

Behaviour



Calgary
Humane
Society

Rule of three

A newly adopted dog typically needs three months to comfortably integrate into their new home. The “Rule of 3” gives you a general guideline on what to expect during this period. Remember that as your new dog settles in and adjusts you may see quite a few highs and lows in terms of their behaviour and it’s important to be patient and consistent with them during this time.

3 Days To Decompress

What to expect from your dog

- They may be overwhelmed by their new environment
- They may decide to hide, curl up in a crate or seem shutdown
- They may seem sleepy, overly energetic, or show pronounced peaks and valleys in their behaviour
- They may have difficulty settling or relaxing
- They may not be comfortable enough to act like themselves or show their true personality yet

What you can do

- Don’t pressure your dog into situations that could be overwhelming or scary
- Give your dog space and don’t force interaction
- Help your dog understand what is appropriate in terms of bathroom habits, lounging spots and things to chew
- Let them explore at their own pace
- Be consistent and patient in training
- Redirect behaviours that you don’t want and frequently reward the behaviours that you do want
- Take lots of time to establish a bond
- Minimize absences away from your dog

3 Weeks

To Learn Your Routine

What to expect from your dog

- They should start to anticipate meal and walk times
- They start to show routine bathroom habits
- Their energy levels start to show routine patterns throughout the day
- They start to understand your daily routine
- They may start to show more unwanted behaviours

What you can do

- Keep a predictable household routine
- Slowly increase the duration of your absences but still keep them short
- Monitor your dog for signs of stress
- Use positive reinforcement based training and avoid aversive tactics while you work with your dog
- Follow up with a trainer if behaviour issues start to appear

3 Months

To Feel like Part of the Family

What to expect from your dog

- They've adjusted to your schedule and home environment
- They've built a bond, and level of trust, with the family
- They may still be testing some boundaries

What you can do

- Remember to be patient as your dog learns
- Be consistent with your training and routine
- Be understanding that your dog will experience setbacks
- Continue any recommended training plans
- Follow up with your veterinarian for regular checkups and vaccinations

If you are struggling with your dog's behaviour you can always call our free behaviour helpline at 403-723-6019, or go to CalgaryHumane.ca to book a consultation or join one of our behaviour classes