



INTEGRATING YOUR NEW PET

(Taking him or her home)

Thank you for your support of GRRH and rescue activities in general! We wish you the very best experience with your new family member and are always available to answer questions.

Please realize the following is offered as a general explanation of some of the more important items in the integration process. By no means is it all-inclusive or an exact science; however, the items listed are valuable lessons from numerous individuals and what has been learned from placing several hundreds of Goldens into new forever homes.

VERY IMPORTANTLY, while GRRH does it best to evaluate the dogs and acclimate them to a “normal pet life” during the fostering period, please realize that many of these special pets have unknown backgrounds (many have been abused or neglected or other unknown “baggage”) and may be slow and timid to adjust to new people or their new surroundings, so extra care and caution is required. Patience, love, caring and training; more love, training, care and patience are the key!! Following are some required steps that the new owner should take that are highly recommended by GRRH.

PET ID ON THE DOG ASAP!!

It is extremely important that the new owner obtain a dog tag (available at Petco, Walmart, and others for \$5 or \$6) with their personal contact info and place it on a secure dog collar on their new pet AS SOON AS POSSIBLE! It’s sad and surprising the number of pets who end up in shelters or pounds, many which do not leave but are put down, because they have gotten out and did not have proper ID on them. GRRH recommends/requires that this be completed within the first 24 hours, if possible, acquire the tag and collar before you even pick up the dog (if you know which dog you’ll be adopting).

(to be updated with info regarding registering the chip ID and contact details, including GRRH)

“PUPPY-PROOF” YOUR HOUSE, YARD, AND OTHER AREAS:

Do a walk-through and thorough check of your home, yard, garage and areas where your new pet will be. Be sure to put any toxic bottles and packages (cleaners, fertilizers, anti-freeze, etc) in cabinets or in a secure area. Check your yard and fence to make sure it's secure, no areas where a dog could crawl underneath, areas where they may dig out, make sure gates close and latch securely, etc. Puppies and some dogs like to chew on extension cords so pay attention to that possibility. You may want to place that really good pair of shoes or slippers on an upper shelf to avoid an inadvertent loss :) After all, chewing is natural and a real pleasure for dogs, although they can be trained to chew on only toys.

FIRST INTRODUCTIONS TO OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS AND/OR PETS:

Another extremely important aspect of the integration process. Please exercise extra care and err on the side of caution to avoid any unwanted occurrences. A few key points to consider:

Introduction to Other Pets

1. Take the process slow and DO NOT RUSH IT or take it for granted.
2. Have your new pet on a sturdy leash; recommend that other pets to be on leashes as well.
3. BEFORE THE INTRODUCTION, take your current pets for a good walk and exercise. Take your new pet for a separate walk and exercise. THIS TENDS TO GET ALL OF THEIR ENERGY LEVELS DOWN AND MAKES THEM MORE RECEPTIVE.
4. After walking them separately, walk them together on a neutral territory (not your backyard). This tends to minimize the territory protection instinct that the dogs naturally have. It also helps in the bonding process in that they are performing a “pack activity”.

Introduction to Family Members and Friends

1. Take the process slow and DO NOT RUSH IT or take it for granted.
2. Allow the dog to sniff the person's hands on the dog's terms and pace, again take it slow
3. Don't bring your hand up behind or above the dog's head to pet him/her (may spook them), rather pet them under their chin.
4. A few tips if there are children are in the home,
 - please remind them not to make sudden actions around your new pet
 - although best of intentions, do not try to kiss the dog or put their faces in the pet's face

FEEDING, MEDICATIONS, OTHER:

It goes without saying that any medications be administered as required.

It is suggested that you attempt to maintain the dog food that they were on previously or at least a mixture as you transition them over to a new food of your choice. An abrupt change in diet can have a big affect on the dog's digestive system, and the resulting consequences.

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS AND LEAVING THE DOG ALONE WHEN YOU LEAVE:

Many schools of thought agree on the benefit of crating your pet for the best of all parties. Much of it depends on the dog's background, personality, and your home. It's recommended that you visit with the Adoption Coordinator and/or Foster Parents to gain additional insight in this matter.

TRAINING

A well-trained dog is a happy dog ! Almost every dog expert and dog book agrees that dogs want nothing more than to please their owners, have structure and know what's expected, and offer conditional love. While GRRH does not offer training advice, it is important that the new owner, or any owner for that matter, make themselves the "Alpha" for a harmonious relationship with your pet. Under no circumstances allow your pet to dictate the rules.

EXERCISE

Other than love, patience, care and training; exercise is **the most important activity that any owner can do with their dog**. Dogs absolutely love their walks and getting exercise. The walks and regular exercise address so many items; i) it helps to create a closer bond between owner and pet, ii) it burns off energy (especially important with a high-energy pet), iii) it keeps the pet's weight down, especially important for Golden Retrievers who are common to develop hip-dysplasia at older ages, iv) it's the dogs way to get out in the world and see what's going on (Caesar Milan compared a dog sniffing on a walk similar to that of humans reading the newspaper or watching the news), v) dogs being migrating, pack animals, it provides them a way of satisfying that internal instinct, and vi) good exercise makes the dog much more attentive and easier to train.

INTEGRATION PROCESS GOING FORWARD

Again, take the process slow and DO NOT RUSH IT.....be patient and understanding many of these wonderful animals have had a not so positive background, to say the least. They have anxieties and personality quirks just as many people do. They all have their own story, although they unfortunately cannot tell us what that is. Several dogs have thunder-phobia, fear of loud sounds, separation anxiety, fear of a certain "type" individual (i.e. a male) who abused them previously, etc, etc.

Many of our Golden Retrievers integrate and acclimate to their new forever homes immediately and without any incidents whatsoever. However, many, the majority, do have issues which require patience, understanding, compassion, and love to help them overcome these fears. The GREAT (GRRH8) news is that Golden Retrievers have the temperament and demeanor that allows them to work through these type issues, with your help and guidance, to become wonderful, wonderful companions and forever family members!

This is the true spirit of rescue and pet adoption !! What a genuine great feeling of doing the right thing !

" He (she) might only be here for part of your life, but for him (her) YOU are his whole life"