



# ACCLIMATING YOUR SHY DOG

A shy dog can have a difficult time transitioning into a new environment. These dogs require a lot of patience from their new family in order to build trust and settle into their home. A good way to start is getting to know your dog's stress signals and remembering to stick to a consistent schedule. Remember, a shy dog should never be left alone in a fenced yard or on a tie-out. Here are some tips on how to remain positive and consistent while working with your new dog.

## Equipment

- 🐾 Any dog who is considered shy or a flight risk should be equipped with "escape-proof" walking gear such as a martingale collar or a harness lead.
  - Remember to check the fit before each outing.
  - Use a nylon leash rather than a retractable one. If dropped, retractable leashes can cause more fear because they may be perceived as "chasing" the dog as they run.
  - To prevent your dog from running through the doorway, you can install a gate system in the home near exits using baby gates or puppy playpens.

## Plan your walk

- 🐾 When a dog is new to your home, they will not know your neighborhood. Before going for a walk, think about how to avoid circumstances that could scare your dog. This could include loud vehicles, crowds of people, other dogs, etc.
  - To start, choose calmer times and places to walk so that your dog will not be frightened by a lot of chaos. Ex: Wooded areas, quiet back roads, etc.
  - While walking, always be aware of your surroundings. Watch for potential triggers and move in the opposite direction if you see something scary approaching.

## Positive, slow introductions only

- 🐾 Most shy dogs need help learning that new people are friends.
  - While on walks, it is important that you communicate with people, asking them not to approach your dog. Each time a stranger walks by, feed your dog a small training treat to form a positive association with strangers approaching.
  - If there are new people coming into your home, offer your dog a spot to use as a "safe place," such as a crate or gated-off room. Tell your guests that if the dog enters this space, it means they are off-limits for interaction.
  - Have guests interact with your dog only if your dog approaches them. Keep petting to a minimum and have them offer a favorite snack or toy from a distance.
  - Always have new people move slowly and talk quietly while around your dog.

## Specific rewards

- 🐾 Find out what your dog's favorite reward is and use this only in new situations. This could be a particular food, toys, or affection from you.

## Additional help

- 🐾 If you feel your dog still needs a little extra support, consider using Adaptil products or a Thunder Shirt. (Please see manufacturer details for proper use).

## Preparing for veterinary appointments

- 🐾 If veterinary visits are particularly overwhelming for your pup, consider asking your veterinarian to book your appointments at a less busy time. You may also be able to schedule them so you can immediately go into a room, rather than wait in the lobby. Make sure to make all visits as stress-free and fun as possible. Fear-free certified veterinary offices are available in most areas.

**Shy dogs just need a little extra adjustment time. With time, your dog will give you all the love they have.**