

Week 1: Settling In

The first week is about creating a calm, welcoming environment where your pet can begin to feel safe and start adjusting to their new life.

- **Create a Safe Space:** Set up a quiet, cozy area with your pet's bed, toys, water, and food. This should be a stress-free zone where they can relax without interruptions. For dogs, a crate can offer security. For cats, a soft hideaway or carrier with familiar-smelling items is ideal.
- **Establish a Routine:** Start following consistent schedules for feeding, potty breaks, and sleep. Routines help pets feel secure and understand what to expect. Feed at the same times daily and maintain consistent walking or play sessions.
- **Observe and Go Slow:** Let your pet explore the home gradually. Supervise their movements and give them time to adjust to each area. Avoid overwhelming them with too many new experiences or people at once.
- **Limit Visitors:** Keep the environment calm. Introduce family members one at a time and avoid having guests over during this early period to prevent sensory overload.
- **Bond Through Quiet Interaction:** Sit near your pet, talk gently, and offer treats or toys. Avoid forcing interaction—let them come to you when they're ready.
- **Basic Rules from Day One:** Begin with gentle boundary setting. Don't allow behaviors early on (like jumping on furniture or begging) that you wouldn't allow later. Consistency is key.

- **Initial Vet Visit:** Within the first few days, schedule a wellness exam. Bring any medical records you have and discuss vaccinations, parasite prevention, diet, and microchipping.
- **Watch for Stress Signals:** Common signs include hiding, whining, pacing, or not eating. These are normal and usually resolve with time and gentle reassurance.

Conclusion of Week 1: By the end of the first week, your pet should start feeling more comfortable and begin bonding with you. Continue nurturing trust and maintaining routines to help them settle in smoothly.