

Living with a dog will probably require you to change some things in and around your home, but it will help keep your new pet safe and sound!

Dog-proof your home (or else...). Put away anything your dog might mistake for a toy or decide to chew on such as stuffed animals, shoes, socks, slippers, dirty laundry, briefcases, remote controls, food, trash, etc. Leave out only a few safe dog toys and a bowl of water when you aren't closely supervising your dog.



Set up a crate and a gate. Set up a dog crate in an area where your family spends a lot of time (kitchen, living room, or den) before your new dog comes into the house for the first time. If she isn't already crate trained, or if you adopted a puppy, also set up a baby gate in the kitchen, laundry room, or other non-carpeted room. Even if the room has a door, use a baby gate. Most dogs don't like being behind a closed door, but as long as they can see out, they will adjust rather quickly and accept their confinement.

Decide where the "potty" is. Decide where you want your dog to go to the bathroom. Take her to that spot as soon as you get home and praise her after she's done. You can even offer her a small food treat or other reward. Use this spot every time she needs to go until she goes there on her own. Pick up the waste in the yard diligently to reduce infection with internal parasites and to discourage eating of feces.

Guard your yard. If you are going to have a fenced-in yard or a run for your dog, be sure to patch any holes in the fence and clear the area of flowers, lawn ornaments, and anything else that your dog could either destroy or be injured by. In the winter, clear away piles of snow next to the fence. Your dog could easily climb to the top and jump over the fence (even a six-foot one).

Never put two dogs on the same tie-out/run or put two tie-outs close together. The dogs can get tangled up and strangle themselves or one another.



Which way did he go? Remember, dogs can dig, jump, and wriggle so even with a fenced-in yard or sturdy runner, your new dog should only be outside while you can supervise. When you're not home or can't watch for trouble, your dog should be safe and sound in her crate or room. If she is ever outside alone for a long time, she should have a clean, dry, insulated dog house in the shade or access to a dog door that leads back inside your home.

Learn the language. Understanding dog behavior and training methods will help you solve and prevent many problems on your own. See our Resources page for suggestions.



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