



The Dog's Point of View

Teaching People & Dogs With Empathy, Compassion & Understanding

"Because there's more to raising a happy, confident, well behaved dog than simply dog training"

RECOMMENDED DO'S & DON'TS FOR SETTLING YOUR ROMANIAN RESCUE DOG



**Merlin - My First Romanian Foster Dog
In The Public Shelter in Romania. Saved Just Days From Being Put to Sleep**

The importance of 'getting it right' for your new Rommie Rescue Dog cannot be stressed enough. It is far easier to prevent problems arising than it is to try to undo them once something has happened.

By sticking to a few simple guidelines when your Rommie Rescue first arrives at his new home with you, you can help make sure they settle quickly, happily and with as few problems as possible.

Please bear in mind, the following information is based on my knowledge and experience of Romanian (foreign) Rescue dogs, but every one of them will be different.

These are guidelines and information you need to know, you may need to know all of them, you may not need any of them, but you will definitely **need to be prepared to read and assess how your particular dog is coping with everything, and meet his/her needs as an individual.**

COLLECTION DAY

When collecting your dog you must take/have the following

- ✓ Slip Lead
 - ✓ Collar & Lead
 - ✓ Harness
 - ✓ Crate for the Car or some way of securing your dog in the car ie harness with seatbelt attachment
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- As soon as you have your dog, put him straight into the car in the crate.
 - DO NOT walk him around to see if he wants to toilet, most dogs don't toilet until they feel totally safe
 - Please Remember your dog will most probably be scared and will bolt if given half a chance
 - Please DO NOT Risk your Dog's Life.
 - Leave his lead on in the car if it's safe to do so, to make it easier and safer for you to get him out when you get home, without manhandling him too much trying to get the lead back on.
 - When you arrive home, again take your dog straight indoors or into the garden, but keep him on a lead (unless you are doing meet and greets with resident dogs outside the home - **BUT if your dog is clearly terrified, I would recommend leaving introductions until he has settled a bit and stress levels have reduced, otherwise it is far more likely the introductions will not go well**)

MEETING RESIDENT DOGS

Your new arrival may not be ready to meet your resident dogs immediately, or if he has never been on a lead, or is frightened of the lead, introductions may be better taking place at home, but you will still need controls / barriers in place to keep everyone safe.

1. It is generally best if new rescue dogs can meet resident dogs away from home somewhere quiet, have a little wander & a sniff together and then be brought back into the home together, BUT you will need to assess this based on the point I have made above.
2. Please bear in mind that many of these rescue dogs will be scared, so if you are doing greetings outside the home, **make sure you have them double leaded**, one of which being a slip lead (but not in use) and don't expect them to walk as such, just to have a wander & a sniff and be able to meet their new friends before returning home
3. Make any necessary arrangements so that rescue dogs and resident dogs don't have to be left alone in the same space for several weeks, or at least until it's obvious they have bonded and are very happy together.
4. Once back in the home, allow your new dog time & space to himself, away from resident dogs to process all the new information and experiences. A baby gate is ideal for this, to give them regular periods of down time but without shutting them away completely on their own,. That way they can still see, hear and communicate with resident dogs and get used to all that is going on around them but without feeling overwhelmed and hassled by it all.

GENERAL DO'S

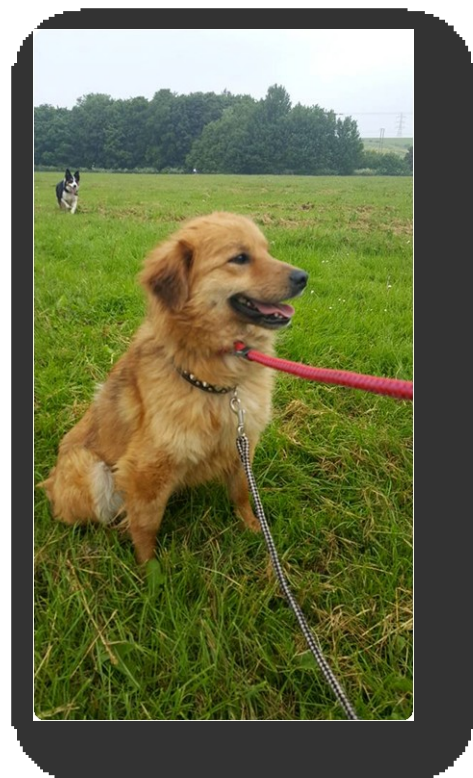
- ☺ **Get your dogs microchip UPDATED immediately!** This is so important, the first few days in a new environment are when your new dog could feel most scared and more likely to run away if the opportunity arises. If the chip has not been registered to you, and your dog has just arrived from Romania **His Chip Will NOT Show Up On Any Database In The UK**, it has to be registered first, so even though a scanner will read the microchip, they will have no way of tracing where that dog came from, meaning he will end up in kennels somewhere with the risk of being put to sleep if not claimed.
- ☺ **LEAVE A LEAD ON WHEN YOU ARRIVE HOME:** Leave a short lead trailing when you first arrive home in case you need to move your new rescue dog off of, out of or into anywhere, this will eliminate the need for you to grab for their collar, which could be scary to an already stressed dog that doesn't know you.
- ☺ Give them plenty of space & regular periods of quiet time during the first few days
- ☺ Avoid having lots of visitors to the house during the first week. Let your new arrival settle, get used to their new environment and get used to you before you start introducing more new people. Visitors tend to want to excessively fuss because they will know you rescued this dog from an awful situation, and this can cause them to feel nervous. Let your dog choose to interact with any visitors when they do come, you should be able to tell how comfortable they're feeling from their body language. If they're happily leaping around your new visitors, then it's more likely they will enjoy a fuss, but if they're hesitant and unsure, it is REALLY IMPORTANT that you let your dog set the pace for new introductions. If you try to encourage them to make friends, you can actually MAKE them scared of new people.
- ☺ Keep them separated from resident dogs for regular periods to allow them to get to know each other gradually & process all that is happening to them, but at the same time feel secure that they are not going to be 'bothered' any minute (preferably using a baby gate so they can see, smell & sniff one another but are not actually together).
- ☺ Keep them on a lead, preferably a long line in the garden for the first few days, some dogs can be very panicked by all they've been through & their new surroundings and you want to be sure they have no intention of trying to escape. This is especially important and a very real possibility if your new rescue dog was a street dog.
- ☺ Keep new dogs and resident dogs separate at feeding times for at least a few weeks, maybe longer. Your new dog will arrive very hungry! If they have spent any amount of time in a Romanian Public Shelter they will have had to fight for their food, and whilst, with many, this behaviour subsides quite quickly, during the settling in period, it will still be in the forefront of their mind. If an argument over food takes place, it could ruin the relationship between your new rescue dog and your resident dog forever, which will cause you many more problems in the long run.



- ☺ Always feed treats and any high value bones/chews etc separately, either in crates or separate rooms (baby gates are a godsend here)
- ☺ If you have a resident dog, pick up all the toys for the first few days/weeks until you can see how they are getting on, and to give them time to get to know each other and settle in each other's company. If your resident dog is used to playing with toys with you, take them in a separate room for playtimes so they don't miss out, and leave your rescue dog with a treat to keep him happy.
- ☺ Double lead your rescue dog when you first start walking them outside, in case they panic and slip a collar or harness. Best combination is harness + lead with a flat collar + lead. Or you could have a slip lead on as well as your ordinary collar/harness & lead, but don't use it, it's only there as a back-up if anything goes wrong.
- ☺ Take your rescue dog out to go to the toilet every 2 hours (every hour if a puppy) this will lessen the risk of accidents in the house and give you the opportunity to praise all toileting outside, increasing the likelihood they will quickly learn where they are suppose to go to the toilet.

GENERAL DON'TS

- ☹ Don't keep fussing over them, they will most likely not be used to it and although you may feel you are comforting them, they can actually find it more stressful, on top of the stress of finding themselves in a whole new strange environment.
- ☹ Don't allow them to follow you everywhere and have access to all areas of the house for the first few days/weeks. Often these dogs will not be used to all the home comforts we offer them and if you allow them free reign over everything, you could find them developing resource guarding behaviours over all the new & wonderful 'stuff' they find at their pawtips. Plus it can help prevent the development of separation anxiety.
- ☹ Don't Let them on beds or sofa's for the first few weeks. Again this can instigate resource guarding, which once it starts to happen, is more difficult to stop than if you can prevent it from starting and being practised in the first place.
- ☹ Don't allow them to keep demanding attention from you. This is usually insecurity behaviour and you could enhance the possibility of separation anxiety and owner possessiveness (resource aggression) developing by always giving in to their demands for attention.
- ☹ Don't mess about with your rescue dogs feet - this is a very sensitive area (instinctively) for dogs, leave grooming, bathing and rubbing with a towel until they are a bit more familiar with you and a relationship of trust has been established. Your new rescue will most likely smell quite unpleasant, and whilst some will tolerate being bathed, it could be another stressor for them on top of an already stressful week! if you can leave it a couple of days, they might feel more comfortable about you doing it



- ☹ Don't Take your rescue dog for walks for a few days. (Unless it is blatantly obvious they enjoy walking on a lead and being out and about) We, as owners, feel they need walks every day to be happy, but many of these dogs will not be used to our busy environments and find them scary & stressful, on top of the already stressful experiences they have been through leading up to their arrival with you . They will be tired enough with processing all that has and is happening to them, they need time to settle to get ready to take on the environment outside. (Google -Stress or trigger Stacking in Dogs for a more detailed explanation about this)
- ☹ Don't Expect your rescue dog to be used to wearing a collar and walking on a lead. If they have had any experience of being on the end of a dog catchers pole, they will most likely be terrified if you start trying to pull them along on a lead. Do plenty of lead practise in the garden in the first few days, without all the distractions they will face when they actually go out for walks, to get them used to it and to realise it's nothing to worry about.
- ☹ Don't Let your rescue dog off the lead for at least several weeks (probably much longer & with some never) unless you are **100% certain** you have a reliable recall, that WILL NOT FAIL in the presence of unexpected distractions.

WHAT TO EXPECT FOR THE FIRST FEW WEEKS (At Least!)

When your rescue dog first arrives with you, it is important to be 100% aware and realise **he will need time to adjust and settle**. If I took one of my dogs and left them in a strange house where they didn't know anyone, I would expect them to be very unsettled, upset, confused, very stressed and to display any range of behaviours, including aggression/reactivity, which they would not normally display.

I would expect all this from a dog that has **never** had any upset in their life and has lived life so far knowing nothing but love, safety and security.

So imagine how much worse it is for a rescue dog from Romania. These dogs could have spent some time trying to survive on the streets, would have had to endure the horrors of a Romanian Public Shelter and how they're treated and handled there. They would have spent 2 days on a transport vehicle with yet more strange dogs and people, 2 days in another kennel environment with MORE strange dogs and people before they finally arrive with you, yet another new environment with more strange people and possibly more strange dogs, along with a completely new routine and level of expectations.

Some dogs cope with all of this remarkably well, but some don't, and it would serve adopters and fosterers better to assume that they won't cope, and behave and handle them accordingly.

That way, you are far more likely to prevent problems than if you assume they will be fine, or that they will be grateful for this wonderful life you have offered them, and then don't provide them with the necessary consistency, boundaries and structure that they **need** at this most unstable of times.



Foster Dog Tico when he first arrived was so terrified, this was where he stayed for hours.

Important points to remember in order to provide structure in the early weeks

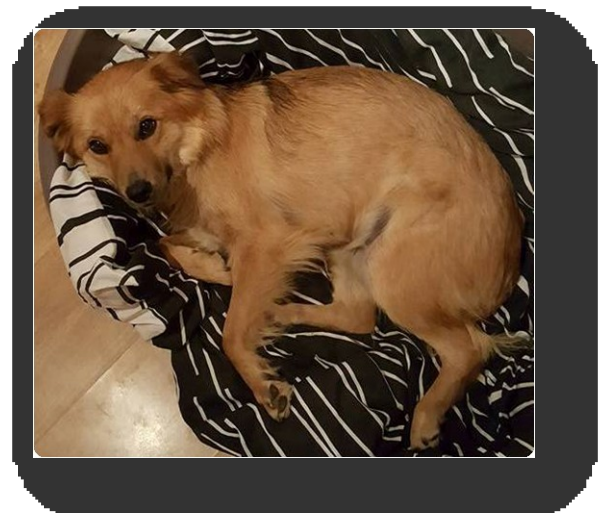
1. Have **all the equipment** you might need ready for when your dog arrives. That way you will be prepared.
2. Keep **YOUR** behaviour consistent. Your rescue dog will learn much quicker from knowing what is expected of him. Avoid confusing him by making sure everyone in the house is doing the same things.
3. **Provide a secure, safe place** for him to be left alone. Start doing this as soon as he arrives, even if only for 5 or 10 minutes at a time while you go elsewhere in the house. The more times you can repeat this from day one, the better your dog will cope with being left when you have to go out for longer periods.
4. **Expect some problems** in the early settling in period, and **be prepared** for it to be a bit stressful and unsettling for **everyone in the house** to start with. All legitimate rescue's will provide support and advice, but it can never hurt to have already sourced a reputable local trainer or behaviourist you can call upon if needed. I would recommend looking for an accredited member of a recognisable body such as any of the following, to ensure your trainer has been fully assessed and uses positive reward based methods of training and handling.
 - [IMDT \(Institute of Modern Dog Trainers\)](#)
 - [APDT \(Association of Pet Dog Trainers\)](#)
 - [PPGBI \(Pet Professional Guild British Isles\)](#)
 - [COAPE \(Centre of Applied Pet Ethology\)](#).

NB: The dog training industry is unregulated and therefore it is possible for pretty much anyone to set themselves up as a trainer, but this doesn't mean they will be a good trainer with up to the date knowledge. I know for a fact, many trainers are still using aversive methods for training and dealing with behaviour problems, which if used on a rescue dog, will most likely cause more problems than it solves

This is a critical transition period. Dogs are particularly impressionable when they first arrive in a new environment, and how well you manage their behaviour during this transitional period will have a direct effect on how quickly they settle and become a well adjusted member of the family.

Please plan to invest time during this period to steadily introduce, teach and get acquainted with your new dog and his/her unique character. All of this **MUST** take place at your dogs pace and within the realms of what he can cope with.

**It will definitely
be worth the extra effort**



POSSIBLE PROBLEMS YOU MAY ENCOUNTER WITH YOUR ROMANIAN RESCUE DOG

It is essential you realise and appreciate that you are more than likely going to face some problems with your new rescue dog. This does not mean they can't be solved, or that you have gotten a 'bad' dog, it's the same with all rescue dogs, they're not robots and if you don't know their history, you have to be prepared to deal with any of the following.

- ✓ Resource guarding
- ✓ Separation Anxiety
- ✓ House soiling
- ✓ Demanding Attention
- ✓ Snatching at food
- ✓ Escaping
- ✓ Running off
- ✓ Fear of new people (growling / reactivity)
- ✓ Fear of other dogs (growling / reactivity)
- ✓ Counter surfing
- ✓ Bin Raiding
- ✓ Not liking a lead being put on
- ✓ Pulling on the lead or not wanting to move when the lead is on
- ✓ Stress behaviours (Chewing / Shredding)
- ✓ Digging

If you're not prepared to deal with any of these problems, you need to discuss this at length with your rescuer before you get your dog. It's unfair to expect a dog to arrive and be 'perfect' and when he's not you send him back, this causes untold psychological damage for the dog, making it harder and harder for him to settle into a future home. Please take a moment to place yourself in his paws and seriously consider what you can and can't deal with based on your knowledge, experience and commitment.

Most rescuers will provide support during the settling in period, but even with this, you need to be prepared to put in the work at home initially to settle your dog as quickly and easily as possible.

EQUIPMENT THAT WOULD BE OF GREAT BENEFIT

- Slip lead + Short lightweight house lead
- A long training line (15 - 30ft)
- Baby Gate(s)
- Harness
- Crate
- Plenty of tasty treats + training treat bag

Prevention of problems during the first few days and weeks following adoption are critical. Problems that happen during this time are most likely to lead to long term issues or even adoption failure.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE ANY HELP

If you are thinking of adopting or have recently adopted a Romanian Rescue Dog and would like any professional assistance with behaviour problems or settling in challenges, please [CLICK HERE](#) to see how we can work together to ensure your new life together gets off to the best start possible.

RECOMMENDED READING

- Charlie: The Dog Who Came In From the Wild - Lisa Tenzin-Dolma
- Cautious Canine - Patricia McConnell
- The Other End of the Leash - Patricia McConnell
- If Bones would rain from the sky - Suzanne Clothier
- On Talking Terms With Dogs - Turid Rugaas
- The Culture Clash - Jean Donaldson

There are many other books by all of these authors, all of which are worth reading, some relate to specific problems and some are more generalised. For [A FULL RECOMMENDED READING LIST CLICK HERE](#)

GOOD LUCK & ENJOY YOUR WONDERFUL NEW FRIEND :)



**Two of the dogs shown here are Romanian Rescue Dogs...
Happy, Relaxed and finally enjoying life!**

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