

First Week Adoption Checklist

Your guide to a successful start with your new pet

Welcome Max Home!

The first week is critical for building trust and establishing routines. Use this checklist to ensure a smooth transition and set your pet up for success.

Day 1: Arrival & Settling In

- ☐ Set up safe space with bed, water, food bowls
- ☐ Show pet location of food, water, bathroom area
- ☐ Keep environment calm - limit visitors
- ☐ Begin using pet's name positively
- ☐ Take initial photos for records
- ☐ Schedule vet appointment within 7 days
- ☐ Give space - allow pet to explore at own pace

Days 2-3: Building Routine

- ☐ Establish feeding schedule (same times daily)
- ☐ Start regular potty breaks/litter box checks
- ☐ Begin short play sessions
- ☐ Practice basic commands with treats (sit, come)
- ☐ Introduce to immediate household members only
- ☐ Monitor eating, drinking, elimination habits
- ☐ Start crate training if applicable

Days 4-5: Expanding Comfort Zone

- ☐ Increase exercise/play gradually (if dog)
- ☐ Introduce grooming basics (brushing, nail check)
- ☐ Practice leash walking indoors (dogs)
- ☐ Reward good behavior consistently
- ☐ Address any concerns with vet or trainer
- ☐ Take note of favorite toys/activities
- ☐ Begin alone-time training (short periods)

Days 6-7: Building Confidence

- ☐ Short neighborhood walks (dogs) or window time (cats)
- ☐ Introduce puzzle toys for mental stimulation
- ☐ Photograph pet in happy moments
- ☐ Research training classes in your area
- ☐ Establish boundaries (furniture rules, etc.)
- ☐ Celebrate small wins!
- ☐ Reflect on progress and adjust routine as needed

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When to Call Your Vet

- Not eating or drinking for 24+ hours
- Vomiting or diarrhea (especially if repeated)
- Lethargy or hiding constantly
- Difficulty breathing
- Limping or signs of pain
- Aggression that worsens
- Any behavior that concerns you

Remember: Every pet adjusts at their own pace. Some settle in within days, others may take weeks. Be patient, consistent, and celebrate progress!

Helpful Resources

- Training: ASPCA Virtual Pet Behaviorist (aspcapro.org)
- Veterinary Q&A: AskVet or Vetster (telehealth)
- Behavior Help: Certified Applied Animal Behaviorists (CAAB)
- Community: Local pet parent Facebook groups