



## **NORFOLK BOXER RESCUE**

### HINTS WHEN TAKING A NEW BOXER INTO YOUR HOME

First and foremost, try to understand how your new Boxer must be feeling. He has been taken away from everything familiar, and placed in a strange house, with strange people, and he will not be able to relax or sleep until he has sniffed out every corner of your house and introduced himself to all the people and animals in it. The temperament of the average Boxer will help him to adapt quite quickly because, as a breed, they tend to make friends very easily.

However, maybe your new Boxer has had a very tough time, been treated unkindly, neglected or abused. Be sympathetic to his needs and most of all, be patient. It will take from 1 - 6 weeks for your dog to reach the conclusion that he is here to stay. The time it takes will depend on his previous experience, his age and state of his health. Obviously, a shy nervous dog who has not had a happy experience with people will need more reassurance than a big bouncy confident dog. Both will need a lot of understanding, love and affection.

We give below a few hints which may be helpful, particularly if you are first-time Boxer owners, but please do remember that we at Norfolk Boxer Rescue are just on the end of your telephone and will always try to help with any problems or queries you may have.

#### **THE FIRST DAY**

Please take things easy. Don't invite all your friends and family around to meet your new Boxer. It will take him all his time to sniff out every corner of your home and to introduce himself to you and your immediate family members. He won't be able to relax or sleep until he has done this, and feels safe. To overwhelm your Boxer with too many introductions will almost certainly result in over excitement or, in the case of a nervous dog, a frightening experience which will take several days to overcome. Keep things as calm as you can, don't feed him until he has quietened down a bit, and give him time and space to come to terms with his new surroundings. There will be plenty of time to introduce him to everyone, and in any case the introductions will go more smoothly if the dog is not feeling up tight and insecure.

#### **YOUNG CHILDREN**

Before your Boxer arrives make sure that younger children understand that their new Boxer will be a fully paid up member of the family with rights to rest and privacy, and is not just a living toy. At the same time start from day one to train your Boxer that chewing up the children's toys is not an acceptable way to behave. Teach the children and the dog to respect each other and they will become firm friends. Young Boxers in particular need rest and over excitement can lead to boisterous excesses. Try to make sure that you have some part of the day, however short, for your Boxer alone. These

can take the form of short training sessions, games or just cuddles, but your new dog needs to feel that he can have some of your time just for himself.

## HOUSEHOLD RULES

Decide before your Boxer arrives where he will sleep and stick to it. Most Boxers are happiest with their bed in your bedroom, but if are not keen on this idea make sure that he sleeps where you want him to on the first night, even if he cries or barks for the first few nights. He will usually settle happily enough when he feels more secure in his new home.

Like children, Boxers need need to learn their boundaries and must learn these from day one. If you don't want your Boxer on the three-piece, don't let him get on it on the first day. He won't understand why he can do things one one day and not on the next. Always be consistent with your house rules. He will quickly understand if your rules never vary, but will be confused if they do. You are also teaching him that it is OK to ignore you if he gets away with doing things you have forbidden on previous occasions.

Also like children, Boxers (particularly males) will try and push your boundaries to the limit. It is very unwise to let this continue and can lead to your Boxer thinking he is the "leader of the pack/family" and he can eventually resent any form of discipline. Many people do not realise that this is normal dog behaviour. In the wild the pack leader calls all the shots and your Boxer will be a much happier family member if he does not feel he has to take on the responsibility to looking after you all. It is you who must be the leader of the household, and if this is so he will put all his love and trust in you as his pack leader and it will be your job to look after him, not the other way around.

The above paragraph is only included for those of you who have given homes to male dogs who would, in the wild, be candidates for pack leader because they are of a naturally dominant nature. Most males do not fall into this category and would in the wild be content to be just a member of a pack, so the chances are that this problem will not arise for many of you. In fact it should not arise at all unless owners allow these dogs to get a bit above themselves and have rather exalted ideas of their station in life! Don't worry, this problem can be corrected if caught early enough and it is very rare indeed for a Boxer not to respond well to firm but kind handling. Bitches, by the way, rarely get such exalted ideas of their station, but can sometimes resent other bitches when out on their walks. Here again good training can usually solve this problem.

## EXERCISE

Try to exercise your Boxer at the same time each day, but under no circumstances let him off the lead for at least 3 weeks, longer if you are not sure of his reaction. Your Boxer needs time to get used to you, and to his immediate locality, and can easily get lost if he runs off into the horizon. The first time you let him off the lead make sure it is somewhere you can retrieve him if you have to. Test him by calling him back several times, if necessary with a bribe of a biscuit or his favourite treat, and praise him loudly when he responds. If he is reluctant to come to your call, please do take him to training classes and teach him the error of his ways. He will thank you for it in the end as a well trained dog can go anywhere with you, and that is what your Boxer wants most of all.

## LEAVING HIM AT HOME

We get so many Boxers in Rescue because, as a breed, they do not cope well with being left alone for long periods. Typically, this results in destructiveness or messing the house. In all cases this is a protest at being left alone. Boxers think their place is by your side, and to be quite honest any form of separation from you hurts them very much. However, all dogs must be left at some time, so start off with only a few minutes and work your way up to an hour or so. Try if at all possible not leave your new Boxer until you feel that he is happily settled with you, as a non-destructive dog may well do some damage out of insecurity or fear in the early days.

## FEEDING

We try as hard as we can to give you as much information as possible about your new Boxer, including the feeding regime he is used to, but of course in some cases this is not possible. However, if you can continue with the same diet, at the same time each day it will help enormously with the settling in process. If you wish to make variations to the diet, this is perfectly OK, but please do try to do it gradually because sudden changes in diet can lead to tummy troubles - the last thing you and your Boxer need. If his usual feeding bowl comes with him, it is a good idea to use it, at least initially, as it will look and smell familiar to him in his new strange world. If it is horribly tatty and unhygienic it can always be discarded in a week or so when it will have served its purpose.

## HEALTH

When we collect your Boxer he is checked over by us for any obvious signs of ill health, but we always ask new owners to take him to the vet as soon as possible after you get him. NBR will let you have all the information they are given about his past health, and if necessary checks can be made with vets who may have given treatment in the past. However, we do ask that a professional examination is made by the vet who will look after him for the rest of his life as soon as possible. **PLEASE INFORM US IMMEDIATELY IF YOUR VET HIGHLIGHTS ANY PROBLEM.**

We need to know, and will help all we can if your dog needs any treatment other than the routine injections, wormings, de-fleaing, etc.etc. which any dog owner would expect to undertake.

If you are giving a home to a bitch which has not been neutered, we do ask you to agree that this will be done at the right time in her cycle. Your vet will advise when this will be. We will discuss this with you before you take delivery of your bitch and the necessary arrangements will be made.

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