

# Beggin' To Behave

## Sandy Strychor, ABCDT

### *The Honeymoon is Over...or The Thrill is Gone*

#### ***Bringing home your new pet and how to keep the honeymoon going.***

The wonderful feeling of bringing home a new best friend! Love is in the air! But, you should expect your new dog to act differently at your home than when you met him at the kennel or at his foster home. Once he arrives at your house he will be both excited and nervous (just like you). He may display anxiety and nervousness by panting, pacing, lack of eye contact, potty accidents, chewing, or gastric upset (vomiting, diarrhea, loose stools). He doesn't yet know the smells, the sounds, and importantly, the routines and rules of your house. It is all very confusing. During the first weeks, to a few months, your new dog may be very quiet and extraordinarily controlled or what we think of as 'good'. The overwhelming feeling of the brand-new environment, with all those new sights, sounds, and smells can cause a lot of dogs to go into a very reserved mode, often leading new adopters to think they've hit the jackpot and adopted the most mellow, well behaved dog in the kennel.

The 'real' dog appears a couple of weeks to a month later - after he's relaxed and figured out the house rules, the routine of his days, and the character of his new family.

Your goal in the upcoming weeks is to reduce the confusion and fear and get him to relax and to be calm and show him how to be good and follow your house rules. In other words, set him up to succeed.

**The Leash:** With leash on, spend the first 30 minutes walking him around outside along the perimeter of the yard. Walk slowly and let him sniff if he wants to. He is getting to know the 'lay of the land' and all the smells associated it. He will likely relieve himself as a way of making himself at home by adding his mark to the smells of your yard. The excitement of the move and new family will cause him to have to relieve himself more often than normal. You should be prepared to give him plenty of opportunities to do this in the beginning.

If you have other dogs, plan to do your introductions outside (preferably in the front yard) to reduce the urge for them to protect their home. Once introductions are made, move to the back yard for a few minutes more and then into your home.

Go with your new best friend and let him explore the house with the leash on. I recommend leaving your new dog on leash in the house for the entire first day. Additionally, don't leave the dog unsupervised at any time. If you can't supervise - put him in his crate. A male may want to mark a door, plant, or chair. This is out of nervousness (or he may smell another dog's marking), which is why it's best to have that leash on. If he starts to lift his leg or display any of the 'pre-peeing behavior, give a short jerk on the leash and tell him 'No', that should stop him immediately. Follow up by taking him outside in case he's not just marking! Nerves and excitement can cause uncharacteristic accidents. Do not scold or hit your new dog for having an accident. Verbally get his attention, grab the leash, and take him right outside to his spot to do his business, and when he does it, praise him! Whenever your new dog is not confined, supervise - set this dog up to win!

**Quiet time:** Even though you are very excited about your new dog, resist inviting friends and family over to visit him for the first week. This will give him time to get used to your immediate family and resident pets.

**Feeding:** Feed your new dog twice a day. If he doesn't eat his food, pick up the bowl until the next mealtime. Don't leave the bowl down all day (grazing). This will encourage your dog to eat less.

If you have other dogs, feed your new pup at the same time, but away from them. Be sure to put down your resident dog's bowls first. Ensure that each dog sticks to his own bowl. Keep vigilant over feeding time for a couple of months until the pack positions are established.

Beggin' to Behave Dog Training      [www.beggintobehave.com](http://www.beggintobehave.com)      [beggintobehave@gmail.com](mailto:beggintobehave@gmail.com)

All Rights Reserved. Permission is given for the reader to download and print one copy for personal use.

Any other user requires permission of the author.

# Beggin' To Behave

## Sandy Strychor, ABCDT

**Common 'Spoiling' Mistakes:** Most common mistakes made with new dogs involve what we tend to consider as spoiling, to make up for all their past misfortunes.

**Mistake #1:** The last thing your new dog needs is lots of choices of furniture. It starts out as a self-invite to the couch and can lead to other pushy and undesirable behaviors like guarding of valuable spaces like couches or beds. What to do? Calmly remove him using a leash (collar grabs are threatening), and lead him to *his* bed. When he steps on his new bed, praise him and give him treats and lots of love. Inconsistent and unclear boundaries encourage all kinds of unwanted behaviors.

**Mistake #2:** Giving the new dog freedom and free reign of his new home. All dogs need boundaries. New ones need them even more. Too much freedom can be overwhelming and overwhelmed dogs tend to chew or pee. They pee when they are scared...or because they don't know what else they're supposed to do. It's our job to make sure we've set up an environment where a new dog can't make a mistake, like chew the couch or the pillows.

An ideal location for your new pet is a centrally located room like the kitchen or living room. Block the room off with a baby gate or use a crate and provide a nice soft dog bed. Crates are wonderful tools. Dogs often do best in a crate because it can appeal to a his nesting instinct and most dogs consider the crate a safe place to be. When you need to leave your pup alone the crate is the safest place for him *and* your home. He won't get into trouble. If you are leaving him in a gated room, doggy-proof the room, removing any tempting-but-forbidden items that might get chewed. When you are at home supervise your dog, make sure he drags a leash so you can lead him outside for potty and remind him to stay off the couch.

Plan on using boundaries for several weeks to several months before allowing full access to your home.

**Mistake #3:** Not starting, and keeping up, some type of daily exercise routine with your new pet. Exercise and mental stimulation encourage relaxation and a calm, relaxed dog is easier to manage indoors. Begin going for a 30-minute leash walk a few times a week and you'll most likely be meeting your new dog's exercise and mental stimulation needs. A big yard to run in is not the same as a leash walk. The walk establishes you as the top dog and promotes bonding with your new dog. Consider some obedience training or agility classes.

**Mistake #4:** Allowing free access to possessions, like the couch or high-value toys and treats with no rules about access to them. This is one of the most serious problems dog owners deal with...resource, or possession, guarding. Many new adopters can't wait to spoil their dogs and the quickest way to do that is with toys and food and includes the couch. Couch hoarders will settle in and proceed to "defend" their space against other dogs and people who venture near. They will sit like a king on the couch and tell the other dogs, or people, to "go away".

The solution is to not give our new dog free access to the couch or give high-value treats (like bully sticks or marrow bones) until you have established that he will give up the treat, or the space, without defending it.

**Mistake #5:** Allowing invasion of personal space and excessive affection. Your new dog is going to bond with you. But they can learn to crowd out your family and other resident dogs as well. Dogs teach each other what line not to cross when it comes to their personal space. They are much better than humans because we give mixed signals. We allow them to "snuggle" on us, invade our personal space, and even follow us into the bathroom. Then we get annoyed when we trip over them in the kitchen. Well-meaning new adopters think they are offering security to their new dog when they're really nurturing unbalanced and anxious behavior. This is the first step on the road to separation anxiety or onto the path of guarding the human as a valuable resource.

**Let's review...**most of the common mistakes well-meaning adopters make when bringing home their new dogs are because there is a lack of boundaries and structure, or spoiling. Be patient and consistent and keep your eyes focused on the long-term joy of having this wonderful new best friend living happily, and in concert, with the entire family.

Beggin' to Behave Dog Training      [www.beggintobehave.com](http://www.beggintobehave.com)      [beggintobehave@gmail.com](mailto:beggintobehave@gmail.com)

All Rights Reserved. Permission is given for the reader to download and print one copy for personal use.

Any other user requires permission of the author.