

## “Two Weeks! Give ‘em a break!”

These are some tips to help give a new dog time to adjust to you and your family and resident pets in the new environment.

**Why The Two-Week Shut Down?** New adult dogs come into our home on “a journey into a new and scary world.” By giving the dog a “time out” the dog can learn its new world, its new people and begin to relax and blossom under the care of the new caregiver. Just like a newborn baby we wouldn’t rush out and pass the baby from person to person, we set up a stable and safe environment, our new dogs are just like that, our newborn baby. We give the rescue dog a bit of time to heal, mentally and physically.

Step back for a minute and think how you might feel if you were expected to live with new people who didn't understand your language. It's very likely that you'd feel exhausted, overwhelmed, and ready to retreat but really have no place to go to. You might begin to act out and yell at people for coddling you and insisting that you do this and do that.

**HOW TO TWO WEEK SHUT DOWN:** For the first two weeks, (sometimes even longer depending on the dog) a dog takes in the new environment and who are the top persons and dogs. A great way of thinking of this time is "this is the dating period NOT the honeymoon" **By shutting down the dog, it gives the dog TIME to see you, meet YOU, hear and take in the new sounds and smells of your home in a safe way.**

- \* **DO NOT leave your home or yard, AT ALL. No car rides, no human guests, no other dogs (see below for resident pets), no pet stores, no WALKS, nothing but you, your home, your yard during the 2 week shutdown.**
- \* Place the dog’s crate in a quiet place where you spend most of your time. If you have resident pets, see below.
- \* Don’t go crazy petting and handling the dog. Allowing the dog time to absorb and the decision to come to YOU for pets and affection can do a lot in taking pressure off a new dog.
- \* Leash. This also teaches the new safe zone for the dog is around you and the humans in the home. Leash the dog right to your belt or under a piece of furniture. And this also stops the dog from reacting if you have to get him off of something like the couch, you are not reaching in and grabbing onto him, just tug gently on the leash, say "come on" and there you go. no conflict!
- \* Exercise – but in your yard! All dogs need to burn off energy. Do fun toss the ball games in your yard. Remember to just have fun, let the dog run and explore. No obedience-like training at all for the first 2 weeks.
- \* After exercise, walk the dog to the crate. If the dog goes to his crate on his own, he is telling you “I need a time out.” Allow him this time.
- \* **If you have resident pets, NO meeting resident dogs or cats for at least 3-4 days. AFTER 3-4 days install a SECURE dog gate between their separate areas and only allow them to interact through the gate for a few days more. See our Pack Introduction Article for further instructions on how to integrate your new dog into your pack.**

\* Understand that walks are stressful because there is so much coming at a new dog. By doing the shut down, the dog looks to YOU as its new leader. Then on walks you will see the dog look to you when he sees something like a kid or a dog to see what your reaction is, lessening his mind about having to defend or control the environment. Gently distract your dog from meeting new dogs and humans while walking beyond the 2 week shutdown if necessary.

\* Ignore Bad behavior - Ignore crying and/or barking. If you run to the dog each time they bark, whine, or cry, you are teaching the dog that doing those things gets your attention. The dog must learn to be secure when you are not there. Use the leash to correct jumping, exploring counters, etc.

\* Praise Gently Good behavior – ex. Dog is sitting nicely next to you, touch or softly pet the dog “good boy/girl” let them know you appreciate GOOD behavior. This makes naughty behavior not so fun if you ignore THAT but praise the good!

Literally in two weeks you will begin to see its honest and true personality. So, please, if nothing else for your new dog, give it the time to LEARN YOU as you are learning who they are.