

### What should I expect?

You can expect that it will take your dog some time getting used to the new routines and adapt to his new environment. The 'Rule of Three' means that you can gauge the time it might take for your dog to fully acclimate to his home in threes: three days, three weeks, and three months.<sup>1</sup>

### At 3 days...

The first 3 days are the initial "detox period" as the dog transitions from the shelter to your home. Your home is new and exciting, with more stimulating activity and space and freedom than a shelter can ever provide. It can be overwhelming for many dogs, especially those who have been in the shelter for weeks.

Your new dog may sleep a lot in those first few days or – more likely – he may be so amped up on excitement that he is easily aroused and difficult to settle down. He will want to check out all the new smells and investigate his new digs. He won't know what you expect from him, where to go potty, or whether he's allowed on the furniture; he won't know that your shoe is not actually a chew toy, or that the kitchen trash is not where he is supposed to find his dinner.

These first few days require an immense amount of patience on your part. Take a deep breath and remember that your home is like Disneyland for a shelter dog. He will settle in to your routine if you give him time and patience. It won't happen overnight, and he will probably still need to attend positive-reinforcement training classes to help him learn better manners, but take comfort in knowing that it gets better!

### At 3 weeks...

After 3 weeks, your dog is probably getting used to your comings and goings, learning the daily routine, and starting to figure out when the next meal is coming. He'll learn that you walk at the same time every morning, and that he gets to go out for regular potty breaks. You'll start to see more of his true personality and less of his initial response – whether that was fear, excitement, stress or a combination of all three. You will have narrowed down his behavior problems (if any) to the ones that are likely to remain unless you attend training classes or get help from a dog training professional. It won't be completely smooth sailing, but the bumps in the road will be less frequent and less stressful.

### At 3 months...

At 3 months, most dogs know they are "home." It's a process to get there, but with patience and a sense of humor, the two of you can scale the mountain together and enjoy the journey toward a great relationship.

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<sup>1</sup> Love Has No Age Limit, Drs. Karen London and Patricia McConnell