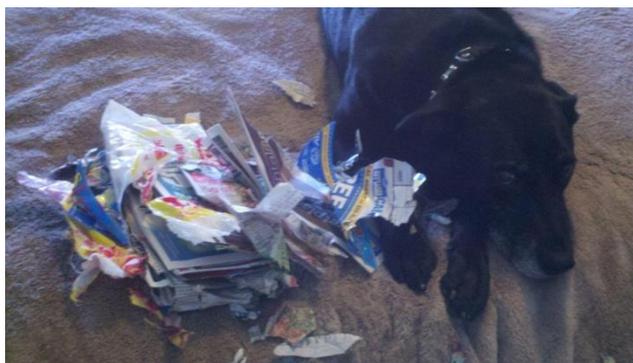


## JAY PRATTE FOR LOVE UNDERDOGS

### YOUR NEW FAMILY MEMBER: THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...

So you have adopted a new member of the family into your home. This one, however, is covered with fur and doesn't speak your language, so discovering their quirks and learning what makes them special is going to be a challenge. The challenge is well worth it as you will improve your skills at reading animal behaviour, find joy in learning what your new friend likes (and doesn't), and you will build a lot of trust for a lifetime of happiness.



Remember, even when we meet new people, they might have what we consider “baggage” that we learn to deal with. A rescued dog will have faced some uncertainties in life, but with time, love and patience ALL of these can be overcome. (The picture above is the rottenest dog ever, my 14 year old lab rescue, Biscuit. He is crazy, enjoys chewing things up, and makes me smile every day of our lives.)

On that note, below are 5 key points to focus on for various time frames as you integrate your new family member. These are not set in stone, and you always need to remain flexible in order to meet the animal's needs while not overtaxing yourself, but this quick guideline might help you figure out some priorities.

#### Day 1

1. **Name:** Pick a good name if you aren't a fan of the one the dog currently has. It should be short, will catch the dog's attention, and something with a sharp consonant helps.
2. **Safety:** Check your home and garden for any holes a dog can slip through, or hazards that could injure them. For the first few weeks always watch to make sure they haven't discovered something you missed.

- 3. Treats:** Pick a couple of good dog treats (Love Underdogs recommend using part of a portion of their regular food, to avoid unsettling their stomach), preferably small and easy to carry. Always have some on you, and share them whenever the dog comes to you or does the tiniest thing worthy of a reward. It is the fastest way to build-
- 4. Trust:** You want to be a happy, rewarding stimulus for your new family member. Always try to look at things from a potentially frightened animal's point of view, and look for ways to build a great trust foundation through treats, attention, and a calm demeanor.
- 5. Learn:** Now is the time to start paying attention to your new dog's behaviours. If you reach to pet, do they flinch? If so, try lowering yourself to their level and talking calmly. Tailor your behaviours to match theirs. The more you learn about their individual mannerisms, the faster you will understand them and build a solid bond.

## Week 1

- 1. Reward the good, ignore the bad:** Animals don't think like we do. The best thing you can remember is ALWAYS reward behaviours you appreciate and want (praise, treats), and even when it is frustrating, ignore behaviours you don't. Frustration often triggers a quick desire to punish, but in the long run you will build more trust by rewarding the good, teaching the dog what you DO want!
- 2. Crate:** Get a properly sized crate for your home, and make it a happy place full of toys, praise and treats. This will help minimize the development of any separation anxiety, and provide them their own safe place.
- 3. Sit:** Always a good starting behaviour. Keeps the dog calm and still, easy to train and easy to reward. Also gives you a solid behaviour to fall back on during times of stress or frustration.
- 4. Lead:** Start working on walking on a lead. Practice in a quiet location or the garden, reward calm behaviours and when they are watching you for direction.
- 5. Possessiveness:** Watch your dog's behaviour carefully, and help them learn you are not a threat. Practice gently taking a toy or food bowl away, and trade for treats if necessary. Work on minimizing any food aggression during feeding time.

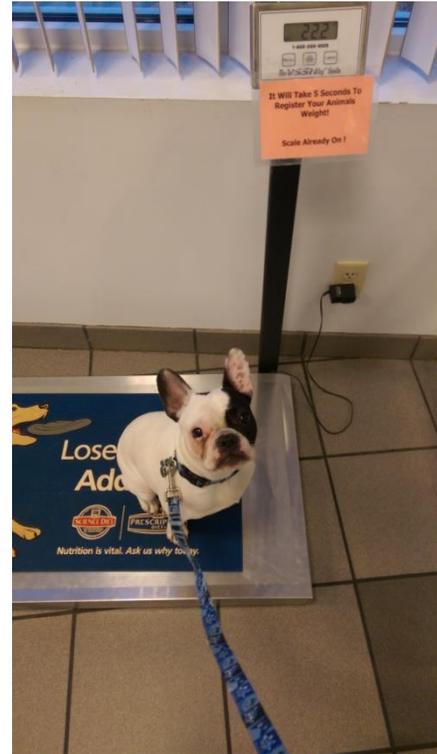


## Month 1

1. **Recall:** Good name, been on a lead, now work on rewarding them like crazy whenever they come when you call. In the garden, the house, at the park... Never punish if they're slow, just use tiny rewards. HUGE rewards and praise for fast responses, and always reward recall.
2. **Wait:** Expand your sit behaviour. Teach them to wait calmly until you tell them "ok" and that they can move. Increase how long they will wait over time. This behaviour is helpful on walks, when going out or meeting someone at a door, etc. Also teaches good manners.
3. **Manners:** More of the *reward good, ignore bad* philosophy. Look at the things you might want to change in your relationship with your dog, and then how you can teach and reward new behaviours (for example, not jumping up on people).
4. **Adventure:** Take your furry friend on trips to new places. Learn what stores or locations allow pets, and get them into the world. They might be anxious at first, but over time this will help your dog overcome fear of new things, be less surprised, and more prepared to face the big world in general. Always make sure the adventures are full of love and rewards!
5. **Maintenance:** With sit and wait under your belt, think about health maintenance behaviours. Teach them to allow you to handle their paws and trim nails, with lots of praise/treats for cooperating. Teach them to allow gentle inspection of their ears, clean their teeth, and to accept grooming. Always keep these sessions rewarding and fun!



Road trip!



Healthy boy!

## Year 1

1. **Health:** Look at your dog: how is their coat? weight? (many dogs are overweight, research how to tell where yours should be) any random lumps or changes you have noticed? Do a bit of homework and check with your vet to make sure all is well.
2. **Social:** Dogs are social creatures. Do they get significant time with you to play and hang out? With other dogs in the home, at the park, or on “play dates”? A well-socialized dog is happier, less anxious, and calmer.
3. **Enrichment:** When you’re not around and the dog is alone at home or in the crate, always have toys and options for things to do. A bored dog can become stressed or anxious, and no one wants to be left alone with nothing to do all day...
4. **Family:** Is your dog part of the family? Are there things you can do to improve their lives and increase their happiness? Remember, our pets only have the options that we provide them. So the happier YOU make the dog, the happier they will make you in the long run.