

## Importance of enrichment

It is vital you provide your dog mental and physically stimulation daily. Enrichment plays an important role in reducing unwanted behaviours, anxiety and ultimately improves a dog's quality of life.

There are endless ways to provide enrichment to your dog without spending much money. Check out some DIY options below.

### When they are home alone:

- ✓ Instead of feeding your dog in a bowl, scatter their dry kibble throughout the backyard.
- ✓ Make enrichment boxes/ food puzzles with your recycled toilet rolls, cereal boxes etc.
- ✓ Create a lick or snuffle mat for your dog.
- ✓ If your dog loves to dig, give them a place to dig (i.e. sand pit).

### When you are together:

- ✓ Spend some time training with your dog. Teach them to 'sit', 'leave-it', 'find-it', or a new trick.
- ✓ Take your dog for a walk in a different neighbourhood.
- ✓ Play hide and seek with your dog.

Congratulations on the newest addition to your family! We're excited you decided to adopt your new dog from Domestic Animal Services (DAS). This brochure is designed to set you and your new furry family member up for success.

All dogs at DAS have been temperament tested so we find the best match possible. The behaviours we see at the shelter are only a glimpse into a dog's personality. Their temperament can change as they settle into a new environment.

Try not to set expectations on how this adjustment period will go. Your dog may not show any signs of stress, or they may need some time to settle into their new routine and home.

It's important to never leave your new dog and a child alone without supervision

## For more information



[www.cityservices.act.gov.au](http://www.cityservices.act.gov.au)



02 6207 2959



92 Mugga Lane  
Symonston, ACT



**OWN A DOG**  
OWN THE RESPONSIBILITY



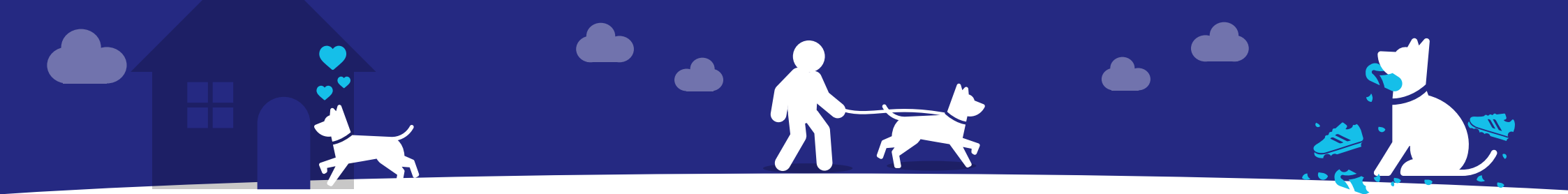
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# Adopting a dog from Domestic Animal Services

## A guide to help your new dog feel at home





Entering a new environment can be overwhelming for many rescue dogs. Your house is a new place, with new smells and sounds, and it can take time for them to feel comfortable. Being prepared can help make the transition as smooth as possible.

## Prior to adoption

- ✓ **Dog proof your house and backyard.** Walk your property to ensure it is safe and secure. Close off the areas they are not going to be allowed.
- ✓ Set up a place for them to go that is **safe and comfortable** (i.e. sheltered kennel or crate). This should be placed in a quiet area, so they can go to it if they are feeling overwhelmed.
- ✓ Have a **collar with a name tag** and phone number ready to go.

## First few days

- ✓ When you first arrive home, **immediately take the dog to what will be the toileting area.** Spend a good amount of time here and praise them when they toilet where you want them to. Even if they're already house-trained, rewarding them will reinforce this good behaviour early on.

*Remember even a 'house-trained' dog will make mistakes in a new environment. Reprimanding a dog for toileting inside will only cause the dog to be fearful of you. Keep it positive and give them time to learn the new house rules.*

- ✓ **Let the dog wander** and investigate their new home.
- ✓ **Give your dog space** by not forcing interaction. Follow their lead and let them come to you. If the dog wanders away after receiving attention, let them.
- ✓ **Be patient and praise often.** Reinforce good behaviour by praising or treating your dog when they do something good (without asking). They'll quickly learn good things happen when they perform that behaviour.
- ✓ To limit gastric distress, **wean them off their current food** by mixing in their new food slowly. Your dog's feeding routine was:



- ✓ **Keep a calm environment** by avoiding loud noises or inviting guests over in the adjustment period.
- ✓ **Start their new routine as soon as possible.** Think mealtimes, walk times, playtime, and toilet breaks. Dogs adapt quickly to routine and having a plan from the start will help.
- ✓ **Separation anxiety is common** in shelter dogs. Before leaving them home alone for a whole day, practice leaving them for short periods of time. Use enrichments to keep them occupied while you're gone.
- ✓ **Don't overwhelm them** by visiting a dog park or off lead area in the first few weeks. Give them time to bond with you and settle into their new routine.

## After the first few weeks

Your **dog's 'true' personality may start** to come through now. They will be starting to feel more confident, understand their environment, and become more settled. It's around this time that behavioural issues may also start.

We **recommend** Rewarding good behaviour and ignoring or redirecting unwanted behaviour to help your dog understand what you want.

- ✓ Reward wanted behaviours.
- ✓ Train alternate behaviours.
- ✓ Give your dog positive feedback.
- ✓ Build behaviour patterns.

## A note on responsible pet ownership

**All dogs in the ACT must be microchipped.** If your contact details and/ or address changes, it's important you contact your microchip provider to update the details. Your dog's microchip company is:



**All dogs must be registered with your local council.** If you live outside ACT, it's important to familiarise yourself with the regulations in your district.

In the ACT registration is renewed annually. If you change your contact details and/ or address, it's important you notify Domestic Animal Services. **Our priority is to reunite lost dogs with their owners as soon as possible.**