

Congratulations!

Welcome to the SPCA family and thank you for adopting your new family member.



We are here for you and your new pet.

If you have any medical questions, please feel free to reach out to our clinic staff at (914) 941-2896 ext. 110.

If you have any training or behavioral questions, or need a trainer referral, please feel free to reach out to our Behavior and Enrichment Department at

(914)941-2896 ext. 124 or ext. 116

Or via email to Trainer@spcawestchester.org

Online Resources and books for Adopters:

[Love has No Age Limit – Welcome and Adopted dog into your home by: Patricia McConnell, PhD](#)

[Way to go! How to Housetrain a Dog of any age By: Patricia McConnell, PhD.](#)

<https://spcawestchester.org/adopt/resources-for-adopters>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dbzPoB7AKk>

Congratulations, you just adopted a new dog, or should I say a new family member. While it is cause for celebration, let's go over some simple things before planning the big welcome party. Here are some guidelines to help you and your dog navigate through this exciting new time and to ease your dog into his new forever home.

While getting out of the shelter is a day your dog has dreamed of, it can be stressful. Upheaval and change can put anyone, human or animal out of sorts. Remember it is all new for your dog and they aren't sure exactly how to behave and what to make of the changes. For this reason, go slowly. A wise trainer once said, "If you think you are going too slow, slow down". Your dog will be getting to know you, learning the ins and outs of potty training, sleeping arrangements, and a brand-new feeding and walking schedule among other things.



You are excited you have a new pet and want the world to know it, but please don't have a big party to introduce your extended family and neighbors to your new dog. Let him get to know you, and the people he will now be living with. Keep things calm and relatively quiet in the first couple of weeks. Once your new dog is more settled you can begin to have him meet your friends and family. We know due to COVID all of this has changed, so please refer to our socializing during COVID handout.

When interacting with your dog, try not to have everyone swarm around at once; it can be intimidating for him. Offer treats and allow your dog to approach you first before petting. (Please refer to the body signal handout to learn what your dog is telling you.)

Show your dog around his new home (on leash is a good choice). Have a safe space ready for him. A kitchen with a bed or crate set up and a baby gate makes a safe environment for the dog to rest and calm down. Whenever your dog is not supervised, he should be in this area of your home. It will help with house training and give him a place to decompress. It is always best not to give too much freedom too quickly. Too much freedom could mean getting into things that they shouldn't. Things like chewing your

favorite shoes, or soiling in spots you don't notice, or even injuring themselves in areas not dog-proof.

Start house-training right away. Walk your dog outside before stepping inside the house. If they do eliminate outside, be ready to praise and reward. Expect accidents. Your new dog has been living in a shelter. Dogs in shelters have no choice but to soil where they live. You may be pleasantly surprised that he picks up housetraining easily, but don't expect it. Treat your new dog like a puppy no matter what his age. Take him outside as frequently as possible and praise and treat after he uses the bathroom. If he does have an accident, oh well, clean it up and move on. Never reprimand a dog for soiling inside. You would never scold a child who is transitioning from diapers to the bathroom, so don't scold your dog. Simple recipe: frequent potty breaks, confinement when not supervised and watch for signs of needing to use the bathroom when you do supervise (circling, sniffing, going to the door). If you see any of those signs take a quick run outdoors. And don't forget a good enzymatic cleaner.



I know what you are thinking, "My dog stinks!" While this may be true, please do not start your relationship by giving your dog a bath or taking them to the groomer. Most dogs are not big fans of the bathtub or the grooming salon. While they can easily adjust to this with some positive reinforcement, now is not the time to stress them unnecessarily. Wait a couple of weeks until your dog is more comfortable. You can always purchase baby wipes to help him smell a little fresher.

Your dog may have some digestive issues in the first few days. Again, change is stressful. Don't rush to transition to a new food. When transitioning, go slowly adding a little of the new food at a time. Your dog may not have a great appetite in the first few days, this is very common. As long as they are drinking water and using the bathroom, there is no reason to worry. (If it goes on longer than a few days or if your dog stops drinking water then please call your vet.) Feed your dog twice per day and always have fresh water available. Please let your dog eat in peace. No hovering around or allowing the kids trying to play with them while they are eating.

Provide your new dog with plenty of appropriate things to chew on. Nylabones, bully sticks, kongs (stuffed with food), etc. Chewing is a natural stress reliever for dogs and provides mental stimulation as well. And don't forget the toys. Always supervise your pet with these items to be sure they are safe. If you need to get something away from your dog, never take it out of his mouth. Always offer something delicious to trade.

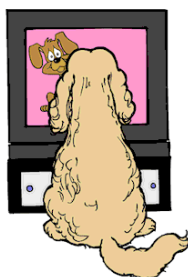
Puppy Adoption during Covid-19

One of the biggest challenges when raising a puppy is proper socialization. During a time of social isolation this may seem especially overwhelming. But just what is appropriate socialization and maybe our “new normal” may really help your new puppy thrive.

Socialization is gradually exposing your puppy to a multitude of experiences but all while the puppy is relaxed and comfortable. The goal is to build confidence and for your puppy to associate good things with these new experiences. What it isn't, is overwhelming your puppy with people, other dogs, potentially scary things (men with beards, motorcycles, etc.)

So, if we can't bring our puppies to puppy class, family gatherings, ball games and the like what can we do? Well, as it turns out quite a lot.

Household humans. If you live with others, take advantage of the variety of people in your household. Everyone should spend individual, quality time by playing, feeding, grooming, cuddling and gently handling the new family member. The differences between big and small people, adults and children, bearded and non-bearded men, right under your own roof can be significant.



Household sounds. There are many sources of sound stimuli in your home. Watch your puppy or dog to see how he reacts to the doorbell, microwave, TV sounds (and images), phone ringtones, a piano, and electronic toys. A typical puppy alerts to the sound and shows some curiosity, but then recovers. Reassure and feed him if he seems worried, then reintroduce the sound at a lower volume (or from a greater distance), gradually building up to the original intensity.

Learning to be alone. The quarantine “honeymoon period” will soon be over, and you won't have as much time to spend together. Because learning to be *without* people is as important as learning to be with them, now is the time to teach your puppy to stay by herself in a crate or a gated area.

Place your crate in a nested area, such as a corner of the family room or in your bedroom. Provide a chew or food-stuffed toy in the crate, and cover if it helps. Go for some neighborhood walks (practicing social distancing) without your puppy, or spend time in another room, cooking or reading. Learning to be without you will be a useful skill for the rest of her life.



Environmental stimuli. Socialization can apply to environmental as well as social stimuli. There are limitless examples outdoors to which you can introduce your puppy safely. Remember to allow him to take his time in approaching, stepping on, or passing the stimulus. Reassure, feed, bounce a ball, and encourage, but never force. Consider:

- Different textures – asphalt, grass, uneven trails, wet and dry conditions.
- Traffic and traffic sounds.
- Bicycles, skateboards, and other wheels – from a safe distance.
- A variety of weather, including light rain and wind in addition to sunny days; darkness as well as daylight.

Social stimuli. Even while we have to maintain a safe distance from each other, there are safe ways to introduce your puppy to the people and animals around her.

- If you live in an area where people walk and exercise nearby, briefly stop and talk to others while staying at least 6 feet away. Point those people out to your puppy, and tell them about her. Be sure she is aware of them.
- Watch your puppy's body language. You have the luxury of time and distance (from others) to allow identification of fear or over exuberance. This is a great opportunity to learn about her social boundaries in a safe (for her) way. Use plenty of food, and reassuring and happy words. Sit on the ground with her while you regale your neighbors about how perfect she is.

- This is also a good opportunity to expose her, at a safe distance, to other dogs. In fact, it is better for all new puppies to meet others from a distance rather than to have close encounters with dogs who might be aggressive. You might also walk past dogs in fenced yards who bark or run along with you. Again, this is an opportunity to watch your puppy's reactions and respond accordingly. Always use a happy voice and give bits of food to reassure her. This is a type of "counter-conditioning" – teaching her to have consistently good associations with the dogs in her world.

Training. Teach your puppy valuable skills like sit, down, drop it and go to your bed. YouTube has a wealth of videos by reputable trainers. Force free, science based, positive reinforcement trainers. Kikopup is a favorite. Organizations like IAABC have a wealth of information on their website. And just because you can't take your puppy-to-puppy class doesn't mean you can't bring the class to them. Many trainers are now offering remote training and zoom classes.

Social isolation doesn't have to prevent us from getting our puppies what they need and helping them thrive.

We can't thank you enough for choosing to adopt from us! Please reach out to us anytime. Email: trainer@spcawestchester.org

HOW NOT TO GREET A DOG

Most people do this stuff and it stresses dogs out so they BITE!
I don't care how cute you (or your kid) think Boogie is. Please show him some respect.



DON'T
Lean over the dog & stick
your hand in his face



DON'T
Lean over the dog & stick
your hand on top of his head



DON'T
Grab or Hug him



DON'T
Stare him in the eye
(This is an adversarial gesture)



DON'T
Squeal or shout in his face



DON'T
Grab his head and kiss it
(This is an invasion of space)

Doing this to a dog who doesn't know you is like a perfect stranger giving you a great big hug and kiss in an elevator. Wouldn't that creep you out? And wouldn't you have the right to defend yourself?

THE CORRECT WAY:



- * No Eye contact
- * Let the dog approach you in his own time
- * Keep either your SIDE or BACK towards the dog (non-threatening posture)



- * Pet or stroke him on the SIDE of his face or body. Or on his back.

Identifying Fearful Body Language in Dogs

These body language signals indicate that a dog may be fearful.



Ears back



Tucked tail



Trembling



Avoids eye contact



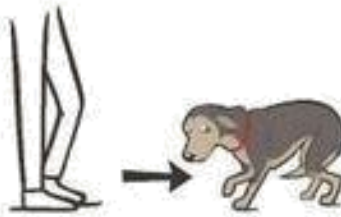
Crouching



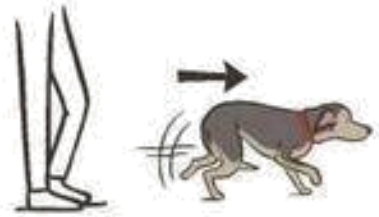
Cowering



Lip licks



Backing away



Running away



Not interested in food



Does not approach



CENTER FOR
Shelter Dogs

A PROGRAM OF THE ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE OF BOSTON

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