

New Paws in the Pack

How to select and train a new puppy or rescue dog

by Tammy Wilson-Teeter

When choosing a puppy or a rescue dog, it is so important to pick one that fits well into your lifestyle! Take the time to research the different breeds until you find one that has the personality traits and energy level that will work for you. If you live in an apartment or a condo, a baying, high-energy beagle may not be the best choice for you, even though they are so adorable! Take extra care with this step. If you are adopting a puppy from a shelter or a rescue group, evaluate the pup's personality. If you have concerns and need some help in this area, give Wiggles and Wags Dog Training a call and we will be happy to help you find the right dog to fit your needs!



Meet Orbit, a brand-new member of the Sandler family in the Ahwatukee Foothills!


Bringing your new pet home is such an exciting time. With all this excitement, it is also important to begin working on your leadership skills. Building a bond of trust and friendship between you and your dog right from the beginning will ensure a successful long-term relationship. You can start by establishing your house rules and then gently, but firmly, enforcing them. Put your new puppy on a routine and a schedule. Dogs excel in homes that have regular set routines! They want and need direction from you, as the parent, to guide them and let them know what your expectations are from day one. If your dog is a rescue, treat it as if it were a puppy with a clean slate. Try not to dwell on the fact that it had a rough life prior to the life it will have with you. It's a new beginning!

Your new pet doesn't know your expectations, but she wants to please you. Break these down into small pieces and show her the behaviors that you desire. Praise her often and use happy tones only when she is behaving exactly as you like. Yes, it is important to correct bad behaviors, but it is just as important to praise and pet her for good behavior. This will let her know what makes you happy! Learn to search for her when she is being good and lavish her with affection.

Prior to bringing your pet home, do some puppy proofing. Puppies are not born knowing the risk of living in a human environment. They do not know how dangerous a moving car or a live electrical cord is to them. Here are a few safety precautions that you can take: Put up baby gates to keep your puppy close to you. Remove all items from low shelves or tables. Cover all electric wires so they cannot be chewed. Keep blind cords out of reach. Have a crate set up in the main dwelling area of your home. Crates provide safety when you are away. They are also helpful in housebreaking your new pet!

Start right from the beginning with housebreaking (treat every dog as if he is not housebroken). Resist giving your new pet full roaming privileges in your home. You can start by keeping him in one room with you so that you can watch him. Take him outside immediately when needed. Freedom should be earned and granted slowly. Take the time to let your new pet explore the home with you. Introduce these areas to your pet in controlled settings. This will remove anxiety and decrease the chances of any accidents. The first couple of times you let your dog outside, go with him. This helps remove the possibility of him getting startled or scared. Show him around and let him slowly build confidence. Lavish him with praise when he does his business!

Find a veterinarian whom you like with a clinic near you. Puppies will need at least three sets of vaccinations, spaced three weeks apart. Vaccinations will need to be updated once a year. Your veterinarian may also want to check for intestinal parasites that are common in puppies. Work closely with your veterinarian to be sure that all the bases are covered.

Remember, your new family members naturally want to please you. After all, you are the head of their new pack! Give them the guidance, protection and love that they need and they will return it a hundredfold. 



Tammy Wilson-Teeter is co-owner of Wiggles and Wags, LLC with 20 years experience training dogs. She specializes in the rehabilitation of rescued and adopted dogs and is currently on the Executive Committee and Board of Lost Our Home Pet Foundation. She is an active member of the Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce. Contact Tammy at (602) 821-5279 or www.wigglesandwags.biz.