

# Epsom Canine Rescue



## Guidance on Adopting a Rescue Dog

*Thank you for choosing to adopt a Rescue Dog*

It is an often used saying, but a true one; but by adopting a rescue dog, you really do save two lives not just one!

Not only have you offered a loving home to your chosen dog, but you have also made space in kennels or in a foster home for another dog to be helped. Your donation will also help to shelter, feed and pay veterinary fees for other dogs, so allowing us to continue with the work that we do.

As a rescue we have an excellent track record of dogs settling well into their adopted homes, and we pride ourselves in taking the time to ensure that the dog you are considering will be suitable for your home and lifestyle, and vice versa. Our ultimate goal is that with the right dog and guidance, you will both ensure a loving and longstanding relationship.

Where appropriate we will offer specific advice if we feel a dog has particular training or behavioural need. Please do take the time to follow these guidelines, as it will help to ensure that your dog settles in quickly, and will help to avoid future problems.

If at any time you have concerns or a query you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact us. In fact we would rather you approached us sooner with something minor, rather than later when a problem has developed. Many issues can be resolved very simply, with the right advice. We are all very approachable, and in any event love to hear how our newly homed dogs are getting along :)

*the Epsom Canine Rescue Team x*



## **Why Adopt a Rescue Dog?**

According to the 2011 Dogs Trust survey, 126,176 stray dogs were handled by local authorities in the past year. This is a 29% increase since 2008, and a likely reflection of both the harsh economic climate that has prevailed these past years, as well as an increase in backyard breeders seeking to make easy money.

Of these, approximately 48% of dogs were reunited with their owners, and 46% were either re-homed directly, or found their way into the Rescue system. Approximately 7,100 dogs were not so lucky, and were put to sleep once their seven days were up.

Dogs find themselves in rescue for many reasons - overbreeding, social status, puppy farming, the racing industry, a reluctance to neuter, a failure to train & socialize leading to behavioural issues; as well as changes in family circumstances such as new babies, financial, moving house, divorce etc.

Most dogs are simply confused, alone and unloved; and in the right environment will thrive and go on to make fantastic family pets.

## **Checklist:**

### **What you will need prior to adopting your dog.**

#### **Consider :**

Your new dog will take time to settle into their new environment. We will always provide you with as much background information as we are able to, however in some circumstances this may well be limited if for example they came in as a stray.

You may need to adapt your current commitments and family's routine to allow you to dedicate sufficient time to integrating and settling your new dog. Owning a well rounded, well socialised, well trained dog who is a pleasure to walk and take out and about involves investing time and commitment. An under exercised and under stimulated dog may well resort to attention seeking or destructive behaviour. A tired dog will be an easier dog , and that will include mental as well as physical exhaustion!

As a responsible rescue, we will always seek to identify problems where we are able, but sometimes they will only be apparent when you bring the dog home. In those cases we will always look to work with you to resolve any issues, possibly by involving our behaviourist to offered structured guidance and advice.

If adopting a crossbreed dog, we will always do our best to give an indication of likely adult size and temperament. However this can never be entirely accurate, as there can even be a wide discrepancy amongst litter-mates, and true character may only be established after a number of months. With that in mind, there will always be an element of mystery which to most people is part of their charm!

#### **ID Tag**

Your Dog will arrive wearing an Epsom Canine Rescue (ECR) ID tag. Please ensure that he continues to wear this throughout the trial adoption period as his microchip will also be registered with these details. However you should also purchase your own tag with your own contact details on for the dog to wear as well and this should be done before you collect your dog from the foster home or kennels. (We strongly advise not including the dogs name as this makes theft easier.) This will help if your dog is lost locally to your home, and hopefully allow someone to return him to you quickly. Once formal adoption papers have been signed, the ECR tag should be removed and returned to ECR for future use.

If your dog goes missing at any time, prior to formal receipt of microchip transfer, you should immediately contact a member of the ECR team, because if they are found and scanned, the details will still be registered to ECR. We also have members who are very involved with Dogslost who can help you to find your dog.

## **Collar, Harness & Lead**

Your dog will arrive wearing a collar, but we would appreciate this being returned when final adoption is completed so that it can be used for future dogs and saves us money. We do not advocate the use of metal link or any form of half check or choke type collars.

For dogs that are strong on the lead or enthusiastic 'pullers', you could consider purchasing a 'Gentle Leader' type head-collar which acts humanely to encourage the dog to walk comfortably.

Consideration should be given to ensure that the lead you buy is suitable for the weight of dog you are adopting - particularly with the flexi type leads.

We do not encourage the use of flexi leads for dogs with fast acceleration such as lurchers as they can cause whiplash type injuries if the dog suddenly races away.

Nearly all of our dogs are walked in a harness. We particularly recommend the Sally Hopkins type fleece ones as these come in a variety of sizes and colours and can be purchased directly from ECR. They are gentle on the dogs skin, helping to avoid pressure points. We consider harnesses to be better for the dogs for a number of reasons:

- They avoid pressure on the delicate windpipe
- They are more secure than a collar, which can slip off.
- They allow for 'double security' attaching lead to both collar & harness which can be useful for control, or for particularly strong dogs.
- They provide an easier 'grip' if you need to get hold of your dog quickly.

## **Bed**

It is best to provide your dog with his own special place to sleep. Initially we would suggest buying a relatively inexpensive bed as dogs can sometimes chew particularly when unsettled in a new environment.

## **Harmful Items**

Please ensure that all chocolates, grapes, cleaning chemical, garden pesticides or fertilisers are safely shut away.

## **Food**

If your dog has come from a foster home, we will let you know what they are currently eating. If they have come from the kennels, then they will have been eating either Arden Grange or CSJ Dry dog food mixed with Forthglade (wet food trays).

If you wish to change their diet, we would suggest that you initially purchase some of their current food, to help avoid stomach upsets; then after a two week settling in period, **gradually** introduce the new diet. We strongly suggest you avoid brands that use a lot of additives and colorings such as Bakers, as these can have a hyperactive effect on dogs similar to giving blue Smarties to children!! Similarly, please consider the protein content of dry foods bearing in mind how active your dog is, the higher the protein the more hyped up your dog will be.

Brands we recommend as being high quality and good value include:

- Nature Diet (wet)
- Arden Grange (dry)
- James Wellbeloved (dry)
- Burns (dry)
- Natures Harvest (wet)
- Chappie (wet)

## **Chews & Treats**

Again we do not advocate the use of highly colored treats for the reasons stated above. The thin “pencil” type rawhide chews should also be avoided at all costs, as they present a severe choking risk to even very small dogs

Treats we recommend include:

- Fish4Dogs - they are all natural, high in beneficial fish oils, & come in a variety of sizes.
- Rawhide braids & chews - Please ensure you choose an appropriate size for your dog and monitor them particularly when they get near the end. Please do not purchase the ones with knot ends as these can be chewed off and swallowed whole – please opt for pressed hide.
- Pigs ears or dried tripe.
- Raw Marrow Bones
- Dentastix given in moderation.

- Homemade Tuna cake (recipe can be supplied!) - easy, healthy, (not smelly), and can be frozen and used when needed as a high value treat.
- Dried liver pieces

## **Toys**

Toys that stimulate your dog mentally are very useful, particularly when you need to keep your dog occupied i.e when being left.

Kong or similar 'stuffable' toys are particularly good, dependant on the dog it may be best to opt for the black EXTREME KONGS as they are made of a harder rubber and are more suitable for terriers and bull breeds. These can be stuffed with a variety of foodstuffs and can keep dogs busy for ages. Suitable things to 'stuff' include your dogs regular food, chopped chicken, sausage, dried liver. Kongs can also be microwaved to help set food in them (mix some chopped meat or dry kibble with some grated cheese, stand in a bowl then microwave for a few seconds until the cheese melts, then allow to cool & set before feeding). Filled Kongs can also be frozen, so that you will always have a ready supply and they will last your dog even longer!

Most dogs like balls especially tennis balls as they can squish these to release tension etc but please ensure they don't strip the fur and eat it!! PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW YOUR DOG TO PLAY WITH GOLF BALLS.

Play fetch and hide and seek games with your dogs, do not encourage tug of war, rough and tumble, any combative or restraint games with your new dog.

## **Crate**

A crate can be very useful for helping your dog to settle, and providing you with peace of mind in the early days when you have to go out. We will let you know if your dog has already been crate trained, but if not we can provide guidance on how to do this. If they have not used a crate before, it is important that they are introduced correctly, NOT JUST PUT IN AND SHUT IN!! A guidance sheet is available for crate training, please ask and we can email this or post to you.

Many dogs find a crate a comforting place to which they can retire when they want to get away from the hustle and bustle of life.

## **Muzzle**

If your dog has been muzzle trained we will let you know and advise what size of muzzle you need to buy. Please do not be put off by the use of a muzzle as they can give your dog much more freedom by allowing them to run off lead safely instead of being restricted to on lead walking. Please ensure you use the basket type muzzle and not the nylon ones



as these are designed for vet visits etc and do not allow your dog to pant or vomit when exercising.

## **Coming Home – Please don't expect too much, too soon!!**

No dog will settle within a few hours/days of bringing it home, and a rescue dog is no different in that respect. Many of these dogs have been through so much, that they need time and patience to settle. They may initially be scared or confused by yet another move, friendships to forge & hierarchies to establish if there are resident dogs. There may be relief that they are finally out of kennels & on a comfy sofa. The first few weeks may well be a roller-coaster: Periods of uncertainty in the new home, followed by a testing period once they become more confident and start to push the boundaries, until with love, consistency and training things begin to settle down. This may take a few days or it may take a few months - each dog is different and you need to be prepared for that.

Consistency and a routine are the most important things that you can give your new dog – you must all agree on house rules, decide what is acceptable behavior and routine in your home and start as you mean to go on i.e please do not allow him/her sleeping upstairs as you feel sorry for them and then do not allow them to do so & hope to change things later! It may mean some sleepless nights, but setting the ground rules from day one is easier and less confusing for your dog, the same with allowing on furniture and at the table whilst you are eating.

It is also important to keep things as calm as possible for the first few weeks, whilst maintaining your usual routine as much as possible. Every dog is different, but too many visitors or certain environments may overwhelm your new dog, Dogs can exhibit stress in many different ways including hyperactivity, panting & fear. So care should be taken to monitor their reaction, introduce new activities and people gradually, be patient, calm & reassuring and use positive reinforcement at all times. You can also go for a walk to burn off energy or use a crate to give the dog some “down” time. It is important to realize that these initial behaviours stem from the dog's insecurity. Give them time to learn about their new environment and take it slowly.

### **Appropriate Behaviour**

It is important to decide what behaviour is acceptable to you, stick with it, and be consistent in reinforcing it right from the start. Praise & reward the good behaviour, and ignore (and try to prevent) the undesirable. Sometimes dogs misread our signals and if

your new dog is developing a bad trait please contact us immediately as it is much easier to 'nip it in the bud' at this stage, before it becomes an accepted learned behaviour.

## **Sleeping**

It is best to place the bed somewhere quiet and cosy so that they can have a peaceful place to retire to if they want. Most dogs prefer somewhere where they can still see what is going on and be part of family life.

Decide where you would like your dog to sleep long-term, and start with that from day one. As with any new dog, this may initially entail a number of broken nights as your dog learns to settle in a strange environment, but it is important to be consistent. Certain things can help:

- If your dog is used to canine company it is best to place them (crated or otherwise) where they can see any other dogs if you have them.
- Ensure the dog has had enough exercise so that they are sufficiently tired.
- Special treats to go to bed with but nothing that the dog can choke on.
- Rescue dogs particularly may not be used to sleeping alone, so a favourite toy, a ticking clock or radio may help settle them.
- Kennels often also have heat lamps so they may not be used to total darkness
- A stuffed Kong or a special treat only given at bedtime may occupy them until they fall asleep.
- Try not to go to him unless he is really howling, as it will only take longer for him to learn to settle. If you do need to go down, try to be matter of fact, settle him down then leave him again.

If problems persist please let us know and we can offer further guidance. We strongly recommend that you do not allow them to sleep in your bed or bedroom unless that is your long term aim, as it will be harder and more stressful for the dog to adapt in the long-run and could cause separation anxiety problems.

## **Separation Anxiety**

Unfortunately if dogs have come from a kennel environment, we cannot always predict whether they will suffer from separation anxiety (SA). However, kennels can also help to break that habit, and starting with training as soon as you bring them home can help to prevent the problem establishing or escalating. Many dogs are so relieved to be 'home' that they quickly form bonds with their new owners, and worry if left alone. It is important

(even more so if you don't work, or have regular commitments that take you out of the home), that you help your dog become used to being alone, so that he doesn't howl or become destructive when you do have to go out and leave him at home.

From day one, regularly establish a routine of going into another room, closing the door behind you for a short while, so that your dog is separated from you. When you come back in, avoid making a fuss of him if he greets you excitedly. Only when he is calm, give him lots of praise and a treat.

Extend this gradually until he is alone for a few minutes at a time and understands that you will come back. If he cries, ignore it or you will be reinforcing the negative behavior.

Continuing to build this up, will make it much easier on the dog when you do need to go out, and can be easily incorporated into the household routine.

When you do go out, again make sure he is well exercised & tired, a radio left on can provide company, and a Kong stuffed with high value (i.e. treats he loves & doesn't often get) will help to keep him busy. Keep your exit very calm and leave without making a fuss.

Keep the time you are out short initially, and gradually build it up. When you return home, ignore any over enthusiastic behavior (hard as it can be), wait until he is calm and only then say hello make a fuss of him.

## **Aggression towards other dogs**

If we are aware of any issues with your new dog whilst around other dogs, we will have let you know.

There are many reasons for this, but often it is a lack of early socialisation. In any event in the early days it is wise to be alert for negative reactions and avoid potential flash points.

If we have advised that your dog should be muzzled when out, please adhere to this. The decision will not have been taken lightly, and the reasons will have been explained.

Outside, be aware of dogs' body language - ears back, raised hackles, body stiffness, growling & crouching are all indicators that they are not happy and it is best to take a wide berth.

When introducing your dog to other dogs, keep both dogs on the lead while introductions are made and try not to impart any tension on the lead whilst both dogs check each other out, do not allow the leads to become inter-twined. If all goes well it is best not to allow

them to play whilst on-lead, as they can easily become tangled which may make the dogs stressful and then harder to separate.

If the worst happens & a fight should occur, the best course of action for separating them is to lift the back legs of the attacking dog off the ground and swing them away. This usually results in them letting go of the other dog to regain their balance. Again if you are unsure and concerned by your new dogs reaction to other dogs then please contact us and we can ask our behaviourist/trainers to advise.

## **Exercise**

It is important to maintain an exercise routine suitable for the breed and age of the dog you have adopted. Many problems can be resolved by simply providing your dog with adequate exercise. Taking your dog out and about, also aids mental stimulation, that will not be adequately provided by your garden. It is also very important for socialisation as it allows your dog to meet other people and dogs. Remember terriers have high prey instincts so be aware of wildlife and bear in mind that scents are strongest at dusk and first thing in the morning when the air is damp so bear this in mind when walking at these times in rural areas.

## **Toilet Training**

If your dog has come from a foster home, we will be able to give you a good indication of their toilet training ability. However if they have come from kennels this is not always possible and will depend on prior history.

In any event it is best to expect some accidents. Moving to a new home is a very stressful experience for dogs which will often be expressed by increased urination. This will most likely settle down very quickly, but in the interim it is important that you take them out into the garden at regular intervals and be aware if the dog starts sniffing and circling indoors. Praise and reward them when they go outside, so that a good routine is swiftly established. Never tell them off for accidents indoors, it is not deliberate and will only encourage them to try and hide whilst they do it.

If problems still persist we can offer further guidance.

## **Marking**

In the early days it is often common for your new dog to mark their territory - often this will just mean that they seem to try and mark every single bush & tree in your garden! However it can sometimes be indoors as well, such as chair corners, doorways etc. Again this should settle down very quickly, and if you see them starting to do it you should just take them outside quickly, wait until they go then praise them. Any odours or marked areas can be dealt with using biological washing powder or soda water.

## **Feeding**

Please ask what, how often and quantities your new rescue dog is being fed. Unless advised (usually due to age) our dogs will have been fed twice a day, and we would recommend that you continue with this. We usually recommend a diet of both wet and dry foods and please stick to good quality food stuffs as mentioned previously under the food section.

## **Introductions:**

### **People**

- Try not to overwhelm your dog with too many visitors when he first arrives home, to give him a chance to get to know and feel confident with his new family and his/hers environment.
- With nervous dogs, allow him to approach when they are ready, and visitors can be seen as less imposing if they ignore the dog and come in and sit down without making eye contact. They can then be encouraged to give them a treat so that they learn to see this as a positive experience.
- More exuberant dogs may need a little 'reigning in' to prevent them from continually jumping up and bad habits developing. In which case it is a good idea that he be put on a lead or house line when visitors arrive so that he doesn't have the opportunity to display unwanted behavior. He can then be greeted & rewarded when he is sitting quietly or at least as all four paws on the ground!
- At all times be aware of your new dog & open doors when guests are arriving & leaving, to make sure there is no opportunity for him to get out.

### **Children**

- Young children should always be supervised around any new dog.

- They should be taught how to approach and handle the dog correctly so that they are not too rough, children can do nasty things to get a reaction from the dog or other children.
- They should never disturb or pester them especially whilst he is eating, sleeping or playing with a toy.
- Childrens toys should be kept out of the way.
- It is best that they don't eat around the dog, or walk around holding food, or the dog may think it is for him!
- Remember it is against the law for a child under 16 yrs to be walking a dog alone.

### **Resident Dogs**

- If you have a resident dog, they will already have met to ensure compatibility. However when arriving home is still best to meet on neutral territory outside, by taking them for a walk before going into the house and the new dog goes in first to avoid an territory guarding.
- It isn't unusual to have some growling & posturing as they establish hierarchies and it is important that you continue to supervise them when they are together.
- Do not give toys, treats or bones during the settling-in period as these can become flash points. And when you start to introduce them, avoid using 'favoured' toys & do so cautiously.
- Each dog should have their own place to sleep, and if they are crate trained, these can be used when you leave them the first few times to ensure everyone is safe, or use dog-gates to separate when you are out.
- Ensure sufficient distance when feeding, or do so in separate rooms until you are confident there will be no food guarding.

### **Resident Cats**

You will have been advised on the suitability of your dog to live with cats, and he may also have been 'cat tested'. However, this does not necessarily mean that he will have lived with cats, simply that he has been introduced to them, and has exhibited behavior that suggests future compatibility. Further training and careful introductions will still be needed. Even if the resident cat is 'dog savvy' we strongly recommend that you follow these guidelines in the early days to avoid future problems:

- Ensure that the cats have an 'escape route' by employing the use of a stair gate.
- Initial introductions should be done with the new dog on lead or a house-line, so that he cannot chase, and can be corrected where necessary.
- Use positive reinforcement when the dog ignores the cat or comes away when called.

- Do not leave the dog alone with the cat in the house or garden until you are confident there will be no conflict.

## **Socialisation**

Unless you have been specifically advised that your dog has behavioural issues regarding other dogs (in which case specific training may be needed), it is important that you establish a routine that allows your dog to interact with other dogs on a regular basis. Even if you have other resident dogs, it is important that they learn to interact and behave appropriately around unknown dogs.

A well socialised dog is a pleasure to own, and much easier to include in family activities. A major reason for dogs being difficult to re home and facing euthanasia is their inability to interact with others, and displaying this through aggression.

A well socialised dog will always be a happier and healthier dog.

## **Training Classes**

We cannot recommend strongly enough the benefits of enrolling your new dog in a training programme:

- A well trained dog is a pleasure to own.
- It will help to form a stronger bond between you and your dog.
- It stimulates your dog both physically and mentally.
- He will be tired and more content.
- He will have the opportunity to socialise with other dogs.
- You can deal with any behavioural issues as they arise and your trainer will get to know your dog.
- Most of all it's fun and can lead onto other activities such as agility & flyball!

We have included an article at the end of this pack from our recommended trainer/behaviourist which will help you to build a bond with your new dog – entitled 'Nothing is for Free' – Sandra of Dogs and Owners Guidance School can be contacted via her website [www.dogsandownersguidanceschool.co.uk](http://www.dogsandownersguidanceschool.co.uk)

**Most of all, please enjoy and love your new member of the family!!!**





## **Nothing in Life is for Free!**

“Nothing in Life is for Free” is a way of living in harmony with your dog and communicating to him that you are an effective leader and decision maker. This will help your dog to trust and accept you as his leader and be confident of his place within the home. Contrary to popular opinion, almost all dogs find the responsibility of leadership stressful and they only put themselves in that position when they do not perceive you to be capable of the role. Do not confuse being a good leader, with dominance. Dominance is an over-used and misunderstood word when it is used to describe a dog. Your dog’s number one priority in life is not to dominate everyone around him. In fact, your dog’s number one priority is almost always satisfying himself! The Nothing in Life is for Free system will put you in control of all the things in a dog’s life that he enjoys, thus he will have to comply with your requests to get good things.

### **Part 1 – Basic Training/Cues**

Basic training will need to be taught first, ie sit, down, stand, stay, come/here, although any cue that the dog understands can be used, such a ‘spin’, ‘give paw’ or ‘speak!’. If your dog cannot yet reliably perform several basic behaviours then attend a dog training class or get some one to one training.

### **Part 2 – Ignoring your dog’s demands!**

Firstly, you need to stop giving attention to your dog when he demands it. When your dog comes to you and nudges your hand to be fussed, or whines for attention, just ignore him. Don’t push him away or tell him ‘No, get down’. Simply pretend that he is not there. Your dog may try harder and harder to get you to fuss him as this has always worked in the past so you will need to be patient. The nudging may even turn into pawing or other attention seeking behaviours. Ignore all of these. It will take a while for your dog to understand that this no longer gets him attention so don’t give in to him. Completely ignoring him will work faster and better than giving him the wrong kind of attention, such as saying ‘go away’.

### **Part 3 – Taking control of the dog’s resources**

As the dog’s owner, you have control over all the good things in his life. Playing/toys, attention, food, walks, going in and out of doors, going for a car journey, going to the park, everything your dog wants comes from you. Until now, he has probably been getting most of these things for free so there is no real reason for him to respect your leadership or your ownership of these things. Now it is time to make sure that your dog does not get access to these things unless he has done something for you first.

This training does not need to be a long and drawn out process. All you need to do is enforce a simple behaviour that the dog already understands before allowing him access to what he wants. For example, dinner should be a few second encounter that consists of nothing more than saying ‘sit’, then ‘good boy’ then putting the bowl down and walking away.

So for example...

You	Your Dog
Feeding your dog	He must sit and stay until you've put the bowl down
Putting the lead on to go for a walk	He must sit whilst you've put the lead on. (If he jumps up once you have clipped on the lead, unclip it and put it away again). Try again in a few minutes
Getting into and out of the car	He must wait until asked to get into and out of the car
Opening the door to give access to the garden	He must 'down' when the door is opened and wait until he is told he can go through
Playing Tug	He must not take a tug toy until asked to do so and must let go when asked to do so
Fussing him whilst you watch the telly	He must lie down and roll over before being fussed
Allowing him to sleep on your bed	He must not jump onto the bed without being requested and he must get off (happily) when asked to do so
Playing Fetch	He must lie down before you throw the ball

You will need to be patient during this phase of change for your dog. He has already learned that he can make these decisions on his own. There is a long history of him taking control of these resources so you will need to persevere. Enforce the new rules (or he gets nothing) but bear in mind that he needs some time to learn new ways. **There will be many other things that your dog views as valuable resources so remember to identify these and use them wisely.** Control these resources and you control your dog!

#### Part 4 – Games and affection on your terms

So now that you are calling the shots, you will have to make an extra effort to provide him with attention and play time. For example, call him to you, ask him to sit or roll-over and when he does you can shower him with as much attention and fuss as you want. Send him away to fetch his toy and when he brings it back to you, have a great game of tug or fetch. The difference is that now you are the one initiating the attention and beginning the play. Now you can spend quality well balanced time together.

You can see that this training method does not mean that you have to give your dog less attention. You can call him to you and hug and fuss him as much as you please if you wish, as long as he responds to a request first. You can demand his attention, but he can no longer demand yours. Shortly your dog will see you in a different light and be eager to obey more, learn more and receive more!

Whether your dog is a shy character or a pushy character, this method will help them. Shy unconfident dogs will be more relaxed with this lifestyle structure and pushy dogs will be happy to hand back responsibility to you – no longer having to make decisions about what to do and when to do it himself. You have now assumed the leading role and harmony will prevail.

Specific advise relating to : .....