



HUMANE SOCIETY OF BROWARD COUNTY

Behavior Modification Handout

Bringing Home Your New Pet

Congratulations on the adoption of your new pet! The first few days will be very exciting for you and probably a little scary for your new friend. It will be helpful for you and your new pet to have a game plan. Make sure your pet has a safe place in his new home such as a crate or his own bed and that you have provided all the necessities such as food and water bowls, food, toys, leash, collar, or litter box and scratching post. There is a lot to think about when bringing home a new friend for life but above all remember patience and compassion. The dog, cat, puppy or kitten you have adopted has been through a lot in the last several days and needs time to settle in and get used to a new routine and a new set of rules. Training can help make the transition easier for you and your new pet and we do offer a wide variety of training classes and options to accommodate your specific needs. Please visit our web page at www.humanebroward.com for more information.

Starting Off on the Right Paw

Give your pet plenty of time to acclimate to his new surroundings. It can take up to 4 months for the pet to adjust and feel comfortable again. The shelter is a very stressful experience for an animal and they may act differently at home – sleep a lot at first, be reserved and quiet (hide), maybe even run a little wild with their first taste of freedom.

Avoid too much too soon, new owners are often excited to show off their new pet and visit new places with him as well as have people come to their home and meet him. Take it easy the first several days. Let the animal have time to settle in to his new environment and get used to a new routine. New owners can sometimes overdo it and end up frightening their new pet and making him more nervous. A nervous and anxious animal may growl or snap when approached and this does not make a good first impression. The first few days is a very important bonding period and should be a quiet and controlled environment.

Puppies

When you bring home your new puppy you should already have his primary resources set up and ready to go. You should have a crate or a plan for a confinement area to keep your puppy safe when you cannot supervise him. There should also be a feeding area, with his own food and water bowls. Your puppy should be fed three times a day; in the morning, in the early afternoon, and again in the evening. As your puppy grows and gets older he will probably start to pick at (not eat completely) one of those meals, usually the afternoon meal. You can then eliminate that

meal from the feeding schedule. Fresh, clean water should be available to your puppy, so remember to wash the bowls frequently. Plenty of toys and appropriate chew items should be made available, the more toys your puppy has the less likely he is to make a mistake and chew up your things. Get your new pet started on a schedule and a routine right away. Getting up, going to bed, playtime, walking or exercise, feeding and potty time should start as soon as possible. A consistent living environment will take some of the confusion out of all the new things you will be expecting your puppy to do. Expect mistakes, these things take time and you will need to be patient with your new pet.

Dogs

Bringing home your new dog might be a little less hectic than a new puppy, but he will still need a lot of the same things. Be prepared to confine your new dog in the beginning to see how he acclimates to the household. It may be less stressful for him to limit his space to a crate when you are not home. A crate is a tool for training and should not be over used by leaving your pet confined for lengthy periods of time (no more than 6 – 8 hours at one time). You should feed your dog twice a day about 12 hours apart, in the morning and again in the evening. Fresh water should always be available to your pet. Don't forget older dogs love toys too! Get your new pet started on a schedule and a routine right away.

Kittens

Bringing home a new kitten will need a little preparation. You will need a sturdy cat carrier for your new pet to travel in and you should already have in place, at home, the important resources: litter box (have extra litter handy), feeding area with food and water bowl, toys, scratching boxes or posts and maybe even a cat tree he can call his own. Your kitten will probably feel more comfortable confined to a single room for the first couple days with all his resources close by. Gradually give your kitten more space and allow him to roam around while you supervise. You can free feed your kitten dry food (leave food out) and supplement feeding with two meals of moist food in the morning and again in the evening. Some people prefer to not feed moist food and as long as your pet is eating well and healthy you may choose to only feed dry. Fresh, clean water should always be available to your pet. Setting a specific routine is important for your new feline but not as critical as with the canine set. Your kitten will gradually adjust to your schedule and adapt to his new environment. Just remember do not get up in the middle of the night and feed or play with your kitten as this will become a routine very quickly and your kitten will come to expect this attention and seek it (meowing to wake you).

Cats

You will need a sturdy cat carrier for your new pet to travel home in and you should already have in place, at home, the important resources: litter box (have extra litter handy), feeding area with food and water bowl, toys, scratching boxes or posts and maybe even a cat tree he can call his own. Your cat will probably feel more comfortable confined to a single room for the first

couple days with all his resources close by. Gradually give your cat more space and allow him to roam around while you supervise. It should not take very long for him to feel comfortable enough to investigate the whole house. Some cats may take a little longer to get up the courage to go exploring but be patient and reinforce his interactions with food treats to get him interested and feeling good about things. You can free feed your cat dry food (leave food out) and supplement feeding with two meals of moist food in the morning and again in the evening. Some people prefer to not feed moist food and as long as your pet is eating well and healthy you may choose to only feed dry. Fresh, clean water should always be available to your pet. Setting a specific routine is important for your new feline but not as critical as with the canine set. Your cat will gradually adjust to your schedule and adapt to his new environment.

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Remember to visit our web page for more information on behavior, training and problem solving for you and your new pet.

www.humanbroward.com

There are helpful articles on house training, play biting, litter box problems, introducing a new pet to the household and many more.