

RESCUE DOGS: Decompression

Why utilise decompression?

Bringing home a rescue dog means some decompression time, you can follow the 3-3-3 rule as a rough guide on how long this might take. This stands for 3-days, 3-weeks, 3-months, it might take 3-months (or longer) for your rescue to settle into their new environment and for you to fully understand their personality, issues and quirks. Enabling decompression will help the transition for your dog into the new environment.

Time & Space

You need to ensure you give your rescue time to adapt to the new environment, it won't happen overnight (except in rare circumstances). You might not get a lot of sleep just like when you have a puppy. You might consider taking some time off work to help the process for both of you

You need to give them space and freedom to move around without adding on pressure of trying to teach them or interact with them too much. Of course you want to establish a relationship but this can take time and less is more initially.

They should also have their own space with their own things; bed, water, toys etc. Make this area calm, quiet and cozy for them. Consider making two areas; one near the main family chill zone and one out of the way somewhere. This enables a choice between sitting near people or having some alone time.

Manage Expectations

Did you have plans for your new dog? Forget them for now and focus on the first point. Expectations lead to frustration on your part and do not compare your rescue experience to someone else. This includes managing friends and family's expectations. Avoid having visitors the first week at least and when you do introduce them do it slowly and outside. They should also follow the time & space pointers above.

Establish a Routine

Take your new dog for a walk regularly (unless you have inherited behaviour issues as you might need a walk holiday) to the same location initially and as your rescue dog settles in build an 'environment database'. This means start to introduce a new environment each week to slowly acclimatise your rescue. This will help you establish if any areas are going to be an issue for the dog. If you go to too many places too quickly your dog may become overwhelmed. Initially stick to regular feeding times, play times or other activities and once they have settled in you can try to mix it up a little.

Create New Associations & be Prepared

Your rescue dog might have some fear or anxieties, always be prepared with tasty treats (especially when outside) and some favourite toys. Sprinkle feed when out if something

noisy is happening to build a positive association. Rescue dog get scared and bolt?
Encourage them to run toward you and feed, feed, feed. Always be prepared, is your lead / collar / harness safe? Can your dog escape from the equipment? Is it old, is it strong enough? They should be walked on a harness with a double lead, if they escape one thing, they are still secure on the other. Always keep your rescue dog on lead for at least 3-months (or longer). If you have a flightly rescue dog keep a light lead on when travelling so when you open the car there is less chance of loosing them.

The Responsible Dog Rescue is always available for support and behaviour advice so please do not hesitate to contact your admin if you feel you are struggling at any point.

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