



## Meet & Greet

### Potential Families

If you have your own dogs that you need to meet the new dog, it is recommended you either leave them in the car to start with or bring them back another time.

### Why?

You need to spend time with the dog one on one to see if you feel the dog will be a suitable addition to your family. If you bring the dogs together first they will typically have eyes only for each other and you won't get to have that quiet one on one time with them to get to know them.

### Family meets dog

When you walk into the home / yard where the dog is being kept please ignore them initially, avoid looking at them or touching them. This behaviour takes the pressure off the dog and is considered polite doggie language.

Even though humans are conditioned to put their hand out to a dog to sniff this isn't correct doggy etiquette. A dog prefers to approach you themselves not the other way around.

If the dog is excited / being pushy when you arrive, don't say anything to the dog, ignore it the best you can (no eye contact), just use your body (not your hands) to block the dog i.e. turn your body and use your thigh / hip to block the dog.

If the dog jumps at you, turn your back on the dog. If the dog is hurting you whilst jumping up at you or is not calming down, request that the owner of the dog put a leash on the dog until it calms down.

When the dog has calmed down and has approached you themselves with appropriate behavior you can acknowledge the dog and give calm long strokes to the side of the dog's body.

Avoid patting the dog on the head – this is a very rude thing to dogs you don't know and most do not like it and some will feel threatened by it – it is a very dominant thing to do and not appropriate doggie language when you do not know the dog.

Do not razz the dog up or try and play rough with the dog without the owner's permission. Many dogs don't feel comfortable behaving in this manner with strangers.

### Nervious dogs

If the dog is nervous / stand offish when you arrive, simply ignore the dog (no eye contact, no touch) and sit and chat with the owner for a bit.

If the dog has not approached you in a positive manner within half an hour, you'll need to consider whether you are in the position to take on a dog that may be 'special needs'.

### Aggressive dogs

If the dog growls at you / threatens to bite you / bites you, then you should consider whether this is a suitable dog for you. Most forms of aggression are borne out of fear and will need the assistance of a Behaviourist.

## Families with children

If you have children, we recommend you do not organise a meet and greet with the dog unless the owner / carer of the dog can confirm with you that the dog has been around children and hasn't had any issues.

Your child needs to be calm and by your side at all times during the meet and greet. Screaming, squealing and running can trigger a nervous dog to nip or worse.

We recommend that families with children do not adopt nervous dogs unless there is a safe previous history with children. You will also need to consider the behaviour of your own children and whether they are suitable for a nervous dog or a dog at all.

Dogs shouldn't be expected to not react and ignore all inappropriate behaviour from children. Some dogs are more tolerant than others and finding one that fits with the behaviour / energy of your children is extremely important.

Dogs and children should never be left together unsupervised.

## Dog meets Dog

If you have a dog that needs to meet the potential new family member be sure to take your time and set everyone up for success.

Take the dogs for a walk together (do not allow dogs to meet until the end of the walk), each dog should have a person holding a lead, do not take both dogs yourself. Dogs should be under control during the walk – if a person cannot control the dog then the meet and greet will likely not end well.

Walk in single file and have a nice amount of room between dogs to start with. If the dogs are being excited or playing up distract/correct them and walk faster to keep their mind on the walk. You may need to put more distance between you and the other dog initially so the dogs can be calm.

As the walk continues you can start to close the gap a bit, don't close the gap too fast though.

Once the dogs are no longer excited and overly interested in each other you can allow them to meet.

Doggy Etiquette says dogs should not meet face to face, this is considered rude and can result in tiffs. Have the dogs meet nose to bum so they can smell each other – you may have to guide the dogs into this position.

Try to keep the leads loose, if they get tight and create tension this can create a tiff. Tangled leads is one of the most common causes of tiffs with first introductions.

If there is an incident, calmly pull dogs away from each other and walk off in different directions until calm, go for another walk and try again.

Once the dogs have finished smelling each other and have shown no aggression it should now be safe to drop the leads (if in a safe place) and let them interact freely – let their behaviour and energy guide you with this choice. It is generally safe for them to approach each other's heads after the bum sniffing has taken place.

Return to the house and let the dogs interact for another half an hour if they're getting on. Ideally they would have gotten tired and laid down before you put them back in the car. But if they are happily playing that is fine also.

## Making the important decision

It is important that you remove emotion from logic when deciding to adopt a new dog. You do not need to make a decision on the day and you should never feel obliged. If you don't live too far away it is even recommended that you sleep on it.

Be sure you have asked the owner / carer of the dog all the questions that are important to you. Ask them what the dogs positives and negatives are – what things they would like to improve.

Address your concerns don't ignore them.

The right dog will come along at the right time so if your gut and your mind tells you this is not the right dog then do not adopt it. It is not a positive thing for the dog if an adoption does not work out and it has to be returned or taken to a pound because the previous owner can't take the dog back.

## Adopting the dog

If you have chosen to adopt the dog and the owner/carer of the dog agrees this is the right thing for the dog you will need to do some paperwork.

You will need to fill in a form that changes the microchip over from the last owner to the new owner. If you are adopting from a private owner and not a rescue organisation then you should contact your local council for this form and take it with you on the day.

Confirm with the owner of the dog what will happen if the dog doesn't work out with you, can the dog be returned?

If you are adopting from a rescue organisation your adoption will likely be subject to a 2 week trial where you can return the dog if it does not work out. It is expected that you give the dog every opportunity to work out and do not give up too soon. The Rescue organisation may organise for a Behaviourist to come and help you or recommend one for you.

## Settling in

Dogs can take up to 2 months to settle into their new homes. It is important that you are firm and consistent with the rules and the boundaries from the very moment the dog walks onto your property to give the dog the best possible chance of success.

When you arrive home with your new dog, take it to the yard and let it smell around and toilet before letting it into the house – praise for outside toileting. Follow it around and be ready to re-direct it if it goes to toilet in the house – but do not act in a strange way i.e. hover over the top of it as to unsettle the dog.

If you have a dog already, you need to pick up all bones, food bowls and toys to start with – dogs may resource guard from one another (protect items they consider of high value, even if they haven't liked the item before!).

We recommend you always feed dogs separately so they don't eat too fast and feel safe. It's best to have a door closed in-between them i.e. one inside and one outside. Fights over food are very common in the early stages. Set your new family up for success and don't put them in the position to fight over food.

Always pick up the dog bowls before you let the dogs back in with each other and check no pieces have been left on the floor.

### Tiffs

Tiffs are not unusual as new dogs get to know one another, however if they are ending at the Vet then this new family is most likely not going to work – please contact the previous owner / carer to discuss further.

### Same sex

We recommend you do not adopt a dog of the same gender as the dog you already have. Male and Females get on the best with minimal risk of dominance fights. Bitches will usually always rule the roost and the males typically accept this. However they can still resource guard (fight over food/toys etc).

Same sex can work but it is very dependent on the personality and the dogs should be de-sexed.

### Bones / Treat Balls

Only allow the dogs to have these under close supervision. You will eventually need to know how to dogs will cope having these things out together. Make sure the dogs have their collars on so you can separate if necessary but standing by a hose is another solution to try and break up a food fight. There is usually always one dog who will approach other dog eating to try and steal away their bone.

### Toys

Some dogs will even fight over toys (perhaps even toys they haven't shown an interest in before), it is very dependent on their personality and is usually seen in dogs only used to being the only dog. To start with put all the toys away and only have out under supervision.

### Separation Anxiety

It is reasonable to expect a new dog will not be happy to be left without human companionship (in the yard) without human companionship as it's all very new to them. It's important to let your neighbours know you have a new dog and to bear with you whilst the dog is settling in. It is also important you use a separation training program you can request from [sacha@greatdanerescue.com.au](mailto:sacha@greatdanerescue.com.au) to get the dog used to being by its self when you can't be home with it. Dogs with separation anxiety can be destructive so if you don't want it destroyed then you need to put it away.

### Dog Parks

We recommend you do not take your new dog to a dog park for at least a couple of months so you can get to know it better and form a bond with it and do the necessary training.

### Walks

It is very important that you walk your new dog at least once a day. Dogs are naturally migrating creatures – keeping them in a house or backyard 24/7 is not mentally or physically healthy for them. If you have trouble walking your dog i.e. it pulls then please contact your local Trainer and have a one on one session. There are tools that can help you such as a head halter although a one on one with a trainer is a great solution.