



# trina & friends

## K9 RESCUE

### **DECOMPRESSION GUIDE**

Thank you for adopting one of our dogs! We appreciate your commitment to saving a life! Below you will find a comprehensive guide to decompression for introducing a new dog to yours.

#### **What is Decompression?**

Decompression is a calming period that a dog needs when first arriving in your home. It is imperative the dog has this time to adjust to the new environment, people, and other animals. The average decompression time is about two weeks, but it differs for every dog.

Many people do not realize how crucial decompression is and how this will make or break how your dog is introduced into the new home. Please set your dog up for success.

It is also imperative that the new dog and resident dog(s) have time to adjust to a new dog in the home. Many people do not realize that this takes time and cannot be rushed. In the first couple of weeks when keeping dogs separate, it is essential to “crate and rotate”. This means when the new dog is due for some time out of the crate, please be mindful that the other dog is in a separate room or in his/her crate, so there are no opportunities for off-leash interaction.

After the first week, if the dogs seem to be tolerating one another in the home (still being kept separate) you can start walks together in week two, but always keep them at a distance and take things very slowly. If the dogs are relaxed around each other during those walks, then they can have some social time in the house, dragging leashes and under supervision. When they are good 100% of the time dragging leashes and have been playing nicely, the leashes can be removed and dogs given more time together. Again, this may take more than two weeks, so please be patient. They should still be supervised at all times for a period of months, if not indefinitely, depending on the dogs.



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During this decompression time, we highly recommend no long walks, car rides, pet store excursions, parties, etc. UNTIL THE DOG IS READY. (Necessary trips to the vet are excluded from this.) Any of the above activities or events provide an overabundance of stimuli and are very stressful, especially when the dog still has no reason to trust you.

### TOP TEN TIPS

#### 1. Forget expectations

No matter how much you plan, you won't know how a dog is going to react in their new environment until after you bring him home. "The first 24 to 48 hours will be a learning experience for all," says dog foster veteran Shannon Quinn Lewis of Angels Among Us Pet Rescue. Leave your expectations at the door. Your situation is unique, so don't compare it to others.

#### 2. Take your time

It can take on average four to six weeks for your new rescue dog's personality to surface. Lewis says, "Don't expect to get a lot of sleep, don't expect the pup to be perfect, and don't expect them to come into their new home exhibiting their true personality. It all takes time." The best thing you can do is go slowly. Your dog and your family will be happier in the long run.

#### 3. Keep calm

A newly rescued dog needs a calm environment to acclimate. Dog foster mom Leigh Hodes of Angels Among Us Pet Rescue says, "Bringing a new dog to your home takes a lot of trust on both parties." Keep things quiet and calm in your home as much as possible. Every sound, movement, and smell will be new to them. Keep toys and affection to a minimum. "Let the dog come to you," advises professional dog behaviorist and trainer Khalvin Kuczynski at Tenacity. "Less is usually better at the beginning." Resist the temptation to shower your dog with affection and toys. "The real idea is you want to establish structure," adds Kuczynski. "You want a relationship that's founded on respect first and foremost, as well as love and affection –those things should weigh evenly."



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### **4. Give them space**

Dogs are den animals and need a space to feel safe. To help with the transition, give them a space that is quiet, comfortable, and cozy. "You're allowing the dog to be comfortable," says Dr. Smith. "They're going to be a little self-protective at this point." Give your dog a spot to let him emerge out of his shell of his own accord.

### **5. Keep them on a leash**

A leashed dog is a must for the safety of your pet and will help keep you stay in control. "The leash should essentially become your best friend," says Kuczynski. "The idea is if the dog jumps on the couch, you don't have to grab the dog by the collar. You just simply grab the end of the leash and pull the dog off the couch." This keeps you safe, and it doesn't run the risk of harming your relationship with the dog.

### **6. Crate train**

A crate is an easy and effective way to create a safe haven. Crate training is one of the quickest and least stressful ways to encourage desirable behaviors in dogs. Some new dog owners are not fans of using a crate; however, Kuczynski strongly recommends implementing crate training as soon as you bring a dog into your home. A crate satisfies a dog's instinct to be in a den while alleviating many behavioral issues like resource guarding, separation anxiety, and house-training issues.

### **7. Slow introductions**

For the first week, keep your dog at home and limit visitors. When it comes time to make introductions to people and other pets, do it slowly. If you have other animals, it's best to let them get acquainted with the new dog outside your home. Take them on a walk and let them meet on neutral territory; an established dog may feel more territorial in the house. Advise your friends (especially children) to give your new dog "face space." Ask them to resist the urge to touch or get in their face. Let your dog go to them, and pay close attention to how they communicate comfort or discomfort.

### **8. Exercise them every day**

The adage "a good dog is a tired dog" is true for a reason. Dogs are active creatures. They need a daily exercise routine to keep them physically and mentally healthy. Get the leash and take them for a walk every day to improve you and your dog's health while establishing a positive bond.



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### **9. Keep a routine**

Dogs are creatures of habit. Their happiness depends on their environment. Dogs need a steady routine so they know what to expect from their owners and their lives. Their behavior will reflect this accordingly. Once they have a solid structure, they can handle occasional changes like a pro. Feeding, walking, playing, sleeping, and other daily activities can all be a part of your dog's regularly scheduled routine.

### **10. Establish positive associations**

It's your job to help your dog form positive associations in their new environment. You want your new dog to feel like their home and all the sights, sounds, and smells that come with it, are the most wonderful things in the world. Keep treats on hand to praise and reward your dog if you're getting ready to vacuum or there's a fire truck blaring sirens. Your dog will soon associate any unpleasant experiences with that of comfort, affection, and yummy treats.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

<https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/training/the-importance-of-decompression-when-bringing-home-a-new-dog/>

<https://behaviorvetsnyc.com/tag/decompression/>

<https://www.rachaelraymag.com/real-life/tips-on-decompressing-your-new-rescue-dog>