



## Adoption Handbook

Some Common Sense Suggestions for Easing  
the Transition With Your New Family Member

# Table of Contents



<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>PAGE NUMBER</b>
Congratulations on Your New Family Member	3
The Adoption Contract	4-7
Checklist of Initial Supplies	8
Set Up for Success	9-10
Start on the Right Foot	11-12
House Training and the Crate	13-15
Obedience Training	16-18



Dear Adopter:

Congratulations on your new family member—a BTBR foster dog!

Bringing a new dog into your home—and your life—is a big commitment, one that comes with many benefits and joys. (But let's be real: Many responsibilities as well).

This Adoption Handbook isn't intended to be an exhaustive guide about dog ownership but we wanted to give you a few sound tips at the outset. There's great material on the web that can provide you with critical information on a just-in-time basis. And, the counsel of a good veterinarian can be invaluable. But, when you have questions, ask! BTBR is here to help. Our contact information is on the last page.

We're thrilled you've decided to take this step. Thank you for supporting rescue dogs.

*The Board of the  
Black Tie Boston Rescue*

# The Adoption Contract

**Congratulations on your adoption with BTBR and the addition of a new family member! Here's a reminder of what you agreed to ...**

*It's especially important that you understand BTBR retains a claim to and a legal interest in BTBR dogs for the dog's entire life. Accordingly, BTBR may exercise its claim and recourse to reclaim the dog if, at any time, the conditions of this Adoption Contract aren't being met, in the sole reasonable opinion and discretion of BTBR.*

## BTBR ADOPTION CONTRACT

In consideration of the mutual promises contained herein, Black Tie Boston Rescue (BTBR) and Adopter(s) identified below agree to the following Adoption Contract.

1. BTBR is an organization that makes a commitment to each dog that enters its program for the dog's lifetime. BTBR is dedicated to the successful rehabilitation and rehoming of dogs in need. Therefore, BTBR retains a claim to and a legal interest in BTBR dogs for the dog's entire life. Accordingly, BTBR may exercise its claim and recourse to reclaim the dog if, at any time, the conditions of this Adoption Contract are not being met, in the sole reasonable opinion and discretion of BTBR.

2. Adopter agrees to BTBR nonrefundable adoption fees\* as follows (unless otherwise specified by BTBR in writing under special circumstances):

Effective September 1, 2023

\$650 Puppies under 1 year old\*\*

\$475 Dogs 1-3 years old

\$375 Dogs 4-8 years old

\$275 Dogs 9+ years old

\*Fees may differ for certain dogs and will be communicated accordingly (*i.e.*, dogs with ongoing medical needs, multiple-dog adoptions, certain other breeds, etc.)

\*\*Puppies that have not been spayed/neutered will require an additional \$150 deposit which will be refunded after verified spay/neuter by the contracted deadline.

3. BTBR is responsible for fully vetting all dogs based upon their age and health before they are adopted. Dogs may not be adopted without first completing all necessary medical care, procedures, and follow-ups.

4. All BTBR dogs will be spayed/neutered *before* adoption. Adopters commit that the BTBR dog will not produce a litter of puppies, either as purposely bred or by accidental breeding. Spay/neuter surgery must occur at no less than 6 months of age and no more than 1 year of age.

The sole exception to this *spay/neuter before adoption* requirement is for a puppy that is too young for or a dog whose health does not permit spay/neuter surgery before adoption. In addition to the BTBR Adoption Fee of four hundred and fifty dollars (\$450.00), a one hundred and fifty dollar (\$150.00) Deposit will be charged for mandatory spay/neuter. This \$150.00 spay/neuter Deposit will be refunded to Adopter upon request and receipt by BTBR of verification that the dog has been spayed/neutered.

Permanent adoption is contingent upon compliance with this requirement. Proof of spay/neuter must be received by the BTBR within fourteen (14) days after the surgery. In the event that the dog's health does not allow this requirement to be honored by the agreed-upon date, BTBR must be provided with a written statement from the Adopter's veterinarian that the dog is not yet in physical or emotional condition for spay/neuter surgery. The spay/neuter deadline date this Agreement will be amended to the date the Adopter's veterinarian deems appropriate and safe.

Adopters, not their veterinarians, are responsible for ensuring that BTBR has received verification that the spay/neuter surgery has been performed. Failure to comply with this requirement will be considered a

## The Adoption Contract, continued 2

breach of the Adoption Contract. In the event of contract breach, Adopter agrees to transport, at their expense, the dog safely back to BTBR within five (5) days of the failure to meet the spay/neuter deadline. It is expressly understood and agreed that the Adopter will not be entitled to a refund of the Adoption Fee under these circumstances.

5. Adopters agree and promise to keep and provide for the BTBR dog's lifetime. Should the dog have or develop any special needs due to age, health or other circumstances, Adopter agrees to meet those needs immediately for the well-being of the dog.

6. Adopter agrees to inform BTBR in writing, within two (2) weeks, if Adopter's home address or phone number changes.

7. Adopter agrees to keep their BTBR dog as a pet only and will not sell him/her or allow him/her to be donated for medical or any other research.

8. BTBR, in addition to rehoming dogs, advocates for **Standards of Care** generally applicable to all dogs and Boston Terriers in specific. Adopter agrees to meet these Standards of Care.

Adopter understands that the normal adjustment period for new dogs is approximately 30-45 days and Adopter is prepared to make allowances accordingly as the dog gets to know his/her new surroundings.

Adopter agrees to provide the BTBR dog with proper food, water and bedding--inside their home. Boston Terriers are strictly inside house dogs and are unable to live otherwise by the nature of its breed.

Especially at the outset, Adopters must be careful to avoid making gestures that could imply injury to the dog or cause the dog to engage in a threatened reaction. Boston Terriers are intelligent dogs and a sharp verbal correction is more than sufficient to tell the dog that the Adopter is unhappy with any behavioral situation.

Adopter agrees that BTBR dogs cannot be left alone for more than six (6) hours at a time. Longer periods of time (other than while sleeping) without the ability to relieve themselves are painful to the dog. (Suggestion: Provide the dog with good toys to occupy a dog left alone).

### Best Practice:

Adopter will endeavor not to leave a BTBR dog in a parked vehicle, unsupervised.

Dogs should be crated while left alone, or at least until the dog is familiar with his/her new surroundings. The dog's collar can be replaced by a harness to prevent strangulation when he/she is crated.

Adopters agree to provide both routine (at least, annual) and emergency veterinary care as needed. The dog will receive an annual physical exam, and, unless otherwise directed by the vet, any usually prescribed, age-appropriate annual vaccinations, and an annual heartworm test. Adopter agrees to give the dog heartworm preventative medication monthly, along with flea and tick preventatives.

Adopter agrees to make all adjustments or arrangements to prevent the dog from escaping, becoming lost or injured.

Adopter will:

i. Protect the dog by purchasing licensing as required by local law, microchipping (BTBR will cover the cost of having a microchip implanted at a veterinary office or clinic while the dog either is in foster or adoptive care, with BTBR listed as the second contact on the chip) and identification tags. Adopter will keep information current.

ii. Obey leash laws.

iii. Not chain or tether the BTBR dog. Electric/shocking collars are considered abusive and may not be used on a BTBR dog; training collars, like those for invisible fencing and vibrating collars for bark and behavior training, however, will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## The Adoption Contract, continued 3

iv. Provide suitable fenced in space for the dog to run freely. Adopter will not allow the dog to run free or unleashed while not in an enclosed fence. If Adopter is unable to provide enclosed yard space, Adopter will walk the dog on a secure leash as many times a day as needed, no matter the time of day or weather conditions. Adopter will use caution when walking and meeting other dogs.

### Best Practice:

For dogs that pull during walks or exercise, a harness rather than collar can prevent the dog slipping out of the collar or injuring its neck or larynx.

Adopter understands that “housetrained” does not mean perfect and the dog will need time to learn the particular household's expectations. Some dogs may take longer to housetrain and some male dogs mark territory when in a new environment. Adopter recognizes marking behavior is normal and is not guaranteed to resolve itself. (Suggestion: Sometimes, belly bands are helpful in discouraging in-house marking).

Adopter realizes that Boston Terriers are inherently at risk of serious eye injury and will never allow the dog to ride in the bed of any open vehicle, near an open window or with his/her head out of any window of a vehicle.

Adopter understands that Boston Terriers are not good swimmers and will not allow the dog near any body of water, unaccompanied.

Adopter understands that Boston Terriers can be highly allergic to insect bites/stings and will keep a supply of Benadryl (or generic) to provide for the dog's care in the event of a bug bite/sting.

### Best Practice:

Give Benadryl (dosage of 1 mg per weight in pounds) at the first sign of an insect bite and if any subsequent swelling or disorientation has not passed within 20 minutes, the dog must be taken to a vet or emergency clinic.

Interactions between BTBR dogs and children must be closely supervised; protective measures for both the dog and children must be anticipated and taken.

### Best Practice:

A dog's only means of defense, after behavioral indications of unease are ignored, is to bite. Children and dogs require training in order to be good companions to each other.

1. Rawhide and pig ears can be fatal as choking hazards, as well as causing intestinal blockages in dogs. Adopter agrees to never give these “treats” to a BTBR dog.

9. Adopter agrees if BTBR learns from any source that the adopter is not abiding by the terms of this Agreement, or is abusing or otherwise mistreating a BTBR dog, then BTBR has the right to take the dog into protective custody while the charge is investigated. If the charge is deemed to be true and accurate, BTBR shall have the right to resume permanent possession and ownership of the dog and Adopter will relinquish all rights and have no further rights under this Adoption Contract. Any monies or fees paid by Adopter will not be reimbursed by BTBR.

10. Adopter agrees to reasonable visitations or other means of check-in (*i.e.*, via phone, email or text) by BTBR to confirm compliance with this Adoption Contract.

11. If, for any reason, circumstances arise that make Adopter unable to meet *all* the requirements in this Adoption Contract, Adopter promises to promptly notify BTBR to make arrangements to return the BTBR dog to BTBR. Transportation costs and other expenses associated with returning the BTBR dog to BTBR will be borne by Adopter.

12. Adopter understands that rescue dogs often have been subjected to unpleasant experiences including mistreatment. A dog's natural behavior is to protect him/herself from

## The Adoption Contract, continued 4

what she/he regards as threatening. BTBR will not knowingly release any dog that BTBR believes to be a hazard to Adopters or their families. Adopters acknowledge not all behavior of the dog may be known by BTBR. Accordingly, BTBR makes no guarantees or representations about the dog's behavior, health or temperament, and Adopter accepts full responsibility for any risks associated with owning a BTBR dog. **Adopter hereby releases and waives any right or claim against BTBR and its volunteers, agents, and/or representatives involved in the adoption, now and in the future, for any damages to any person(s) or property, or for any other claims resulting in the adoption of a BTBR dog.**

13. This Adoption Contract shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the state of North Carolina without regard to its Conflict of Law rules. The parties to this Adoption Contract hereby subject themselves to and consent to that venue for the resolution of any disputes arising out of the obligations contained in this Agreement.

14. In the event that BTBR dog(s) adopted by Adopter are harmed through Adopter's negligence, Adopter understands that BTBR will initiate vigorous prosecution under the appropriate penal code in North Carolina or any other state of competent jurisdiction and will seek assessment of all costs awarded by any court, as well as legal expenses incurred by BTBR pertaining to the recovery of the BTBR dog, including any subsequent veterinary expenses incurred on behalf of the BTBR dog. Adopter further agrees that any and all additional expenses, including transportation, incurred by BTBR to reclaim the BTBR dog will be the Adopter's responsibility.

15. In the event of a dispute arising out of the terms and/or conditions of this Adoption Contract or failure of Adopter to abide by its terms, and in the event BTBR prevails in any legal proceedings initiated as a result of said dispute, Adopter agrees to reimburse BTBR for its reasonable attorney's fees and expenses incurred as a result of said dispute.

16. In the event of a breach of any of the terms of the Adoption Contract, damages will accrue to BTBR that will be difficult or impossible to calculate or ascertain.

Accordingly, Adopter agrees to pay to BTBR the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5000.00) as liquidated damages in addition to any actual damages and applicable attorney's fees and expenses awarded by a court.

17. If any term, provision or part of this Adoption Contract shall be found or held to be invalid or unenforceable by any court or governmental agency of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity or unenforceability shall not affect the validity or enforceability of any other term, provision or condition. After "blue-penciling" by a court of any unenforceable provision, the Adoption Contract shall survive and be construed as if such invalid or unenforceable term, provision or condition had not been contained herein.

18. This Adoption Contract contains the entire Agreement and understanding of the parties executing it hereunder and may not be modified or changed without written Agreement signed by the parties hereto.

**I have read the terms of this contract which incorporates BTBR Standards of Care and agree to comply with them.**

# Checklist of Initial Supplies

## **MEETING YOUR DOG'S NEEDS**

Adding any new family member, especially the four-legged kind, requires a certain amount of equipment and some adjustments to your home for everyone's safety and comfort. Here's a list of must-have supplies for a great start with your new BTBR dog:

### Basics

- Food (ideally, the food the foster parent fed the BTBR dog; gradually transition your dog to another brand, as appropriate)
- Water bowl
- Bed, blanket, towels
- Crate and/or baby gate
- Long leash, short leash
- Flat collar w/ID tags (to be worn at all times)
- Head halter or anti-pull harness (for walking)
- Poop bags

### Dog Care

- Dog toothbrush, dog toothpaste
- Nail clippers
- Dog shampoo
- Grooming brush
- Flea & tick prevention\*
- Heartworm prevention\*

### Training and Mental Stimulation

- Food dispensing toys (KONG® toys, treat balls)
- Puzzle toys (hide-and-seek, treat wheels)
- Training treats (soft treats, freeze-dried meats)\*
- Edible chews

\*Consult your vet for recommendations



## Set Up for Success



### SETTING UP YOUR HOME

Tempting as it is to give your new dog the run of the house right away, that's too much freedom too soon. Instead, create a safe, confined area—a dog-proofed area—to allow your dog to make a gradual transition to their new home. The dog-proofed area is where your dog will stay when you can't supervise them, *i.e.*, whenever you can't keep your eyes on them **the entire time**. This prevents chewing incidents, house-training accidents and teaches your dog to relax while alone. Don't worry that this is too strict or mean. Dogs are den animals who truly enjoy close quarters.

Where? The ideal dog-proofed area is easy to clean and easy to close off with a door or baby gate. It should be mostly free of furniture. The best places for a dog-proofed area are the kitchen, laundry room, bathroom or an empty spare room.

What? Furnish the dog-proofed area with a bed or a crate with something soft to sleep on, a water bowl and several toys, including a chew toy or a KONG® stuffed with part of your dog's meal.

### FOR A HAPPY AND WELL-BEHAVED DOG

#### *Exercise and Training*

A good exercise program means a healthier *and* better-behaved dog. Tired dogs bark less, chew less, sleep more and rest easier if left home alone. Does that mean you must take up marathon running? No, but a stroll around the block is not enough.

Here are some options for giving your dog a good, aerobic workout:

- ✓ Train your dog to fetch or play Frisbee®
- ✓ Sign up for a dog sport or activity like agility
- ✓ Let your dog play with other dogs regularly
- ✓ Burn off mental and physical energy with regular obedience training and/or classes
- ✓ Hire a dog walker or enroll your dog in doggy daycare

**Tip:** Until your dog's recall (coming when called) is rock-solid, don't let them off leash unless you are in a fenced-in area.

## Set Up for Success, continued

### **FOR A HAPPY AND WELL-BEHAVED DOG**

#### *Mental Stimulation*

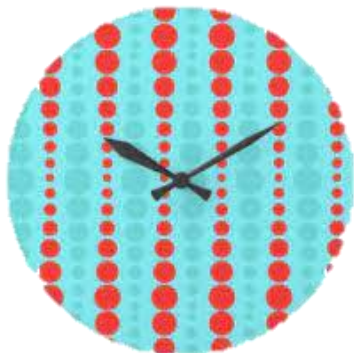
When it comes to boredom, dogs are a lot like children. Unless you give them something fun to do, they will make their own fun. To dogs, that often means a scavenger hunt in the trashcan or disemboweling the couch cushions.

Instead, give your dog acceptable outlets for their mental energy by providing toys, puzzles and other brain teasers.

Always choose size-appropriate chews or toys and check with your vet before introducing your dog to a new product. Avoid rawhide chews and pig's ears—they've proven dangerous to dogs.



## Start Off on the Right Foot



### THE FIRST HOUR

It's important not to give your dog the run of the house—or make them the center of attention—right away. Instead, prepare them for a normal routine from the beginning by introducing them to your home this way:

Step 1: When you arrive home, take your dog out for a walk or bathroom break.

Step 2: Introduce them on leash to their new home, including the dog-proofed area.

Step 3: Give them a chew bone or stuffed KONG® and leave them alone in the dog-proofed area for five minutes or less. Then take away the bone or KONG® until the next time they are in the dog-proofed area alone.

**Tip:** If they begins to howl, whine or bark, wait for them to be quiet for at least 10 seconds before you respond. Otherwise, they learn that whining or barking summons you, and they will bark or cry for longer periods of time.

### THE FIRST DAY

You probably want to spend every moment with your new dog, but that can give you problems in the long run. Dogs are highly social animals and have to be taught to be calm and relaxed when alone. You need to get your dog used to—initially--brief absences within the first few hours of their arrival at your home. See page 13 for crate training tips.

Leave your dog in their dog-proofed area while you go out or spend time in another part of the house. Vary the length of your absences, from 30 seconds to 20 minutes, and repeat them throughout the day. Does your dog seem comfortable? Then increase the amount of time.

**Tip:** It may take several days or even weeks for your dog to adjust to their new home.



## Start Off on the Right Foot, *continued*



### **THE BEDTIME ROUTINE**

After a bathroom break, put your dog in their crate or dog-proofed area with a chew toy. They may have trouble settling in at first, but should eventually relax and go to sleep.

Tip: Harsh as it seems, don't respond if your dog cries or barks. If they get attention for crying or barking, they'll keep it up longer the next time.

### **LEAVING FOR THE FIRST TIME**

Just as you can't spend the first 48 hours nonstop with your dog and expect them to be fine when you leave, you can't launch into eight-hour absences from the get-go. Ideally, your dog will never have to be left alone for a full working day. But you need to build up to longer absences *gradually*.

# House-Training and the Crate

## AVOIDING ACCIDENTS

Regardless of your new dog’s house-training history, you should allow anywhere from a few weeks to several months for a brush-up course. That way, you avoid accidents and get off to a great start. To do this, you need to use your dog-proofed area and/or a crate. A crate is a terrific investment for a number of reasons. A crate can help you with:

- ✓ House-training. Prompts your dog to hold it when unsupervised.
- ✓ Chew training. Stops your dog from chewing anything except legitimate chew toys.
- ✓ Settling. Teaches your dog to settle down when alone and inactive.
- ✓ Kenneling. Your dog may need to stay in a crate during travel or a hospital visit.

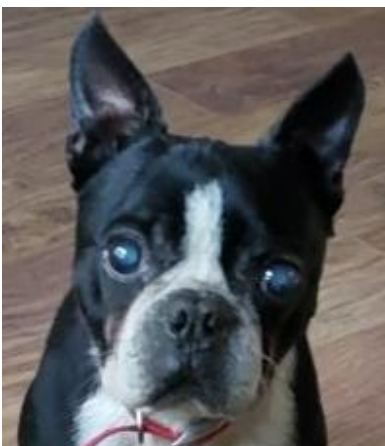
If you decide to purchase a crate, get one large enough for your dog to stand up, lie down and turn around—but no larger. Otherwise, they might be tempted to use one end as a bathroom and the other as a bed.

## CRATE TRAINING

Before you start using the crate, you have to give your dog a chance to get used to it. Don’t just put them in there and hope they adjust; that would be unrealistic. The crate needs to be a comfy, safe place they love to spend time in—their “den.” You can make them feel this way about the crate by using treats, praise and toys in an easy-to-follow crate training program. Here’s how:

### *The First Day*

1. Throw tiny, yummy treats into the crate. When your dog goes in to get the treats, praise your dog. Then allow the dog to leave the crate freely.



## House-Training and the Crate, continued



2. When your dog is happily venturing into the crate, begin practicing closing the door for a few seconds while giving them treats through the opening in the crate. Then let your dog right back out. Repeat the exercise many times, building up to 10 seconds.

### *The Next Few Days*

1. Repeat step 2 from above. Then stuff a KONG® or a yummy chew toy with extra-special goodies. Put the treat in the crate and close the door behind your dog as they go to eat it. Go about your business in the house, then let your dog back out after five minutes. Do this without any fanfare whatsoever.

2. Repeat the exercise several times in the next couple of days using a KONG® or a yummy chew toy.

3. Vary the absences from one to 20 minutes. Ignore your dog if they whine or bark; always wait to let them out until they have been quiet for 10 seconds.



### *Leaving the House*

1. Leave your dog in the crate with something delicious in their KONG® or a yummy chew toy. Then leave the house for *brief* errands, such as collecting your mail or watering the garden.

2. Over the next few sessions, gradually extend the duration of your absences. Go from one minute to five minutes to 10, 15 or 30 minutes. Don't just build your absences upward, though; throw in some shorter ones for variety.

**Tip: Never leave your dog in the crate longer than three to four hours at a time, except for bedtime.**

## House-Training and the Crate, continued

### KEEP IT POSITIVE

Even the smartest, best-trained dog can have accidents, especially when getting used to a new home. The best thing is to treat your newly adopted dog like a puppy for the first weeks or months, at least where house-training is concerned. The key to success is to use your dog-proofed area and/or the crate.

#### *Golden Rules of House-Training*

- ✓ Until your dog is perfectly house-trained, never leave them alone unless they're in the dog-proofed area or crate. Supervise your dog at all times when given the run of the house.
- ✓ Take your dog out on leash often. Start by walking them at half-hour intervals. Then, increase the intervals gradually.

- ✓ If you see your dog sniffing and circling in the house, take them out immediately.
- ✓ Praise and reward with a treat when they go outdoors.
- ✓ Keep in mind that your dog's size affects how long they can hold it. The smaller the dog, the less time you can expect them to go without a bathroom break.

#### **Tip: Never yell at or punish your dog for an accident.**

It will only make them afraid of you, and usually it makes the behavior worse. (When *you're* about to lose it, put your dog in the crate or dog-proofed area, and give yourself a time-out).



## Obedience Training



### **PRACTICE POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT**

Training your dog through positive reinforcement means using your dog's natural motivators to teach them which behaviors you like and which you don't. You can use anything your dog wants: Praise, toys, treats, a belly rub, a leash walk—whatever your dog loves.

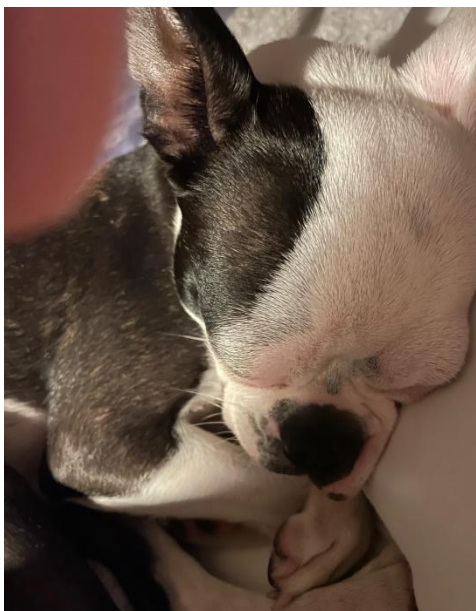
This type of training is based on the fundamental truth that all animals are more likely to repeat a behavior that's reinforced—and less likely to repeat one that isn't. Just like we humans are much more likely to show up for work if we get a steady paycheck, dogs will do exactly what we want them to do—if we tap into their motivation. Reward behaviors you like. That will make them happen more often. Ignore behaviors you don't like. That will make them happen less often.

#### *Why It Works So Well*

1. Tapping into your dog's innate motivators makes training fun for them—and it helps make you their favorite person on the planet.
2. Making training a game means your dog relaxes and learns faster.

**One Caveat:** Knowledge acquisition centers in your dog's brain slow down or shut off completely when they're afraid—risk-avoidance takes the place of problem-solving. So, if your dog is scared or uncomfortable, they can't learn.

Find a way to make them comfortable first, and then try again.

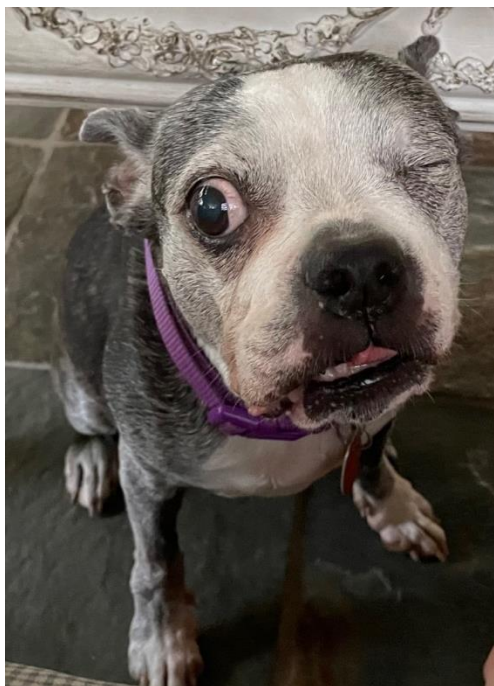




## Obedience Training, continued

### *A Word on Punishment*

**Never** use physical punishment. It comes with serious side effects, like aggression, fear and erosion of the trust between you and your dog.



### **EXTINGUISHING UNWANTED BEHAVIORS**

Using positive reinforcement methods doesn't mean you never say "No" to your dog. You just say it in a way they understand instead of using human language. Either:

Ignore the behavior. Don't reinforce or inadvertently reward unwanted behavior. (Remember: Not allowing the dog out of the crate when whining or barking? Wrong message!)

Avoid the situation. Restrict your dog's access to a place, person or object. You see a squirrel and you tell your dog to sit. Reward the sit.

Redirect them to an alternative behavior and reward those. Instead of just saying, "Off," when your dog jumps up, say "Off" and then tell your dog to sit. Reward the sit.

Tip: Ask your dog to "Say please" when they want something. Ask your dog to sit for doors to be opened, balls to be thrown, food to be fed, etc.

That way, asking politely becomes your dog's main strategy for getting what they want, not pushy behavior.

## Obedience Training, continued

### FOUNDATION BEHAVIORS

Dog training is great for exercise, learning and enjoyment, and you can make it a regular part of your dog's entire life. For now, the following five behaviors form a great foundation:

- ✓ Come when called (recall)
- ✓ Sit
- ✓ Down
- ✓ Stay
- ✓ Off

Teaching your dog these behaviors will make life easier for both you and your dog—and all can be taught within a few months.

These simple principles create a win-win partnership between you and your dog. You get a polite dog, who gets to play with other dogs, chase Frisbees® and eat their favorite treats.

### *Rome Wasn't Built In A Day*

You and your dog are now a team and all teams experience failure—or they're not trying hard enough. Some days, your new dog will be Perfect Puppy and other days, *THAT ANIMAL*. Take a deep breathe, take a break, use the crate or dog-proofed area and regroup. Building *any* worthwhile relationship takes time.

*Good luck and enjoy your good dog!*

