a dog or abused a dog after adopting one. There have even been people who adopted a dog for a small fee or for free and turned around and sold the dog on Craigslist for more money. So, shelters and rescues try to thoroughly check out the people who apply to get a dog.

Typical disqualifiers for pet adoption

Here's where things can get tricky. Shelters and rescues set their own requirements for pet adoption. These requirements can vary depending on the shelter or group you contact. Here are the requirements for adopting a pet from a shelter in one large city:

- 18 years of age with a current Drivers License or ID
- Proof of current address
- Landlord approval if you rent
- Permission of all adults living at the residence
- Other animals residing with you must be current on vaccinations and dogs must be on heartworm prevention

That's from Citizens for Animal Protection in Houston:

<http://www.cap4pets.org/pet-adoptions/adoption-fees>

There's nothing too onerous there. However, some shelters and rescues can have much stricter requirements. For instance, some rescue groups do not want to adopt a dog to people who have cats. Period. Some groups do not want to adopt a rescue dog to someone who has an intact dog – even though the rescue dog will be spayed or neutered. Some organizations do not want to adopt a dog to you unless you have already owned a dog of that breed. Some groups do not want to adopt a dog to you unless you have a fenced yard. Some groups do not want to adopt a dog to people unless there will be someone home with the dog

all day.

In many cases, especially with rescue groups, you have a contract with the group which allows the rescue to take the dog back if they do not like the way you care for the dog. In essence, you do not actually own the dog. The rescue is only allowing you to feed, house, and pay for the dog's vet care.

Not surprisingly, some people have some bad feelings toward shelters and rescues because of their policies about pet adoption. There are many people who feel that adoption policies are too strict and that some groups do not want dogs to be adopted at all since they set such impossible standards.

Most public shelters do not fall into this category. They have reasonable adoption requirements similar to those listed for the shelter in Houston. They want dogs to be adopted. However, if you find yourself dealing with a private shelter or a rescue group that is making unreasonable demands on you, it's usually best to move on to another shelter. Many times you will never be able to satisfy these groups.

Rescue groups

There are good rescue groups who want to place dogs. They have many hardworking, experienced volunteers. Again, it only takes a few groups to give all of them a bad name. If you are working with a good rescue group that has reasonable requirements, you can still expect them to grill you. They will ask you lots of personal questions about your living situation and how the dog would live. Questions they might ask you include:

- Do you own or rent your house?
- Where do you work?
- Do you have a fenced yard?
- Are you married?
- Do you have kids?
- Do you have other pets?
- Have you had dogs before?
- What did your previous dog die from?
- Where would the dog sleep?

You get the idea. At least these questions do relate to the kind of life the dog would live. You can also expect the rescue group to want to meet you and see your home. This doesn't always happen but it often does. They really want to know that they are sending the dog to a good home.

On your part, you should check out a rescue group before dealing with them. Not all rescue groups are reputable. Look them up online. If they are affiliated with a breed club, ask people "in the breed" – people who are active with the breed club

– about the group. This would include people who breed, show, or who are involved in other activities with the breed. Find out what kind of reputation they have. Try to talk to other people who have gotten dogs through the group and see what they were like to deal with. As always, if you find something you don't like, move on.

The cost of adoption and what it typically covers

The cost of adopting a dog can vary greatly, depending on the region of the country where you live. Costs can also vary based on whether you live in an urban or rural area. Shelters in urban areas often charge more for adopting a dog while shelters in rural areas will charge less. If you live in an area with a higher cost of living, you can expect your shelter to charge more.

The cost of shelter dogs is based on a number of factors:

- The area where you live
- Cost of veterinary care
- Cost of pet food in your area
- Shelter overhead (operating expenses and salaries)
- Programs and services provided by the shelter

Obviously, none of these things has anything to do with the intrinsic value of a dog. You could find a dog in a shelter in Chicago and his adoption fee might be \$135. Send him to a shelter in a small town in Kentucky and his adoption fee might be \$40. If you get the same dog from a rescue group, if he is a purebred, his adoption fee might be \$200.

Most shelters have to do some self-funding, aside from money they receive from the city or county, grants and donations. This money comes from adoption fees. However, they still want the dogs to be adopted so the fees cannot be too high. They provide a minimum of veterinary care for the dogs that are taken in and offered to the public for adoption. You can expect a dog you adopt to have received the following:

- Basic vaccinations
- Spay or neutering
- Microchipping

One nice shelter provides the following when you adopt a dog from them:

spay / neuter surgery

canine distemper vaccination

parvo vaccinations

parasite treatment if needed

rabies shot

collar

leash

tag

AVID microchip

10 Day Health Guarantee on kennel related illnesses

In the case of rescue groups, they usually do heartworm testing and will usually treat a dog who is positive for heartworms. This treatment would cost several hundred dollars if the owner had to pay for it. This is one reason why adopting a dog from a rescue can be so much more expensive. They often provide veterinary care for dogs, even for dogs who might be considered unadoptable at shelters. Their fees tend to be higher so they can cover their costs. Even if the dog you like is completely healthy, they may need to charge more, per dog, to pay for one dog who needs extensive treatment. Most rescue volunteers end up paying for a lot of these bills out of their own pocket.

Shelter fees cover veterinary costs and the dog's care. Shelters that have many programs and services for the community put the money right back into those programs.

The range of adoption fees for dogs is generally about \$40 to \$300 at shelters; and about \$150 all the way up to over \$500 from rescue groups, depending on the breed, how rare it is, and other factors.

Keep in mind that there are reputable rescue groups and there are some that you should avoid. There are no laws in this country governing who can make a web site and call themselves a "rescue" as a way of taking your money. There are plenty of good people who do good things for animals in the name of rescue. However, there are also people who run scams by calling themselves "rescues." Please be cautious and investigate any rescue group you donate to or consider getting a dog from. Even some rescue groups with well-intentioned volunteers are poorly run and can end up in trouble.

Chapter 8: Bringing Your Rescued Dog Home

Getting a new dog is surely one of the most exciting days in the life of any pet lover. Most of us want to throw caution to the wind, scoop the dog up in our arms, and just love him! But, wait. That's why you're a grown up. You can scoop the dog and love him but you need to do some things first, before you bring him home.

Preparing your home

Also known as “puppy proofing” your home, even if you're getting a junior dog or an adult, this is the process by which you try to anticipate all the things your new dog might get into when he investigates your house. If you're bringing home a mature dog, he probably won't be very interested in chewing on your furniture or playing with your computer cords. However, if you are getting a puppy or a dog who is under the age of two years old, then hold on to your hat! While cats have a reputation for being curious, they can't compare to a curious puppy.

The best way to go about making your home safe for your new puppy or dog is by trying to look at the house from your dog's point of view. It actually helps if you look at things from closer to the floor so you can see things that your puppy or dog will see. You don't have to crawl around in the floor, but do try to notice the things that your new dog will see: cords, tassels on rugs, shoes in the floor, for example. All of these things make tasty chews for your new dog and you should attend to them. You can tape down cords so they are less tempting or purchase plastic casing for them so your dog can't get to them. At the least, be sure to tuck them behind furniture so your dog is less likely to notice them. You might want to remove rugs with tassels because most dogs will chew on them. Obviously, you should get used to putting your shoes away or your dog will eat them.

Other things you should notice is what's on your coffee table. Your new dog may eat these things or knock them off and break them with his tail. Put away any valuables and breakables until your dog is a little older and more careful in the house. If you have kitchen cabinets under the sink that open easily, consider getting some childproof locks so your dog cannot open them. Start putting the toilet seat down or closing the bathroom door so your dog won't drink out of the toilet. You should also put away bars of soap. Some dogs like to eat soap because of the fat content.

Put away anything your dog can chew on such as your cellphone, purse, eyeglasses, and remote controls. Dogs love to eat crunchy things like electronic devices and they are expensive to replace. You get the idea. If you don't want your new puppy or dog to eat it, then hide it. Keep everything you want to save up high so your new dog can't reach it.

Resign yourself to the fact that you will forget occasionally and leave something down for your new dog to chew. This is normal. Try not to get too mad at your dog when he eats your smartphone and vow to remember to put your things away. He will outgrow this stage.

One of the most important things to remember is to put away anything poisonous or caustic, such as household cleaners. Do not leave bottles of bleach, liquid plumber, or spray cans of cleaner sitting around where your puppy or dog can reach them. Dogs really are curious and your dog might decide to chomp on one of these bottles with terrible results.

Also, do not leave any kind of medication sitting out. Over-the-counter medication and prescription pills can both be deadly to your dog. Keep them put up where your dog can never reach them.

Some houseplants are also dangerous to pets. Likewise, many young dogs tend to eat plants. If you have houseplants it's a good idea to put them in a room where your dog can't get to them or hang them up high.

You can help your new puppy or dog get through this stage by providing him lots of toys and safe things of his own to chew on. Puppies start teething when they are about three or four months old, getting their new adult teeth. Their jaws keep growing and changing until they are about 17-18 months old. After that time most young dogs settle down and stop chewing so much. Until that time, get in the habit of always asking yourself if something can be harmful to your dog.

Other preparations

There are some other important preparations you need to make before you bring your new dog home. It's a good idea to have all of your dog's new belongings gathered together before you bring him home so you won't have to leave him and run out to buy things.

Basic things your new dog will need include the following:

- Collar and leash
- Food and water bowls
- Bed
- Dog food (use the same food he's been eating at the shelter at first)
- Toys and chews
- Grooming supplies (brush, comb, shampoo)

These are the basic things you will need for your puppy or dog. You can add to these items later, once you get to know your dog better. You will probably want to change food at some point but it's a good idea to keep feeding the same food

your dog is already used to at first. A sudden change in food can cause stomach upset and lead to diarrhea.

House training or potty training will be a big part of your dog's early training. Many people like to use potty training pads to get their puppy to go to a specific place to potty. You can use these pads both in the house and outdoors. They contain a chemical that encourages a puppy to pee on them. The sooner you start your dog's potty training, the better.

The best way to introduce your dog to his new home environment

If possible, it's a good idea to try to get your new dog on a Friday afternoon or Saturday morning so you will have the weekend to help your new dog adjust to his new home environment. You could also take a day or two off from work to give yourself some time to help your new dog adjust. Things will seem strange and unknown to your rescue dog at first and he will be depending on you to show him around and teach him how things work in your home.

Most people will be bringing their new dog home from a local shelter or rescue so they won't have to worry about traveling a long distance with their dog. You can go directly to the shelter or rescue, or to the dog's foster home, to get the dog. In many cases the paperwork has already been completed by this point, especially if you have made previous trips to the shelter. This will certainly be the case if you are adopting from a rescue since they will want to check you out and perhaps do a home visit.

You should take your dog's new collar and leash with you to pick him up. If you don't have a collar or leash, most shelters will provide you with a simple nylon kennel lead. Some dogs will be happy to get out of the kennel and happy to go with you. Others may be more hesitant and fearful. You should try to remain calm and understanding with the dog. Lead him to your vehicle. If the dog is a puppy or Toy breed, you can carry him.

Kennel crates are often recommended when you travel with a dog in the car, especially a medium or large dog. They provide good protection in case of an accident. They also prevent the dog from wandering around the vehicle which can cause an accident. If you have a small dog or puppy you might use a small, portable pet carrier.

Many people simply hold a small dog in their lap but this can lead to problems. A nervous dog can get carsick and vomit on you. A wiggly dog can get loose in the car. If you open the car door and you aren't holding the dog securely, he can escape and get lost. You would be surprised by how often newly-adopted dogs get lost, especially on the drive home.

Things you should NOT do when taking your rescue dog home:

- Do NOT put your new dog in the trunk of your car
- Do NOT put your new dog in a cardboard box
- Do NOT let your new dog ride loose in the back of a pickup truck

Some dogs will already be familiar with riding in the car and they will probably love getting in the car and be happy to go home with you.

Once you arrive home with your dog it's a good idea to encourage him to potty outside before you go indoors. Your dog is probably excited or scared so it's a good bet that he has to relieve himself. If he potties before going inside, this is one less thing you have to worry about at first.

After he has relieved himself you can take him indoors and let him start getting to know his new home. Usually the first thing a dog encounters will be his new family. We'll discuss how to introduce your dog to new families members in the next section. You'll also need to introduce your dog to any other pets you may have. This can be a delicate task. We'll discuss it a little later. When you first bring your dog home it's a good idea if any other pets are outdoors, especially if you have a fenced yard; or confined to their crates or in a room where they won't be able to frighten your new dog.

With your new dog still on his leash, you can start walking him around the house. Start by taking him to the kitchen or other area where his water dish is. Your dog may be thirsty. Anxiety and stress often makes dogs thirsty and your dog is probably feeling a little nervous. You should fill the water dish with some fresh water. Make sure to keep the water dish filled with fresh water. After you have offered your dog some water, you can continue to show him the house. Show him his bed. Even if you plan to allow your dog to sleep on your bed, it's a good idea for your dog to have his own bed so he has his own place to go. You can place the bed in your bedroom or in another room where you expect your dog to spend some time.

Continue to give your dog a tour of the house. Make sure to show your dog any toys or chews you have bought for him. If your dog seems to like them, you can remove the leash and let him lie down and relax with them. Or, take a seat and encourage your dog to sit or lie down so you can pet him and get to know him better.

How to introduce your dog to other family members

As already mentioned, when you first bring your shelter dog home, your family members will probably be eager to meet him, if you have family members. It's a good idea to give your new dog some space at first. Most dogs are a little nervous when they arrive at a new home so don't allow your family members to

swarm around the dog. This can be overwhelming to the dog. Crowding the dog and putting pressure on him when he first arrives in your home could cause him to feel threatened. He might become fearful which could lead to him hiding or even biting someone. If he becomes very nervous he could also soil in the house right away, even if he has just relieved himself outside.

Instead, try to allow the dog to have some time to meet the family more slowly. Meeting each person one at a time is better than meeting three or four people all at once. Encourage your family members to stay calm and speak softly when talking to the dog during the first day or two. Have them offer the dog a toy or a treat when they interact with him. Show them how to pet the dog gently and appropriately so they don't threaten the dog.

If you have children, it's a good idea to talk to them about how to behave with the dog. You should tell your children to:

- Be gentle with the dog
- Do not pull on the dog, including his tail or ears
- Do not hit the dog, even when playing
- Do not run away from the dog, even when playing (dogs will chase running kids)
- Do not scream around the dog; this can be unsettling to many dogs

It's particularly important to introduce your kids to the dog and show them how to pet the dog appropriately.

Some dogs may be very happy to be in a new home and they will immediately begin warming up to you and your family members. In these cases you probably won't have any problems with the dog being frightened or overwhelmed. But it's always a good idea to be prepared, just in case the dog is anxious when you bring him home. Even if the dog is nervous, most dogs will begin to relax and settle in within a short period of time unless they have been abused or have some other temperament problems.

Introducing your new dog to other pets

Hopefully you have asked questions to find out how your new shelter dog gets along with other pets before deciding to adopt him, so you already know that he gets along well with them. That doesn't mean that your current pets will be happy to have a new dog in the house. While some cats and dogs adapt to a new dog reasonably well – or are even happy to have a new housemate – some pets can be jealous and unhappy about a new dog in the house. This can be especially true if you have an older pet who has never had to share your attention before. In some cases it takes a long time for a pet to accept a new shelter dog in the house so you will just have to be patient.

You can help the introductions go more smoothly by keeping the pets separated at first. When you first bring your shelter dog home, be sure your current dog is either outside, crated, or in a separate room so he can't rush out and intimidate the new dog. It's often advisable to make the initial introduction in a neutral area so your current dog doesn't feel like he has to protect his turf. Some people advise making the first introduction in a park with both dogs on a leash. You can have a friend hold one of the leashes. Let the dogs meet and sniff each other but be ready to draw back if either dog is aggressive. You might also be able to make this introduction in your front yard, though your current dog might feel protective of your home there.

If the introduction goes well, you can move on to letting the dogs get to know each other off-leash at the park or in your yard. You should monitor the interaction of the dogs carefully and be ready to step in if the dogs stop getting along.

If the introduction does not go well and one of the dogs seems too bossy or pushy, you will need to keep the dogs separated at your house while they slowly get used to each other. Keep them in separate rooms; feed them separately; spend time with them separately. Most dogs will eventually get used to each other and accept the situation.

Whether the dogs accept each other right away or there is some friction, you can expect them to have a few disagreements as they work out their positions. Whether you have two dogs or 10, dogs will create a pack hierarchy, with you at the top. But they will need to settle issues such as who gets the best sleeping spots, who gets to sit next to you, who gets the best toys, and so on. You might not notice some of these things, but dogs do.

If you are introducing your new shelter dog to a cat in the family, this also requires time and care. Keep your cat in a separate room at first. With your dog on a leash or in a pet carrier if he's small, and your cat in a carrier, you can let them see each other. You can also use a pet gate or baby gate at the door of a room. Put your new dog on a leash and lead him to the door so he can see the cat inside. Some cats will ignore the new dog and others will hide. You can gauge how your new dog reacts to the cat. Is he interested? Excited? Does he seem to like the cat? Does he want to kill the cat? You can continue to repeat this procedure and gradually allow the dog and cat to come into contact. In some cases the cat will decide to leave the separate room and come out into the house where the dog is. This is the moment of truth. What happens when the dog and cat are in the house together, without anything separating them? Make sure you are home and close by when this happens. A lot depends on the cat. If your cat is confident and refuses to run away when the dog comes to sniff him, most dogs will settle down and leave the cat alone. But, if your cat runs, many dogs will chase them. That can be a problem. If the dog perceives the cat to be prey, the cat can be in danger in the house.

If you have chosen a shelter dog who already has good experiences with cats, the dog should relax and accept the cat when your cat decides to meet the dog.

If you are bringing home a puppy from the shelter or rescue, you stand a better chance of having him accept a cat without any problems, especially if he has never met a cat previously. Most cats will simply smack a puppy if he bothers them. The puppy learns – quickly – to leave cats alone, even if he soon grows to be much bigger than the cat.

As for other pets, most dogs won't bother an aquarium or terrarium. If you have birds, most dogs won't bother them as long as they are safely out of their reach, although birds do fascinate many dogs, especially Sporting breeds. Do be careful if you have rabbits, gerbils, or hamsters. Make sure the cage is safe and your dog can't get into it. Dogs will usually see these small animals as something to eat.

How to handle an overly nervous or frightened dog

It's not unusual for a dog coming from a shelter or rescue to be nervous when he arrives at a new home. Put yourself in his position. The dog has left one home, gone to a shelter or rescue, lived in a kennel situation which might have been foreign to him, and might have lived in a foster home – all in a short time. He's met strangers, strange dogs, and been whisked from place to place. It's hardly surprising if the dog is nervous about going to another new place or meeting more new people. At the least, it will take such a dog a while to realize that he has a new “home” and he's not leaving. Some dogs can suffer from separation anxiety for a long time. The dog can latch on to you, as the only stable thing in his life, and he might not want to allow you out of his sight.

Fortunately, most dogs are very resilient and they can adapt to change. Even shelter dogs and dogs from rescues can adapt to all the changes in their lives and turn out to be good pets. But you can expect many dogs to be nervous and frightened when you first bring them home, or at least a little bewildered. If your dog seems very nervous or frightened, there are some things you can do to help him.

- Don't rush the dog
- Don't force him to do things such as coming out of his crate or your car, going in your house, or meeting new people
- Don't lose your temper

Take your time with the dog. If he is reluctant to get out of your car, for example, try coaxing him. Offer him some water and treats. Speak to him gently. Sit in the car with him and pet him. Try to gain his trust. Eventually he will get out of the car. If he seems reluctant to go in your house, do the same things: coax him,

Speak to him gently, and encourage him to go inside. Banish your family members until the dog is feeling less nervous. Show him his bed or another soft place where he can lie down and be quiet. The dog may choose a quiet corner behind some furniture, for example. Let him. Don't try to move him. Many nervous dogs just want to rest and get their bearings before they start looking around the house. If your dog is very nervous, let him rest until he decides to get up and look around on his own. This is also true of special needs dogs or dogs with chronic health problems. Allow them to rest before trying to show them the house.

For dogs that are very nervous or frightened, it's best to allow them to do things on their time table instead of being concerned about showing them around or meeting everyone. There is plenty of time to see things and meet people and pets later. The most important thing is for your adopted dog to begin feeling safe.

Chapter 9: Beginning Your Relationship

Now that you have adopted your shelter dog and brought him home, you are beginning a relationship that, with luck, may last many years, depending on the age of the dog. With any dog there are lots of things you need to do in order to get off to a good start and that's especially true with a rescue dog. Your rescue dog might be carrying some emotional baggage from his earlier life, for example, and you will have to work on those issues. You will have to take care of his health. You'll have to take care of his training and behavior. Your new dog can become a wonderful pet but, like every dog, it will take some work to build that relationship.

Visit the veterinarian

Whenever you get a dog from any source, it's always important to visit the veterinarian within the first 48 to 72 hours. This is true whether you are getting a dog from an animal shelter, a rescue, a pet store, or a dog breeder. Before you and your family bond with a puppy or dog, have your veterinarian examine the dog and make sure that it is in good health. (Unless, obviously, you have knowingly adopted a special needs or chronically-ill dog so you can care for him.) Most breeders, pet stores, and even shelters offer guarantees about the health of their dogs for some period of time and they will take back and replace a puppy or dog if you contact them and tell them that the dog is sick, per your veterinarian's exam. However, you should be very careful about getting a replacement puppy or dog if the dog has an illness such as parvovirus, distemper or another contagious disease. Do not ask for a replacement in these cases since a replacement dog will likely die as well. Be sure to inform the shelter, breeder, pet store, etc., if your puppy or dog has a contagious disease. They will need to quarantine their other animals and stop selling them. They should also contact people who have recently adopted a dog to let them know about the possibility of illness. If they take their pet to the vet early enough, it could make a difference.

Most of the time when you take your new shelter dog to the vet, he should pass with flying colors. If the vet does find something wrong, it will probably be something minor that is easily treated. For instance, your new dog might have ear mites or need to be wormed. If you have a puppy, your puppy might need to get his next set of vaccinations. Your vet will be able to tell you if your new dog is healthy, treat any health issues, and talk to you about things such as flea and tick prevention. He or she will also be able to get your dog started on regular heartworm prevention.

Most puppies and dogs coming from shelters and rescues have already been spayed or neutered so you won't need to talk to your vet about this issue. However, if your puppy or dog has not been altered, you can talk to your vet

about these procedures.

House training

One of the most important things that your new dog will learn is his house training. Soiling in the house is one of the top reasons why dogs are relinquished to shelters each year. People will put up with many problem behaviors, but most people won't put up with a dog that won't learn to be house trained.

It's possible that you have adopted a dog that has already been house trained. If that's the case then great! You and your dog are way ahead of many people who adopt a new dog. Some dogs are also very easy to house train. For whatever reason, large dogs are often easier to house train than small dogs. But any dog **can** be house trained. It may take some time, but any dog can learn to be house trained.

There are two basic ways to house train your dog. You can train your dog to potty indoors or you can train him to let you know he needs to outside.

In order to train your dog to potty indoors you can use potty training pads or something like a porch potty (these products have lots of different names but they are all similar). Potty training pads are treated with a chemical to attract dogs so they will use them when they need to relieve themselves. Most of these training pads have plastic under the pads so they won't leak and they will hold a lot of liquid. You simply dispose of them after they have been used. You can place them anywhere in your house or apartment – usually a quiet place where your dog can go and be undisturbed. The porch potty is like a litter box but it usually has plastic grass or real turf as a top layer. Underneath it has a drainage system. Dog use it to relieve themselves indoors. You can pick up solid waste on top and urine goes through to a tray on the bottom so it can be emptied and cleaned. It's usually easy to train a small to medium dog to use both of these methods because they are left sitting out in the house at all times. You can encourage your dog to use them by praising him and giving him treats when he uses them.

If you would like to train your dog to let you know when he needs to go outside (a traditional method), it helps to put your dog on a good schedule. Schedules are especially helpful with puppies. Basically, you should take your puppy or dog outside as soon as they wake, after every meal, after every big play session, and before bed.

You should also watch carefully for signals that your puppy or dog needs to go out. Puppies, in particular, are not very good at communicating at first, so they can't tell you that they need to go out. Watch for signs such as sniffing the floor, looking for private places such as behind furniture, going back to the site of a previous accident, and looking at the door. As your puppy or dog gets more

sophisticated about communicating with you, he might bark at you, scratch at the door, or put a paw on your leg to let you know he needs to go outside.

Make sure that you praise and reward your puppy or dog when he potties outside. It's easy to be upset when your dog has an accident in the house, but don't forget to let your dog know how happy you are when he potties where you want him to go.

Things you should NOT do include:

- Do NOT rub your dog's nose in a mess
- Do NOT hit your dog with a newspaper
- Do NOT yell at your dog for an accident

When your dog has an accident, it's usually because you missed his signals. You need to pay closer attention! And make sure you are consistent. Take your dog outside every single time he gives you a signal that he needs to go. Don't give your dog a pass because it's raining or snowing. There might be some false alarms, too, but that's better than missing his signal.

In most cases, it only takes a few weeks to house train a puppy or dog. Dogs vary. Some take longer than others. But if you and your dog continue to work at it, your dog will be house trained thoroughly and he won't forget.

Dealing with problem behaviors

A number of important studies have been done regarding dog adoption, owner relinquishment and retention of pets. These studies are helpful to shelters and rescues so they know why dogs are turned in, why some adoptions are successful and others aren't, and what kind of behavior problems are sometimes found in adopted dogs.

One study, conducted in tandem by the American Humane Association and PetSmart Charities, has been taking a look at the entire subject of keeping pets in homes, and it's being conducted in three phases. It's called *Keeping Pets (Dogs and Cats) in Homes: A Three-Phase Retention Study*. The second phase of the study – *Phase II: Descriptive Study of Post-Adoption Retention in Six Shelters in Three U.S. Cities* <http://www.americanhumane.org/petsmart-keeping-pets-phase-ii.pdf>, was released in the summer of 2013.

The study provides some good insights about dog adoptions and some of the behaviors that can lead to owner relinquishment:

In 2008, Lord et al., surveyed over 2,500 adopters one week following acquisition of a pet and found that 50.6 percent of the individuals who had adopted a dog or

cat reported that the pets had a behavioral problem. Fifty-one percent of the pets had one or more health issues.

Pet behavioral issues

Dogs with behavioral issues and little veterinary care have been found to be at greatest risk for relinquishment. Of reasons for relinquishment given by owners in a study conducted on behalf of the NCPPSP by Salman et al., 33.8 percent were classified as behavioral.

House soiling was a common reason for relinquishment for both dogs and cats. When a single behavior was given, biting, aggression, and escaping were the top three behaviors cited by relinquishing owners of dogs. The most common behavioral issues reported for dogs were chewing, digging or scratching objects. The most common behavioral issues for cats were chewing, digging, scratching, or high energy level. For both dogs and cats, pets less than one year of age were most likely to have behavioral issues reported. A 2010 study by Shore and Girrens found that 55 percent of recent dog adopters experienced behavioral problems within the first six months, but 35 percent continued to have problems after six months, most of which were minor.

Because the most important factors relating to risk for relinquishment for dogs are modifiable, addressing these issues early could potentially increase likelihood of retention.

As you can see here, common behavioral issues for dogs include **soiling in the house, chewing, digging and scratching** on objects (things in the home), **biting, aggression**, and **escaping**. Most of the behavioral problems surface within the first six months and a significant portion of the problems continue after six months. Most of the problems are considered to be “minor,” however. They **are** minor, if you are an experienced dog owner, and these behaviors can be modified with most dogs. However, if you are a first-time dog owner or if you haven't trained a dog before, these behaviors can be quite frustrating. They could easily make many adopters decide to return a dog to the shelter.

If you have already adopted a dog who has one of these issues, or you are considering adopting a dog, here are some tips to help you handle these common behavior problems. We've already discussed house training a dog (Chapter 9). The procedure is much the same whether you have a puppy or whether you have a junior dog or a mature adult. Provide your dog with plenty of opportunities to potty where you would like him to go. Be sure to praise and reward him for going where you want him to go. If you're taking your dog outside to potty, be sure to watch for the dog's signals so you will know when he needs to go out. If you are potty training your dog to use papers, training pads, or a potty system, make sure you change the papers or pads often and keep the potty

system clean so your dog will want to use it.

Chewing

Chewing is a particular problem with puppies, of course, but junior dogs and even adult dogs can chew on things, too. Like babies, puppies lose their baby teeth and get adult teeth which can be painful. This is one reason why they look for things to chew on while they're teething. Puppies typically start losing their baby teeth when they are about four months old. They continue to get adult teeth and their jaws go on growing and changing until they are about 17-18 months of age. You can expect puppies to keep putting things in their mouths and chewing until they are about two years old.

Along with putting things away so your puppy can't get them, you can help deter puppy chewing by providing your puppy with lots of his own toys and things to chew on. Check your local pet store for good chew toys and knotty ropes. Give your puppy toys and chews with a range of textures. At different times your puppy will appreciate things that are soft, hard, nubby, and so on. There are plenty of great toys and chews for puppies so give your puppy a good selection. If you spend some money on good toys and chews you can save your furniture and belongings.

Junior dogs and adult dogs can chew when they are lonely or bored. This is especially true if they are not getting enough exercise or spending enough quality time with you. Along with providing these dogs plenty of good toys and chews when they are home alone, try to make an extra effort to spend time playing with your dog. Increase the amount of exercise your dog gets. Tired, happy dogs are more likely to sleep when you have to go to work and that means they won't be chewing on your belongings.

Some breeds are also prone to being "mouthy." Sporting breeds, especially, tend to retrieve things and put items in their mouth. This can lead to chewing. This is natural for these breeds. Be sure to provide Sporting dogs with plenty of things to chew on and soft things that they can retrieve.

Digging and scratching

If your dog is digging and scratching in the house he can quickly destroy a sofa or tear holes in the carpet. This can be a very destructive habit. Digging is a natural behavior for dogs. Normally they will dig (in the dirt) to make a den or to find cooler ground for sleeping, for example. But a dog that digs in your sofa cushions, digs a hole in your mattress, or scratches a hole in your carpet can't make a den or find a cooler spot to sleep. There is the possibility that your dog has discovered a bug in the carpet or found a mouse in the sofa, but most of the time when a dog does this kind of digging it's because they are bored or anxious.

In both of these cases, it helps for you to spend more quality time with your dog. Try to spend more time playing with your dog. If your dog is bored, lonely, or anxious, more exercise is always a good idea. This doesn't mean putting your dog out in the backyard. It means doing things with your dog. Take your dog for a supervised run. Go for a long walk every day. Do some obedience lessons with your dog. Get involved in a dog sport that you and your dog can enjoy together. Your dog needs something to do so he will stop being destructive.

It's certainly all right to scold your dog for this kind of digging and let him know that it's not okay. Usually clapping your hands or making a loud noise is enough to make most dogs stop, at least temporarily. Be sure to praise and reward your dog when he does more appropriate things like playing with his toys and chewing on his chews.

Biting

Biting usually refers to nipping. This can be a problem with puppies. Puppies are supposed to learn something called "bite inhibition" from their mothers and siblings. And most of them do unless they are taken away from their homes at an extremely early age. However, when they go to their new human home, some puppies do not make the association between bite inhibition with other dogs and bite inhibition with humans. They need to learn that lesson. As a consequence, when you play with a puppy, he may nip you or play too roughly. Since puppies have teeth like little sharks, this can hurt quite a bit! You can teach your puppy appropriate bite inhibition in the following way:

When you are playing with your puppy and he nips you, you should yelp and stop playing with him for a few moments. This is what his siblings would do so your puppy will understand it. Then you can continue to play. If your puppy nips again, yelp and stop playing for a longer time. Then you can resume playing. If your puppy nips again, yelp and stop playing. Take a full time out from your puppy for at least 30 minutes. Don't look at him, talk to him, or play with him. If you do this every time your puppy nips or plays too roughly, your puppy will very quickly figure out that if he wants to play, he has to modify his behavior.

Make sure that you also tell your kids not to play with the puppy if he nips or plays too roughly. And remember to always supervise small children when they are playing with puppies and dogs.

Aggression

As mentioned earlier, most people should avoid adopting a dog that is known to be aggressive. Aggressive dogs require a lot of skill and experience to cope with them and they usually need a professional dog trainer. If you have adopted a dog who begins to show signs of aggression in the home, you should identify what kind of aggression it is. Is the dog being aggressive toward another dog in the

home? Or, is the dog being aggressive toward you or a member of your family? What are the signs of aggression?

If the dog is being aggressive toward another dog in the home, it's possible there is some rearrangement of the pack order going on. The new dog may want to take over as the top dog, for example. Or the dog you already have may be jealous of the attention that the new dog is getting. The dogs may be fighting over you. This is an uncomfortable situation for everyone. Sometimes it sorts itself out in a few weeks but sometimes the dogs never become friends. If the dogs continue to have problems you may have to decide if you want to keep the new dog or not.

If the dog is showing signs of aggression toward you or another family member, sometimes minor issues can be solved. For example, if the dog is guarding food you might be able to resolve this issue. It's possible the dog has gone hungry in the past and he is nervous about having someone bother his food. So, he may growl about his food. This can be disturbing but you can solve it. One way is by putting the food bowl away and feeding the dog out of your hand, bite by bite. The dog can't guard the food because there is no bowl. He has to come to you for each morsel. Dogs can become remarkably friendly when they realize that you have all the food. The dog doesn't get his bowl back until his manners improve. Or, if you want to leave the bowl in the floor, you can try walking by while the dog is eating and dropping yummy things into the bowl. You can drop in things like a piece of steak, some cooked chicken, some yummy fish, and so on. This way you are making sure the dog equates you with these great food items so when you approach the food bowl he doesn't growl. He knows you are going to give him something good and not take away his food.

Guarding food is just one sign of aggression but it's quite common. Another common sign of aggression is a dog that refuses to move when you tell him to do so. For example, your dog might be curled up on the sofa and you want to sit there. When you start to sit, the dog growls at you. What do you do? If your dog is growling at you, won't let you move him, won't get down when you tell him to, or if he's showing other signs of aggression like guarding toys or other objects, you need to take away the dog's privileges and start over. Make the dog earn everything through good behavior. For example, pick up his toys. He only gets toys when he's being a good dog. And then just give him a few – which you pick up when play time is over. Control your dog's food as described above. Don't allow your dog to get on any furniture. Your dog will have to earn that privilege again since his manners are so bad.

Above all, do not try any direct confrontations with your dog if he is growling or being aggressive in the home. Dogs can and do bite and a dog bite is nothing to dismiss lightly. If you ever feel like your dog is threatening you or a member of your family, or that any of you are in danger, you need to contact a professional dog trainer to help you and your dog with his problems.

One of the best things you can do if your dog is showing some of these problems is to begin a good obedience class. Obedience lessons are a good way to strengthen the bond between you and your dog. It also improves your dog's frame of mind, teaching him to enjoy learning. Once your dog learns basic obedience commands, many of them will also help you in the home. Classes that use positive reinforcement techniques – praise and rewards – are highly recommended for most dogs.

Escaping

As many dog owners can attest, having a missing dog is a heartbreaking experience. A dog that likes to escape can be a major problem. Some dogs seem to delight in trying to find ways to get out of a yard, whether they dig under a fence, climb over it, or find some other way out. If you adopt a dog who is an escape artist, there are some things you can do to keep your naughty dog at home, but you may have to try several different things before you find something that works.

If you have an ordinary chain link or similar fence, many dogs will accidentally discover that they can dig under the fence and escape. This is especially true if you have soft ground or a low place under the fence line. Tree roots can also create an opening along the fence line where a dog can scoot under. Dachshunds and Terrier breeds are especially prone to digging, so beware. You can cut down on some of these digging problems by placing used railroad ties along your fence line. These ties are relatively heavy and often used for landscaping purposes. They are dark and blend in to most yards. Your dog probably won't be able to budge them so they should cover up any soft spots or holes in the fence near ground level. You can find them at garden supply stores.

You can also fill in soft areas with concrete to prevent digging or, if you have the funds, you can have your fence extended a foot or so below ground so your dog won't be able to dig out.

If your dog climbs fences – and some dogs are expert climbers – you can get something called coyote rollers to fit along the top of your fence. Coyote rollers are used in the western U.S. and other places to deter coyotes and other animals from entering fenced areas. They are rollers that fit along the top of fences so animals can't get a good grip and go over fences. They work very well at keeping dogs inside fenced yards. You can use them with virtually any kind of fence. You can buy them online and through some fence companies.

If you have a dog that jumps fences, you may have a bigger problem. There are truly dogs capable of jumping six foot fences. If your dog escapes by jumping, you may have to consider an invisible fence. Invisible fences work by means of a buried cable that emits a signal. The dog wears a collar with a receiver that picks

up the signal. When the dog gets too close to the boundary line, the dog receives a warning tone and, if he keeps getting closer to the boundary, he gets a small static shock. Dogs are trained on these fences when they are installed. An invisible fence might be the only way to keep some dogs at home.

These are the main options if you have a dog that keeps trying to escape. There are also dogs who will bolt out the door when you go inside and out. This can be very dangerous, obviously, as the dog can run out into traffic. The best way to deal with this issue is usually to train the dog to sit or “go to your place” when you are going out the door or answering the door. A good obedience class will help you take care of this problem.

How to find a great trainer

As you can tell, many of the behavior problems covered here can be helped if you and your dog are taking a good obedience class. An obedience class will also help you and your dog develop a better relationship and improve your dog's manners in general. But, where do you find a great trainer?

Most communities have a good selection of dog trainers. One of the best ways to find a trainer is by word of mouth. Talk to other people with dogs, especially people who have trained their dogs. If you know someone who has a well-behaved, well-trained dog, ask them how they trained their dog. Where did they go? What trainer did they work with? Referrals from people you know and trust are a great way to find a trainer.

You can also check with local kennel clubs, your vet, your local pet supply store, the animal shelter or rescue where you got your dog, and local dog training centers. There is probably an entire community of dog lovers and dog activities in your area. Once you are plugged into it, you can find the dog trainers you need to meet.

You don't have to sign up with the first dog trainer you talk to. Meet the trainer. Ask questions about how they train. Visit a class. It's important that you and your dog take lessons from someone you like and respect.

Close relationships can take time

Although it probably seems like dogs can have a lot of problems, try to keep in mind that all close relationships take time. You and your dog need to build a relationship. Don't expect to bring your dog home from the shelter or rescue and be like Lassie and Timmy right away. You have to get to know each other. You probably seem just as quirky and strange to your dog as he does to you. If you could ask your dog, he might say that you also have some behavior problems that he's working on. It takes time but the two of you will work things out and develop the kind of relationship you want.

Food and nutritional considerations

As mentioned earlier, it's a good idea to continue feeding your new dog the same food that he's been used to eating at the shelter or rescue at first. Any sudden change in food will almost certainly lead to diarrhea and gastrointestinal problems, especially when it's coupled with all the other big changes your dog is experiencing at the same time.

After the first few days, when your dog has had a little time to adjust to his new surroundings, you can start thinking about changing food, if necessary. Most shelters and rescues are not able to feed the best of foods, for economic reasons, so you will probably want to upgrade the food your dog is eating. Before choosing a new food you should consider whether your dog has any health issues that would require a specific kind of food. Does he have any allergies? Is he a breed or mix that needs a specific kind of diet? Is he a very large or small dog that might benefit from special food? Do you know anything about his health history that might suggest he needs a certain kind of food? When you took him to the vet did you find out anything that might tell you what kind of food he needs? Does your dog need to lose or gain weight? These are all things to consider when you begin considering foods.

Once you have some idea of what kind of food you are looking for, you should check out dog food reviews, such as those on _____, so you can make an informed decision. Choose a good quality food. In general, it's a good idea to choose a food that has plenty of meat proteins. Choose foods with named protein and fat sources. Avoid by-products and digesters. Better foods usually have fewer grains or they are grain-free. Avoid artificial colors, sugars and artificial sweeteners, artificial flavors, and artificial preservatives.

Dog foods today can have a lot of complex ingredients and they aren't always what they claim to be. The most important thing is how your dog responds to the food. If you try a food and your dog doesn't like it or if he doesn't do well on the food, feed something else. You don't have to continue feeding a food just because it's expensive or other people say it's a good food. On the other hand, if you feed a food and your dog does well on it, don't let other people talk you out of feeding it. Your dog's health and condition are the most important things.

Changing your dog's food

Once you have chosen a food that you think would be good for your dog, you should make changes to your dog's meals gradually. Dogs can always gastrointestinal issues when you make changes to their food and this is especially true with shelter and rescue dogs who have been through a lot of changes in a short period of time.

You can start by mixing a small amount of the new food with your dog's current

food. See how your dog likes it. Many dogs like novelty so they will eat up any new food. They could even eat the new food and leave the old food. Ideally, your dog will eat both the old and new food so the change will be gradual.

If your dog likes the new food and there are no stomach upsets and no diarrhea, you can slowly add more of the new food to your dog's bowl each meal until he is only eating the new food.

After you have completely switched your dog over to the new food you should watch your dog's condition carefully. How does he do on the new food? Does he gain weight? Lose weight? Does his coat look shiny and healthy? Does he seem to have plenty of energy? If the food is a good choice for your dog, you should see an improvement in your dog's physical being. He should have a good coat and energy. If he seems to be gaining too much weight, you can adjust the amount of food you are feeding. In many cases good quality dog food has more calories per ounce than cheaper foods so your dog might be eating more calories than he was eating previously, even though it looks like you are feeding him the same amount when you put the food in his bowl.

While it's always tempting to give a dog as much food as he will eat, keep in mind that over 50 percent of dogs in the U.S. are estimated to be overweight or obese. Obesity is not good for your dog's health and will shorten his lifespan, so continue to watch your dog's weight and condition and do not overfeed him. Make sure that he gets plenty of good exercise every day.

If your dog doesn't like your food choice and won't eat it, or eats it reluctantly, you can always choose another food and find one that your dog likes better. Do keep in mind that if you change foods often you can make your dog become very picky about food and then it becomes difficult to find good foods that he will eat. Choose a couple of good foods that your dog likes and stick with them once you know that your dog likes them and stays in good condition on them. You can alternate them when your dog seems to get tired of one of them.

Of course, along with your dog's food, make sure that your dog always has access to clean water.

Chapter 10: Tips For The First Year and Beyond

Your first year with your new rescue dog will bring many challenges. Every dog is different, of course. Puppies usually require the most time but if you have adopted a dog with behavioral issues, you will also be spending a lot of time working on those issues and helping your new dog learn better behaviors. If you have adopted an older dog or a dog with a chronic health issue, hopefully you have talked to a veterinarian before adopting your dog so you know what lies ahead of you.

Along with house training and working on behavioral issues, many dogs from shelters and rescues need help with socialization during their first year.

Socialization

Socializing your dog means teaching him the skills he needs so he can get along well with humans and other dogs. It also includes exposing your dog to the common sights and sounds that he will encounter both at home and when he goes out in public. A dog that is well-socialized generally has more self-confidence, a greater capacity for learning, and he's happier. He's also less likely to develop many common behavior problems. For example, a well-socialized dog is less likely to be afraid of strangers or bark constantly. Self-confident dogs can entertain themselves when you leave them home alone instead of becoming lonely and anxious.

How to socialize your dog in the home

Ideally socialization begins when a dog is a young puppy. When you get a puppy from a good breeder, puppies have usually already been exposed to TVs, stereos, vacuum cleaners, and other loud noises in the home. If the breeder has a cat, the puppy has probably already met him. Plus, the puppy has probably been held and petted by lots of people. These are all excellent ways to start a puppy's early socialization.

However, when you get a puppy from a shelter or rescue, you can't be sure that your puppy has had these experiences. If you have a puppy from a shelter or rescue, you should fill in some of these experiences for him. Begin exposing him to the strange things in your home. Allow him to meet a confident cat that isn't afraid of him, even if you don't own a cat yourself. And, definitely, encourage your friends and family to pet and play with your puppy at home. It's a good idea to have different people play with your puppy: large adults, children, people in wheelchairs, people wearing hats, and so on. If your puppy meets these people in friendly situations, he will be less likely to be fearful of them when he meets them outside the home later.

If you have a junior dog or one that is already a few months old, or even a couple of years old, you can go about socializing him in the home the same way. Slowly introduce him to some of the stranger things in your home, especially things that make noise if he's not used to them. Let him meet people in your home and encourage them to pet him. If your dog seems overwhelmed by too many people, then just have one person at a time interact with him. If your dog is reluctant to be petted, have the person offer your dog a treat first. Most dogs will warm up to someone who has a treat in their hand. It also helps if you are friendly with the person so you can show your dog that this is someone that you like and approve of.

If you have adopted an older dog who isn't very socialized, you can follow these same recommendations. Your dog will probably not become very welcoming to strangers but he should be able to learn that they aren't threatening. He should become used to strange things in the house and loud noises.

How to socialize your dog in public

All dogs should have good manners. That's part of being a good dog owner. It will also make you and your dog welcome in your community.

Socializing your dog in public continues what your dog has already been learning at home. Now that your dog is more comfortable meeting strangers and having people pet him, you can take him places outside the home where he will meet people. You can start with a place like your veterinarian's office. Most vet techs and assistants are happy to pet puppies and make a fuss over them. Plus, they know how to properly pet dogs without scaring them. They will probably even be happy to spend some time petting a juvenile dog who is a few months old. Vet techs and assistants usually have some treats for dogs, too, but you can also take your own treats to reward your puppy or dog for being good and letting people pet him.

Other good places to take your dog include parks where you can walk calmly and encounter people. Puppies and dogs enjoy seeing birds and animals in parks. They can also encounter other dogs at times so be sure your puppy or dog is wearing his collar or leash. Good manners dictate that you should not let your puppy or dog rush up to an unknown dog. Some adult dogs are friendly but other dogs don't like to have a dog in their face, even if the dog is trying to be friends. People with Toy or small dogs should take particular notice of this. Large dog owners do **not** think it's cute when you let your small dogs rush up to their large dogs. Keep your dog by your side. If the other person says their dog is friendly, you can allow the dogs to get a little closer, but you should be prepared to move your dog back or, if the dog is small, to pick him up. If the dogs are close in size and they seem to like each other, you can arrange for the dogs to play sometime.

Dog parks are not usually a good place to socialize a dog, especially if the dog has not had any obedience training and you have not had the dog very long. This is especially true for puppies. Dog parks tend to be a rough and tumble place. A dog who has any fear issues or other behavioral problems can have setbacks at the dog park. Puppies can be injured playing with bigger puppies or dogs. It's usually a good idea to stay away from the dog park with your new shelter puppy or dog until he is older and you know your dog much better.

One good place to take your dog for socialization is a pet supply store, as long as your dog has received all of his vaccinations. Many people take their puppies and dogs to pet supply stores. It's a good place to find dog lovers who will be happy to pet a puppy or young dog. Do make sure that your puppy or dog has had all of his vaccinations before you take him there though. You don't want to risk exposing your dog to any diseases commonly carried by dogs.

Other ways to socialize your puppy or dog

Along with these ways to socialize your dog in public, you can also sign up for a puppy preschool or puppy kindergarten class for your puppy or young dog. These classes focus on socialization and good manners. They are usually taught at pet supply stores, by kennel clubs, or by trainers at training centers so call around to find out where they are being offered in your area. Classes usually last for about six to eight weeks and meet once or twice a week. Puppies and young dogs have a chance to mingle and play in a safe area with other dogs of the same age group, with the owners present. Owners can pet and play with all of the dogs which helps with socialization. Your puppy or dog gets used to friendly interaction with other dogs, along with meeting other friendly people. These classes are a great way to build a puppy or young dog's confidence and teach him how to behave in public.

After a puppy or young dog has finished with a puppy preschool class, they are usually ready to go right into a good basic obedience class.

Obedience classes

Along with learning socialization skills, the other major task for you and your dog during your first year together is to work on learning obedience lessons.

You can teach your dog obedience in a couple of ways: by using CDs, books, and DVDs at home; and by taking training classes with a trainer. Many people have produced wonderfully trained dogs by training their dogs themselves at home. Even people who have never trained a dog before can train a dog at home, especially with the help of good books and other resources. So, if this is something that you would like to do, it's certainly possible to do it.

On the other hand, many people training a dog for the first time benefit from

taking a good obedience training class from a good instructor. This is often true for people who adopt a puppy or dog from a shelter or rescue. Shelter dogs often benefit from training in a class setting with other dogs since this emphasizes good socialization. Training in a class setting with other dogs and people can also help to build confidence for many dogs. Just going to class and being surrounded by other dogs and people is fun for many dogs and they look forward to going to class.

Ultimately, the choice is up to you and what you feel will be best for you and your dog.

There are several different training methods popular today. These include traditional dog training, sometimes called the Koehler Method. This method uses a slip collar and corrections. There is also positive reinforcement. You've probably heard of clicker training and this is one version of positive reinforcement. Positive reinforcement uses praise and rewards in training. Clicker training uses a small metal clicker to "mark" the moment when a dog does what you want him to do. Then you immediately reward him with something he loves, such as a small training treat. Many people have also heard of "dog whispering" but this is not really a method for obedience training. It is sometimes used for behavior problems.

When you talk to a trainer you should ask them what their classes are like and how they train. Or visit a class so you can see for yourself if you and your dog would like it. By all means, if you sign up for a class and it's not working out well for you and your dog, quit the class. There is no reason to put yourself and your dog through an experience that you are not enjoying or benefiting from. Find a better class.

One thing most people tend to forget is that the time spent in class is only part of the work involved. When you take an obedience class with your dog it's also necessary to practice at home each day. If you don't keep practicing with your dog, he won't remember what he learned at class and the class will be useless.

In a basic obedience class, which usually lasts about six to eight weeks and meets once or twice a week, you can expect your dog to learn the following: Come, sit, sit-stay, lie down, down-stay, walk on a loose leash, and heel. Some trainers may teach a few more things, depending on how fast the class learns.

When choosing a class, a smaller class is better. Your trainer will have more time to work with you individually. Smaller classes are usually a good choice for a shelter dog, especially the first time you take a class with your dog.

After you and your dog complete a basic obedience class, the two of you can really go in any direction you like. You're ready for more advanced obedience work, agility, rally, or other dog sports. Or, you can simply enjoy your well-trained,

well-socialized dog.

Your dog's manners

Manners are the way your dog behaves. They are not quite covered by obedience or socialization. They aren't necessarily about behavior problems. Instead, they have more to do with your relationship with your dog and how you allow your dog to act in the home and around other people.

Your dog may know basic obedience but if you allow him to do things that are rude, he can still have bad manners. For example, if you allow your dog to jump up on people when he meets them because it's cute or because he's excited, that's very bad manners. You can easily stop this behavior by telling your dog to sit but it's up to you to control your dog.

When you are out in public, it is good manners to keep your dog at your side when meeting other dogs or people. Don't let your dog rush up to other dogs. Even if you have a tiny dog, it's not cute to rush up to a big dog. Some dogs really don't like it and they could bite your dog. In fact, they could pick your little dog up and shake him like a toy. Of course, the big dog gets blamed for harming the little dog, but it's really the fault of the little dog's owner for allowing the little dog to behave badly.

Many small dogs seem to be unaware of how small they are and they will stand up to and bark at much larger dogs. Again, for your dog's protection, keep him on a leash and don't allow him to do this sort of thing. Although some people think it's cute, it can lead to tragedy.

In the home you should insist that your dog obey you. This is true regardless of your dog's size – whether he is a Mastiff or a Chihuahua, it's important for you, the owner, to be in charge. You should never be rough or harsh with your dog but you should be firm and insist that you are the leader in the home. Some dogs are very easygoing and this will never become an issue but with other dogs, if you allow them to take charge, they can develop problems with aggression if you don't assert yourself.

Taking a good obedience class with your dog does help with these issues, especially if your dog shows signs of defying you in the home.

Conclusion

We have tried to cover everything you need to know about adopting a dog from a shelter or rescue. From deciding if it's the right time to adopt a dog and if you have time to care for one, to how to choose the right dog and bringing him home, all the way to making your home dog proof and handling common behavior problems, we've tried to give you the information you need to make good decisions for you and your new friend.

Of course, every dog and every adoption are unique. You may face issues that aren't discussed here. For health issues, we recommend that you talk to your veterinarian. He or she is a professional and has trained for many years to deal with the health problems your dog might face.

If your dog is having behavior problems that aren't covered here, we suggest that you talk to a good trainer or animal behavior consultant. Many dog problems are quite common and can be easily dealt with but some require more expertise. Instead of taking bad advice from someone, talk to an expert.

Most dogs, including dogs adopted from shelters and rescues, are very adaptable and they will soon settle in to your home and your routine. They will learn the rules that you set for them. Kindness, firm control, and good daily care will make your dog happy. Provide your dog with good food and constant access to water. Make sure he gets plenty of exercise. See that your dog has routine veterinary care as well as flea and tick control and heartworm prevention. Add to these things your love and attention and he should be a happy, healthy dog.

We hope that you have enjoyed this e-book and that it has answered many of your questions. Good luck with your adoption. Hugs and kisses to your new dog!

Resources

These are some of the studies and other resources used for this e-book. You may wish to consult them further for more information.

American Kennel Club Breed Rescue Groups:

<http://www.akc.org/breeds/rescue.cfm>

American Pet Products Association

http://www.americanpetproducts.org/press_industrytrends.asp

“American Temperament Test Society,” <http://www.atts.org>

Banfield State of Pet Health Report

http://www.stateofpethealth.com/Content/pdf/Banfield-State-of-Pet-Health-Report_2013.pdf

“Behavioral Assessment in Shelters,” by Sheila Segurson, DVM, DACVB. 2007. Maddie's Fund.

http://www.maddiesfund.org/Maddies_Institute/Articles/Behavioral_Assessment_in_Animal_Shelters.html

Benjamin, Carol Lea, *Second Hand Dog: How to Turn Yours into a First-Rate Pet*. Howell Book House, 1988.

“Canine Drives,” by Norma Bennett Woolf,

<http://www.canismajor.com/dog/drives.html>

“Choosing and Getting a Dog,” [http://www.paw-](http://www.paw-rescue.org)

[rescue.org/PAW/PETTIPS/DogTip_ChoosingAndGettingAPet.php](http://www.paw-rescue.org/PAW/PETTIPS/DogTip_ChoosingAndGettingAPet.php)

“Evaluating Temperament in a Potential Rescue Dog,” by M. Shirley Chong,

<http://www.shibaweb.com/rtemp.htm>

“Fostering a Rescue Dog,” by M. Shirley Chong,

<http://www.shibaweb.com/rfst.htm>

Keeping Pets (Dogs and Cats) in Homes: A Three-Phase Retention Study. Phase I: Reasons for Not Owning a Dog or Cat. PetSmart Charities and American Humane Association. 2012. <http://www.americanhumane.org/aha-petsmart-retention-study-phase-1.pdf>

Keeping Pets (Dogs and Cats) in Homes: A Three-Phase Retention Study. Phase II: Descriptive Study of Post-Adoption Retention in Six Shelters in Three U.S.

Cities. PetSmart Charities and American Humane Association. 2013.
<http://www.dhewo.com/pdf/keeping-pets-dogs-and-cats-in-homes-a-three-phase-retention-pdf.html>

“Matching Dogs and People: Temperament Testing Shelter Dogs,” by Norma Bennett Woolf, <http://www.canismajor.com/dog/shelevel.html#Test>

National Animal Interest Alliance
http://www.naiashelterproject.org/Pet_Rescues.cfm

National Council on Pet Population & Study
<http://www.petpopulation.org/research.html>

Pet Ownership & Demographics Sourcebook, AVMA. 2012 Edition.
<https://www.avma.org/news/pressroom/pages/Sneak-preview-of-AVMA-Pet-Demographic-Sourcebook-at-2012-convention-in-San-Diego.aspx> (The full sourcebook was used as a reference for this e-book but you can see some of the statistics and information on this site.)

PetFinder.com
<http://www.petfinder.com/>

“Puppy Aptitude Test,” by Wendy and Joachim Volhard,
<http://www.volhard.com/pages/pat.php>

The Shelter Pet Project
<http://theshelterpetproject.org/>

“Study examines pet retention following adoption,”
https://www.avma.org/News/JAVMANews/Pages/130701s.aspx?utm_source=smartbrief&utm_medium=email

“Temperament Testing Program at C.A.R.E. Shelter,” <http://www.care-evanston.org/temperament.htm>

“Tough Temperaments: Dominance, Aggression, Viciousness and definitions of other terms such as Submission, Temperament, Socialization,” by Norma Bennett Woolf, <http://www.canismajor.com/dog/behvterm.html>