

# YOUR NEW PET – PLEASE READ

Pet adoption is a very exciting event for people, but to your new pet this is another change - often a scary one. There are some simple things to remember when bringing your new pet home in order to make their transition into your world less stressful.



- 1) **Focus first and foremost on the human-pet bond.** Spending time with their new family in the comfort of their new home is critical for the first few days or even weeks depending on the animal's personality and/or history. Pets need to become familiar with you and their home before anything else. Some are not even used to owners that interact with them. We may see our homes as the *best home* when a new animal sees it as an *unfamiliar home*.
- 2) **Refrain from taking your pet all over or from having friends and extended family over to meet them initially.** We know you are super excited about your new family member, but remember your pet likely lost their home before, may have been a loose scared stray, then came in to the shelter, maybe off to the vet for a spay/neuter, and then on to yet another change as they go home with you. Even the friendliest and most stable pets can end up nervous or scared from so much change in a period of their life. Focusing on earning their trust by allowing them to simply adjust slowly and at their preferred pace will create a stronger bond more quickly.
- 3) **If you have other pets in the home there will be an adjustment there too.** Do not force new pets to interact with the ones you already have. Allow new pets their own safe space away from the others so they can interact on their own terms. Forcing interactions can make both old and new pets more on edge and this can create poor interactions simply from making them do what they are not really ready for. Allowing a new pet to take in the smells and sounds of existing pets will make future meetings more comfortable for all. Use a slowly phased process. Each pet is different in these new situations, but it is always best to err on the side of caution for the best outcome.
- 4) **Feed separately and away from one another.** Even the friendliest pets can fight over resources - especially food. Start them off on the right foot by simply eliminating the risk of fighting at least for a while until everyone with fur is comfortable with each other. Some pets can have a bad interaction and have a hard time coming back from it. So your goal is to try and make sure that doesn't happen. You don't want to ruin these relationships before they start.
- 5) **Cats will often take longer to adjust than the average dog.** Cats are very particular and can be much more territorial than dogs. But similar to dogs, they may not want to share their things. Especially litterboxes and food. A new cat should always have their own personal litter box or you may invite potty problems. Although we always recommend having at least one litter box per cat in a home, some people don't really care for litter boxes all over, but for at least the first few months you really should have extras as they work on integrating in to the new home!
- 6) **Minimize their living area and give them a safe space.** If your home is large or has multiple levels, we recommend sectioning off parts of your home with baby gates or just keeping doors shut. Just like a new home can be a stressful adjustment for a new pet, so can having way more space than they are used to. If they get too far outside of the main area and have to potty they may not know how to get to an appropriate potty area quickly from where they have ventured off to. For cats you can put extra litter boxes in various areas to help with this and allow them to learn larger spaces without the risk of potty accidents. They need a personal crate, cat tree, and/or personal bed area they can go to for comfort if they need a break. For dogs it is simply best to limit their space to an area closest to an exit so it's easy to take them out often. You can slowly expand the free-roaming space indoors as you see fit.

**The top reasons pets get returned to shelters are;** issues with existing pets, potty issues, the feeling they are not bonding with the humans as expected. Often we find they simply may not have been given the best opportunity to adjust to the most important aspects of a new home - the house, the people, and other pets. If you find yourself having issues with your new pet ask yourself "Am I going too fast for THEM?" Please also remember that CASA staff cares about each animal they place and we are just a phone call or email away. If you have post-adoption questions or concerns – reach out and keep us in the loop. We are here to help you and your CASA pet!

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