

### **Helping your dog when it is time to move home**

It is not easy for a dog to move den site and leave everything that it is familiar with, this doesn't happen very often in the wild and it can be a frightening, threatening and very unsettling time for your dog. It is a new experience, a change of scene for you and you will embrace it with relish, apprehension or both. Your dog lives in the 'now' and although it will sense that something is different it will not understand what is happening and can only face the new territory and changes when they are presented to it. There are only a few things you can practically do before the move to help the dog.

- If the dog is going to be confined to a crate in the new home, to begin with, it is a good idea to prepare the dog for this by building up the time the dog spends in a crate before you move. Take this slowly and do not attempt to close the door of the crate until the dog is comfortable with this. The dog should treat the crate as a sanctuary not a punishment or prison.
- Leave the packing away of the room where the dog spends the majority of its time as late as you can so that the dog is still secure in its environment.

Moving house is very stressful for humans and the dog can sense this so perform Canine Conversation, strictly, consistently and calmly. Bring back snacking first at meal times and be the leader your dog needs at this time. You understand what is happening, your dog doesn't

On moving day if the dog can be left with someone until you have moved in and the removal men have gone this will really help the dog. Try to be calm before the dog is returned to you, the calmer you are the better the dog will settle.

Make sure that you have fenced off an area of the garden (even if you haven't had the opportunity to secure the whole of the garden) for the dog to relieve itself without you having to keep it on a lead and where it is safe.

Keep calm and allow the dog to explore the areas of the house and garden (where it is allowed to go) and you can go about your business leaving the dog to investigate its environment at its pace.

Your dog will be more comfortable and will be able to cope better if you restrict its space initially; probably the kitchen and maybe the sitting room in the evening if you are there, and gradually, at the dog's pace, allow it access to other permitted areas.

It will take your dog approximately two days to be familiar with its environment and approximately two weeks to re-establish its status in the pack. Give your dog time to adjust to its new surroundings whilst still expecting respect. Don't make too much of a fuss of your dog, less is more, and the dog could interpret your fussing/reassurance as you also being worried about these new surroundings, which will make the dog more stressed.

Show your dog where you would like it to toilet and go outside with it for a few times, let it find its water dish and bed but the most important thing is that you remain calm.

Don't be in a rush to take your dog out to explore , let it familiarise itself with its new home before thinking of asking it to cope with anything extra.....and.....above all....enjoy your new home and your relationship with your dog.

Gill Tuxworth 2012