

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there anything I should do as soon as I get my dog?

It's a good idea to let neighbours know that you are taking in a rehomed dog and that for the first few nights the dog may bark or whine. You should also register with the Vet of your choice.

How do I choose a vet?

There is nothing better than a personal recommendation. You should look for one that is easy for you to get to in an emergency, provides emergency cover and has the sort of facilities you would expect. Phone round to compare prices although in the end you need a vet that you have confidence in and that you can talk to.



How long will it take my new dog to settle?

Your new dog will take at least two weeks to settle in and get to know you so please give your dog time.

What should I do in the first few days?

Relatives and friends will want to meet your new dog but please do this steadily so that it is not over awed. Give the dog time to be on its own and to be quiet.

Decide what behaviour is acceptable to you (going up stairs, sitting on furniture etc.) be fair and consistent - this means ALL the family.

Will my dog be house trained?

Your dog may not be clean in the house for the first few days due to stress, change in routine and environment so treat it like a puppy. Let the dog out first thing in the morning, after its meal and last thing at night.

What do I need to do about feeding my new dog?

You will have been advised of the type of food that your dog has been used to and the times that it has been fed. Try to keep to this as a change of diet can result in upset tummies and accidents in the house. If you do want to change onto a different food do this gradually by mixing a small amount of the new food with the normal feed. Gradually increase the amount of new food until you have completely moved over. If your dog does get diarrhoea add a teaspoon of honey and the beaten white of an egg to the drinking water. If the condition does not improve in 24 hours or the diarrhoea is severe then you should contact your vet.



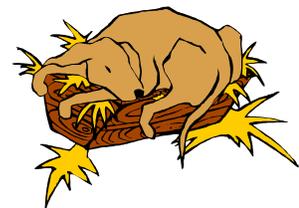
Most people find that a complete food is easier to feed and ensures that your dog has a well-balanced meal. Many vets now have weigh scales that you can use free of charge so do check that your dog is maintaining its weight and not getting fat. Labs are usually very greedy and can soon put on weight if you don't watch out.

What will my new dog need?

You will need the following items all of which can be purchased from a pet supplies.

Bed - any type will be suitable but avoid wicker beds that the dog can chew. Some dogs never use a dog bed so don't get too upset if it turns its nose up at the one you have chosen.

NB most Labs prefer your bed to any dog bed on the market



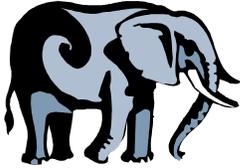
Collar and lead - Check what your dog has been used to - collar, head collar or harness. The use of choke or check collars, as they are sometimes known, is not recommended but if you do use one it should only be used as a training aid and should never be left on the dog. An extending lead will be useful to use in open spaces especially until you are sure that your dog will come

back to you. Please do not use as flexi lead for street walking as your dog may end up in the middle of the road.

Feeding bowls - The best type are those made of stainless steel. Plastic bowls usually end up chewed and pot ones broken. You will need two bowls, one for food and one for water (which should be available at all times). Many Labradors enjoy washing the kitchen floor and will tip their water bowls over in order to do this. If you have a 'tipper' try standing the bowl in a plastic washing up bowl. If your dog is especially greedy you may find the use of an anti gorge bowl is useful.



Dog guards and safety belts



You will no doubt want to take your dog in the car even if it is only to the vets. The safest place for your dog to travel is in a crate specially designed to fit your car. These are well worth the expense and will ensure that your dog is safe should you be involved in an accident. If your dog sits on the back seat you should invest in a harness that will attach to the seat belt of your car. A Labrador being thrown forward in a collision can travel with the force of a baby elephant so keep it and you safe.

Is it necessary to have booster vaccinations every year?

There has been some debate on the need for boosters. However unless you are able to have blood tests done to check your dog's immunity you should keep your dog's vaccinations up to date. You will need to do this in any case if you will be kennelling your dog or taking your dog abroad with you under the pet passport scheme. You will also notice that your dog does not receive the same vaccinations each year. This is because most vaccines now last longer than 12 months, however Leptospirosis and Parainfluenza will normally be given annually. At the same time as you have your dog's booster done your vet will give your dog a health check.



What about micro chipping?

Your dog will be micro chipped when you adopt it however he will still need to wear a collar with a disc giving your name, address and contact number, this is irrespective of whether your dog has been micro chipped or not. Your dog should also carry the Labrador Welfare disc that has been provided. This will give your dog 2 chances of being returned. Microchips have been very successful and will ensure that your dog is returned to you even if the identity disc has become lost. In some cases your dog may also be tattooed. Please note, we now offer dual ownership for all dogs so that we remain on the rescue button and we will take your dog in if the authorities are unable to contact you.

Why neuter?

Many of the dogs that come into rescue are due to unwanted litters and whilst the number of dogs registered with the Kennel Club continues to fall there are still far too many Labradors for the number of suitable homes available. For this reason we ask that all bitches are neutered. The best time to have this done is half way between seasons, but your vet will be able to give you advice on this. We do ask that dogs and bitches are allowed to mature before they are neutered (i.e. bitches to have their first season and dogs to be 12 months old) Whilst a bitch will only come into season twice a year, a dog can service a bitch at any time. This is why we ask that dogs are also neutered. You will find that this will also curb a dog's wanderlust. Your vet will be able to give you more advice on neutering.

What should I do about grooming?



Your Labrador will need grooming at least once a week. One thorough brush is preferential to a daily flick over. If your dog is yellow expect it to moult heavily all year round (blacks and chocolates USUALLY have a couple of good moults a year). A Fruminator, Mikki Moul Master, rake or shedding blade will make a

useful addition to your grooming kit. A trip to the groomers will help if your dog is moulting heavily as the blast dryer will help to remove the loose coat.

A Labrador's coat is usually easy to keep clean. A good brush will remove most of the dirt. Baths should be restricted to once every 3 to 4 months unless he rolls in something objectionable! Always use a good quality shampoo and rinse thoroughly.

Regular brushing of teeth with a special doggie toothbrush and toothpaste will help prevent dental problems. There are also many dental chews on the market that you can give to your dog.

Check your dog's ears regularly. Labradors are not prone to ear problems but any build up of wax should be wiped away with a cotton ball soaked with baby oil or a baby wipe is just as suitable. During the summer months Labradors like nothing better than a romp in the long grass so do check ears, eyes and feet for grass seeds. You should visit your vet if you have any persistent problems.

Don't forget to check nails especially the dew claws which, if allowed to grow, can curl right round and penetrate the dog's pad. If you don't feel confident enough to clip your dogs claws a dog groomer or your vet will be able to do this for you. If you do cut your dogs claws you will need to purchase a pair of proper pet nail clippers



What if I want to change my dog's name?

Your dog will have experienced many changes in his life by the time you adopt him so we **strongly** recommend that you keep the same name. However if you must change the dog's name try to find a name that sounds similar to the one he was given. If this is not possible then use both names for a while and gradually drop off the old name. Always call your dog for his food using your new name. He should quickly get used to the change although some Labs never answer to any name. Please remember that your dog will be registered with Labrador Welfare under his/her original name so please us this when contacting us.

Do I need to clean up after my dog?

You owe it to your dog to clean up after it. If your dog learns to go in your own garden this will make life easier but always carry a polythene 'pick up' bag in case of accidents. Your garden should be cleared daily. You can purchase chemical doggie loos or dispose of the waste down your drain. Pick up bags should be placed in a litterbin, to leave used bags under hedges or behind trees is no better than not picking up at all.

How much exercise will my dog need?



A lot of this will depend on the age of the dog, and how much exercise he gets in the garden and house. Some dogs will run around the house and garden using up energy whilst others are couch potatoes. Lead walking will help to keep muscles in trim and walking on roads and pavements will keep nails short. However dogs really do need some free running exercise to stretch muscles and burn off excess energy. Please remember that Labradors were bred to work and so will need mental stimulus as well as physical exercise. Most dogs will love to fetch a ball or dummy for you although some may not exactly bring it back to you.

What if I want to leave my dog in kennels whilst I go away?

Don't leave it until the last minute to book into kennels; the best ones get booked up very quickly especially at busy times. Once again recommendation is the best way to find one. Make an appointment to go and look round the kennels and make sure you look at all the accommodation not just the block the proprietor wants to show you. The facilities should be in good repair and they should be clean. If your dog has special needs, check that these can be catered for. Do the dogs in the kennels look happy and well cared for? Always check that the Kennel is licensed with the local authority.

What can I do about any behavioural problems that my dog may have?

Although relinquishing owners will often tell us if there are any problems with the dog not everyone is so honest. It is always a good idea to sign up with a local dog training club as this will help both you and the dog to brush up on your training techniques. If you haven't used a training group before, go along without your dog and check that you are happy with the methods used. Your vet may be able to recommend a good local group or you can access one through the Kennel Club Web site. We are always available to help you and offer advice with any problems that you may encounter, so please do not hesitate to contact us. We would like to hear how you are getting on and like to keep in touch with you and your dog for the rest of its life. We can recommend dog trainers/behaviourist, but if you find one yourself please check that they are suitably qualified.

Where can I go for advice?

Remember, we are only a telephone call away and we will always be ready to help in what ever way we can, no matter how long you have had the dog. Your Vet will also be able to advise you, not only on health matters but also behavioural problems too.

The first few days with your re-homed dog

We hope that you will find the following tips help you and your dog to settle down quickly and painlessly together.

Please remember that dogs do not think like we do. They do not have the same emotions and do not express sorrow, concern and forgiveness as we do. They also live for today and will usually not pine for their previous home and owner.



However you will probably feel sorry for your dog for what you think may have happened in the past. You will tend to be easy going for the first few weeks because you want to make the dog feel at home and to accept you. We all have good intentions to start training once the dog has settled in. Unfortunate dogs live only for the present; they have forgotten what happened in the past and recollection of former experiences will only be triggered by audio, visual or chemical reminders.

Your dog will take two days (*yes 2 days*) to adjust and about 14 days to recognize and exploit any weakness that may enable it to get its own way. It may however take you a month to learn about the habits of your dog by which time your new dog will be 2 weeks ahead of you!



You will see from the above that it is important for you to have established the basic rules you will expect your dog to obey before it even enters your home and you should always enforce these rules from day one. This means everyone in the household; otherwise the dog will become confused. This is not cruel; your dog will respect you far more if it knows exactly what you expect of it. Be fair and be consistent and you will not go far wrong.



Never assume that your re-homed dog knows anything. Whilst some may have received basic training others may not. It is best to assume the latter but in any case you may use different words for the commands and the dog has to learn what you expect from it. Treat the dog as you would a puppy, especially with house training, and your dog should soon understand what is expected of it

A little forethought will help your new dog to settle in your home and will enhance your pleasure in owning it. If however you experience any problems at anytime, please do not hesitate to contact one of us.