**So, you just adopted a dog/puppy..............what do you do when you get home?**

* Keeping in mind that the pet you just adopted has come from a different environment than your home, you will need to take your time getting to know the dog/puppy.
* Even a house-trained dog may need a "refresher course" about going outside. Try to get your dog into a routine. Puppies will need frequent trips outside until they start to mature and are able to go longer periods without a potty break. Most dogs/puppies will need to go after meals. Remember to praise the new dog/puppy when it does go outside.
* Most dogs do best with a routine. New adopters often take time off when they adopt a new dog/puppy. This is beneficial as it gives you time to get to know the dog and get it settled in the home, but keep in mind that you will be going back to your routine so the new pet will need to be prepared for that (i.e. start leaving the dog along for increasingly longer periods of time. You can even stand outside the home and listen for excessive barking/howling).
* We recommend providing the new dog/puppy with a crate. The crate will help with the housetraining as well as provide a place for the dog that they consider a safe place for them if they are feeling overwhelmed. Crating will also keep the dog/house safe when no one is around to keep an eye on the dog. The crate should never be used as a punishment. Your dog/puppy should want to go in. If your dog/puppy is resistant, try putting a favourite treat inside the crate and closing the door with them on the outside, they will want to get in to get to the treat.
* We do not recommend bringing in a bunch of visitors right away. Although it is natural to want to show off your new family member, it can be too overwhelming for them and can lead to negative interactions with strangers. Once the dog is feeling comfortable in the home you can start introductions to family members/friends. Don't make it a "party", introductions should be done in a calm manner and guests should be encouraged to ignore the new dog until it settles and then the dog can be encouraged to interact with the new people.
* Off leash parks can be a great experience, however since most times we do not know how the dog may react around other dogs, we do not recommend using off leash parks until the dog is more settled. The first few trips have the dog on leash and walk around the outside of the off-leash park. This way if there are any signs of your new dog not being dog friendly, you can divert the dog without getting into a "fight" with another dog.
* We highly recommend contacting a professional trainer. Training a dog is as much about training the owner as it is the dog. They can provide guidance and tips for correcting unwanted behaviours and classes provide a good opportunity for socializing your new dog/puppy.
* Dogs need exercise. This can take many forms such as going for walks, throwing toys for the dog to chase (and hopefully bring back). If you are going to take your dog on walks, remember to start with shorter walks until you determine what distance your dog is comfortable with and to keep your dog on leash. Also remember you must clean up after your dog has a bowel

movement.

* Provide the dog with a variety of toys that are safe an appropriate for the size of the dog, but refrain from giving them to him/her all at once. Mix it up! This will help prevent them from getting bored with their “same old toys”. Make sure that at least one of the toys is designed to encourage chewing.
* The shelter feeds specific diets to the animals in our care. If you are planning on feeding a different brand of food at home we recommend weaning your new pet onto the food gradually so that the animal does not end up with digestive issues.



**N.B.** Once you get home, if you have any questions or concerns please contact the shelter. We will do our best to help resolve the issue(s) and can give you information about trainers in the area. If the issue(s) cannot be resolved we will make arrangements for you to return the dog/puppy. This does not mean that you are "disqualified" from adopting. We just want to get the right fit for your family and the pet.