Continuing the Journey for Shy Dogs and Mill Dog Survivors

“A Golden Retriever Can Change Your Life!”
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Your tax-deductible donation helps more dogs benefit from this vital work.

THANK YOU!
Congratulations – you’ve adopted a very special Golden Retriever! You are about to embark on a journey that will ultimately make a huge difference in the life of your dog and will no doubt change your life as well.

You know you have the time, love, and patience to give your new dog a good life.

Indeed, those are all essential qualities and will serve you well. Based on our experience with hundreds of dogs participating in our program, we know that they often need more than that to achieve even the smallest goals. This booklet is designed to help you continue the techniques we have already begun with your dog during his or her time in Project Home Life and while at Golden Retriever Rescue of the Rockies (GRRR). It will help you work more effectively with your dog, especially during the all-important transition period into your home.

As you are no doubt aware, that new setting (i.e., your home) is likely to present many challenges for your dog. Puppy mill breeder dogs and other unsocialized dogs have usually never lived in a home before. Most have spent their lives in tiny cages, in barns, or kennel runs, isolated from other dogs and people. They have much to learn, and each dog will progress at his or her own pace.

What your dog needs most, and what you and your family must provide, is an unconditional acceptance of who they are and what their limitations may be for the balance of their lives. Go into this new relationship with the ability to visualize your dog’s potential, but do not set expectations. You have made a life-long commitment to your new family member, and you should expect to weather a few difficulties and setbacks. Don’t worry, there will be many opportunities for celebration as well!

Some of the activities may seem silly at first (i.e., reading books to your dog or stepping through a hula hoop), but these have made quite an impact on dogs in our program, and we know they can help. Use what you learn here to expand your relationship with your dog. Creativity is an important part of helping you succeed together!

The staff at GRRR is always available to provide assistance as needed. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for giving your special dog a second chance at life.
CREATING A CALM & COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR DOG

Frankie Says Relax

Imagine yourself on a sunny, tropical island. You are stretched out on the most comfortable lounge chair, listening to the steady crash of ocean waves with a warm breeze caressing your skin. You are tasting the juiciest, delectable grapes and enjoying a deep-tissue massage surrounded by your best friends. Sounds relaxing, doesn’t it? Wouldn’t it be nice to create an environment such as this that would meet your dog’s needs, so she feels like she just entered the greatest doggie kingdom that ever was?

This may all sound like a fairy tale, but it is important to create a calm and comfortable environment for your dog. Your dog’s first days at home can feel as close to heaven as possible if we think about things from his perspective. The transition can be tough for some shy dogs, so the more we can suit their needs and create a “home sweet home,” the better chance we can reduce their stress during this time.

“Dogs do speak, but only to those who know how to listen.”
~ Orhan Pamuk, My Name is Red

X Marks the Spot

Create an area or allow your dog to choose an area and place a dog bed or blanket there with a variety of toys. Your dog may even prefer a crate. Allow your dog to have this space as their personal area to which they can retreat when things get stressful. It is important that you do not work on activities, pet her, invade or do anything with her in this designated area for at least the first month or until you have earned her trust. This is her SAFE SPOT.

Routine: A sequence of actions regularly followed; a fixed program

Keeping a daily routine is SO important in the beginning when your dog is first learning to live with you. Take her outside, feed her, play with her, give treats, go for walks at approximately the same time and in the same order every single day to the best of your ability. We do this so that your dog will begin to know what to expect every day. When your dog knows what to expect, her fear will lessen day by day.

“Routine is liberating, it makes you feel in control.”
~ Carol Shields, The Republic of Love
PETTING AND BRUSHING

These two basic activities help build the bond between you and your dog and help acclimate him to your touch. It’s hard to imagine a dog not wanting to be stroked and petted, but for some, it is an experience they must learn to enjoy.

For petting, start by sitting next to the dog, not face to face, which can be intimidating. Make sure the dog is not cornered or does not feel cornered: Make sure the dog always has an escape path. If your dog is lying next to a wall and you approach to pet her, make sure your dog has a visible space to escape. If she does not, she may experience a feeling of being trapped. We want these activities to be positive experiences. The dog may not use the escape route, but at least she will know there is a way out if she becomes too uncomfortable. This is another reason to sit alongside your dog rather than face to face.

Pet under the dog’s neck, behind the ears, or stroke lightly across the dog’s back to begin. Avoid touching the dog’s tail or paws, which are sensitive body parts and may elicit a negative reaction. Also avoid tapping or patting heavily on top of the dog’s head.

For brushing, start by using a soft bristle brush or a “glove” brush. Brush with gentle strokes across the dog’s back or on the chest area if she is sitting. If your dog seems to easily tolerate the glove or soft bristle brush, you may advance to a pin brush or rake brush.

Once your dog starts to enjoy brushing, you should begin to brush and pet other areas as well. Eventually, you should start working on gently touching the paws, but please only begin this once she is comfortable being petted in most other areas.

With this activity and all activities suggested, keep your sessions short. For example, pet and brush your dog for about five minutes. Then walk away and give her time out of the “pressure zone.”

“Touch has a memory.”
~ John Keats

The “glove” brush uses rubber nubs to gently stroke the dog’s fur. On the right is a soft bristle brush. Both are good tools to use when first starting to brush a breeder dog.
HIGH-VALUE TREATS!
Kibble is good for a meal, but for training, we need something tasty and irresistible that will allow your dog to choose to come back over and over for more. Here are some of the food choices we use: hot dogs, chicken, meatballs, steak, peanut butter, and cheese. Many of these items can be cut into small pieces and even warmed up to tempt your dog’s sense of smell! Remember, that the size of the treat does not matter, it’s the quantity!

TREAT/RETREAT
For dogs that are extremely fearful and shut down, it can be a mistake to lure the dog to you with food. Instead, toss food AWAY from you, so you reward the dog with relief from what she’s afraid of... (people). Treat/Retreat is a training technique attributed to Suzanne Clothier, an internationally recognized dog trainer. Please visit this site (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGP5ZawSrN8) which includes a video demonstration by Risë Van Fleet.

MENTOR DOGS
The best teacher for a shy dog is another dog. We have used the term “mentor dog” to describe a well-socialized dog that helps a shy dog adjust to a new home and family.

SAY MY NAME, SAY MY NAME
Often when we rescue dogs from a puppy mill or backyard breeder, the dogs come to us without names. Sometimes they have names, but when we call it out to them, they do not respond. Or perhaps when you adopted your dog, you decided on a new name for your companion. Here’s how to work on teaching your dog to recognize her name. This is useful to capture your dog’s attention in situations where you need her to focus on you.

When you are in close proximity to her, simply say your dog’s name. When she looks at you, reward her with a treat. (If she is not taking treats at this point, use something else that motivates her such as petting or a toy or ball). Gradually increase the space between you and your dog and call out her name. When she responds by looking at you, reward her.

Once she is responding to her name reliably, call it out randomly and reward. Then start to say her name in situations that may be distracting – when she is sniffing the ground outside, when she is playing with other dogs, when the TV is on, when going for walks, etc.
YOU GOT THE RIGHT TOUCH, BABY

Teaching the activity touch (or target) is very useful when rehabilitating shy dogs. Many shy or fearful dogs are, at first, afraid of human hands. Were they roughly handled? Were their collars grabbed every time a hand approached? Are they sensitive to being touched? Our goal is to change their perception of human hands from negative to positive.

**Situations to use “touch”:**

- When greeting new people (Saying “Hi!”)
- When teaching “Come”
- When experiencing a new object
- To redirect your dog’s attention

**Teaching basic “touch”:**

- Put a small treat in between your fingers or rub your hand with a food that smells delicious to your dog.

- Hold your hand with you palm facing out and say “touch!”

- Wait for your dog to put his nose to your hand looking for the treat. Say “yes!” and reward with a treat from your other hand (not the hand he is touching). Even if he touches your hand by accident, it still counts!

- Once your dog is reliably touching his nose to your hand about 80% of the time, you can start moving your hand higher or lower as well as using the opposite hand. Then have different people try the activity.

To learn more about using the touch cue, visit www.fearfuldogs.com to watch Debbie Jacobs’ videos with her dog Nibbles!
HERE’S LOOKING AT YOU, KID

Shy dogs are often afraid to make eye contact because they may perceive it as a challenge or a threat. Teaching them to “watch me” will help build trust. It is useful in stressful situations where asking them to look at you will help calm your dog down and give her a chance to refocus on you.

Capture your dog’s attention with a tasty treat. Holding it between your fingers, raise the treat between your eyebrows while the dog is looking at it until your eyes meet. Say “Watch me” and reward with a treat.

Once your dog is doing this reliably, you can raise your index finger without a treat between your eyes. Continue saying, “Watch me,” and rewarding with a treat. Eventually your dog will catch on to the words “watch me,” and you will be able to simply say the words without the hand gesture.

Learning this activity will help if you need to quickly capture your dog’s attention, whether to alert to an emergency or simply to get his or her attention.
READ TO ME
Reading books to dogs may sound silly, but we have noticed it helps some of them relax. We choose to read children’s books, and our favorite topic is dogs, of course! However, you can also use books of your choice.

Keep your voice soft and steady while speaking and practice intermittently giving the dog eye contact between pages. If the dog is comfortable being petted, feel free to do so while reading. If the dog enjoys treats, try putting a few in your hand and randomly give the dog a treat during the course of the book.

“What’s on TV?
Pictures moving on a television screen can be very frightening to a dog that is not accustomed to them. Your dog may be fearful of coming into the room while the television is on or bark at the television in fear. To help her gain comfort with the TV, begin introducing it with no volume and playing a picture only. Choose a channel such as Animal Planet or insert a DVD and mute the volume. If the dog responds well to the moving pictures, very slowly turn up the volume to a soft level.

Repetition is often a good way for your dog to become more comfortable with unfamiliar things around the house. In this case, simply leave the TV on and act as if everything is fine and dandy. Once your dog realizes the moving pictures are not going to hurt her (or you, for that matter), she will become accustomed to them. This may take days or weeks, so be patient. You can help to make watching TV a positive experience by combining it with an activity your dog enjoys, such as eating a few of her favorite treats, being brushed or petted, or playing with her favorite toy.
WHAT'S THAT NOISE?

Since puppy mill breeder dogs have rarely lived a home, they are unfamiliar with many of the everyday noises that occur there. Doorbells, vacuum cleaners, clattering dishes – it's all new to them and can be very scary.

REAL LIFE NOISES

If the dog is startled by a sudden noise, we recommend not coddling the dog or bringing undue attention to the noise. Act as if it’s no big deal and redirect them to something positive, such as a toy, treat, or something else he may enjoy. Alternatively, you may choose to ignore the sound altogether.

You will find that for everyday noises (such as the dishwasher or doorbell), repetition of the sound along with positive praise and/or rewards from you will likely help desensitize your dog to these sounds. If he sees another dog in the home acting nonchalant during the noises, that will help greatly as well.

RELAXATION CDs

We have a used a few music compilation CDs recorded specifically for calming the nerves of an anxious dog. These CDs contain soothing music and are very appropriate for home use as well. Play the CDs while working on a relaxing activity with your dog such as petting, brushing, or reading. Once your dog is accustomed to the music, you can play the CDs while you are not home, so your dog is able to relax while you are away. Here is one that we especially like:

• Through a Dog’s Ear: Music to Calm Your Canine Companion (www.throughadogsear.com)

Ahhh...the desired outcome of soothing music!
STOCKING THE TOY BOX!

Sadly, many puppy mill breeder dogs or unsocialized dogs have never seen a dog toy before and literally have to “learn” how to play. Some dogs, once they get into a home, do not understand that chewing on shoes, wood trim, carpet, or dangerous things like wiring is inappropriate. They need encouragement and guidance to play with toys that are made for dogs. This can be difficult for a dog that has never before been free to play.

Obviously, there are many types of toys you can buy for your dog, including hard sterilized bones, tennis balls, stuffed toys, squeaker toys, etc. You’ll need to experiment to see what appeals most to your dog and what lasts the longest... or rather, is not chewed up or destuffed!

Please, NEVER take a toy out of a dog’s mouth. Always trade the dog for another toy or a treat. For example, if a dog is tearing the stuffing out of a soft toy, distract the dog with a treat or a different type of toy or by calling them away from the soft toy. Then pick up the toy and place it where the dog cannot get to it or trash it if it is severely damaged. Removing a toy from your dog’s mouth may teach her to guard toys if she feels they are being taken from her. At GRRR, you will see staff playing with two tennis balls per dog. We teach the dogs to “drop” the first ball in order to get the second ball. This not only teaches a dog how to drop a possession, it also encourages a dog to approach us knowing we are not going to take his toys away when he does.

Some of the most successful toys we’ve used fall into the category of “interactive toys.” These are especially helpful with breeder dogs because they encourage the dog to exercise her brain as well as interact with humans.
Here are some of the interactive toys and games we’ve used that you can play with at home as well:

**CHASE IT**

Play this game with toys that are attached to the end of a string or rope. Dangle the toy or lay it on the ground and wiggle it by using the handle. Pull it along the floor to capture the dog’s attention and encourage the dog to chase it. Start by pulling just a few inches at a time until it piques the dog’s interest.

**MAGIC GAME**

This toy is made by Nina Ottosson (www.nina-ottosson.com) and is one of many produced by her company. They are available at many sites online. To play, place treats under the plastic bones. The dog may watch while you do this. Encourage the dog to find the treat by nosing the bones or pawing them to uncover the treat. This is an advanced game, but it can be fun for novice dogs if you pick up the plastic bone and say “get the treat!”

**FIND IT!**

Hide treats around the room (in easily accessible places) and ask the dog to find them. Or, place a small toy or treat under a cup and place two additional empty cups next to it. Ask the dog to “find it” and see how she responds. If the dog doesn’t understand the game, lift up the cup and ask her to take the treat. Then repeat the game and see if she will nose the cup. To make the game easier, use clear plastic cups, so the dog can see the treats or toy inside.

**TOY TOSS**

Roll a ball across the floor or gently toss a toy up and down in your hands. If the dog watches the movement of the toy at any time, it is likely she is interested and will eventually learn to play with the toy on her own – so keep encouraging her!

**OTHER TOYS**

The photo on previous page shows (clockwise from bottom center) the TreatStik, Kong Wobbler, Bob-a-Lot, and Tug-a-Jug. We also like Water Bottle Crunchers, Tuffies, and the Busy Buddy line of toys from Premier. Other toys can be found in pet supply stores or from various online merchants.
BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Increasing the dog’s confidence will help him to approach new situations with ease and become less fearful of things that are out of his normal routine. This is a key element to help your dog progress successfully.

BALANCE DISC

This is an air-filled “disc” that has an unusual texture. It can help dogs gain confidence as they learn to balance themselves in an unstable environment. To use, place the disc on the floor. Encourage the dog to put a paw on it. You can sit with the disc in front of you and call the dog to you for a treat. Any time the dog stands or places a paw on the disc, give praise and reward with treats or jolly petting. Look for the Fit Paws Balance Disc or Balance Pod at www.cleanrun.com or www.balldynamics.com.

FOAM PAD

This concept is the same as that of the balance disc. The foam pad has an unfamiliar texture that helps dogs learn to accept and gain comfort with new things. First, make sure the pad is covered with a sheet or pillow case. Encourage the dog to walk over it or place a paw on it, just as with the disc. Again, give praise and reward with treats or petting any time she touches it. If a covered foam pad is not available, you could use a chair pad, a pillow, or even a dog bed.

TEETER TOTTER

Agility is a great confidence builder for all dogs. You can use a small teeter totter for the more advanced dogs to walk across. It is simply made by attaching a short section of PVC pipe to a piece of plywood, then applying nonskid strips on top. We recommend using it on carpet or grass, not on hard floors or cement because of the sound it creates. First, place a treat on the teeter totter and allow your dog to take it. Then, use a treat to encourage your dog onto the teeter totter and to walk across. Go very slowly.

BASIC OBEDIENCE

We can really increase a dog’s confidence and trust in people by teaching them general obedience skills. Work on “sit,” “down,” and “stay” to start. For guidance on how to teach these skills, we’ve included a list of useful books at the end. (All available through www.dogwise.com.)
WEARING A HARNESS

Many puppy mill breeder dogs have trouble learning to walk on leash. Sometimes they pull while zig-zagging out of control, and other times they may flatten out like a pancake and refuse to budge. It is very easy for a dog like this to slip out of an everyday buckle or snap collar, so we recommend an Easy Walk Harness® to our adopters. This harness is made by Premier (www.premier.com) and is available at pet stores. You can find two helpful videos at the Premier site that show the advantages of the harness and how to properly fit one on your dog.

It's important to help the dog gain comfort and confidence wearing the harness. Once you know how to properly use it, hold it out for the dog to sniff. Then slowly place the harness over her head and again, slowly attach the strap under the belly. You may try distracting her with treats while simultaneously putting the harness over her head. Allow her to wear the harness for approximately five minutes, then remove it. While out on a walk, we suggest hooking the leash to both the front chest harness clip and to her collar clip. Even though you may have the harness snug on her body, if she becomes spooked by a loud noise on your walk, she could possibly slip out of the harness. Clipping the leash to the collar as well gives her extra safety, (and gives you peace of mind!)
COMMON EARLY CHALLENGES

Here are some of the typical challenges our adopters have experienced with newly adopted puppy mill breeder dogs, along with suggested recommendations for addressing each one.

“My dog seems afraid of her food bowl and won’t eat.”

If your dog doesn’t eat for the first two to three days after you’ve brought her home, do not become too alarmed (as long as she is in good physical health). It is common for fearful dogs not to eat during this transitional period. Give her time to de-stress and do not overwhelm her with too much activity. At the same time, you can try these following tips to help make the transition easier as well as making it more comfortable for her to eat.

1. Put her food bowl in a quiet, private area such as a spare bedroom. Keep her separated from other dogs while she eats.
2. Allow your dog to eat with no one around. Many shy dogs will not eat while people are watching.
3. Change the type of bowl you are using. Some dogs do not like metal bowls – it could be that the shiny reflection scares them or their dog tags hit the bowl and make a scary sound. Try a plastic bowl or a flat plate.
4. Add wet food or some other irresistible food such as chicken or ground beef.
5. Some people suggest putting the food down for only 15 to 20 minutes. If she hasn’t eaten, try again for the same amount of time midday and dinner time. This will create a routine and help her to know when it’s time to eat. Others suggest leaving the food out all day and overnight since some dogs will eat when it’s dark and quiet.

“I can’t get my dog outside.”

While it’s normal when first adapting to a new home for a breeder dog to find and stay primarily in an indoor “safe spot,” she will need to go outside at least for potty breaks. If your dog resists going outside, try the following:

1. First try to have the dog follow your other dog outside. Many times, the adopted dog will take a cue from the “mentor dog” and simply follow what they do.
2. Try putting a leash on the dog, then walking toward the door. Some dogs are more willing to follow you once you put a leash on them. However, some are not. (Please refer to our Walking on Leash section on the following pages for additional tips.)
3. Reward the dog with high-value treats for each step she takes toward the door.

4. Face the direction of the door while encouraging the dog to walk there (i.e., lead the dog with your body). If you face the dog instead, it may confuse her as to where you want her to go. You could also prop the door open, stand outside (but do not block the doorway), and call your dog.

5. If your dog is food motivated, toss treats in the direction of the door. Start by tossing them on the floor close to your dog, then toss incrementally closer to the doorway. Work until you can toss the treats outside and the dog will eat them there.

6. Once you are successful at getting the dog outside, make sure you stay outside with her. Periodically praise with gentle words and treats. Your goal is to make being outside a very positive experience.

7. If your dog resists being outdoors for very long, work on increasing her comfort level slowly but steadily. For example, you can start by going outside, rewarding her with treats, then going back inside after two minutes (or whatever length of time you determine your dog can comfortably handle to start.) Each day, increase the length of time outside by a few minutes, as long as the duration is not crossing the threshold of stress for your dog.

Overall, be patient with your dog for the first few months but establish a routine for going out and do not vary it for that period of time.

“My dog won’t come inside.”

Unlike the previous scenario, some fearful dogs prefer to spend a majority of their time outside. Being indoors can feel confining and even frightening to a dog that has lived outside his entire life.

1. Most importantly, work on making the indoors comfortable for the dog (see Creating a Calm Environment for tips). The more a dog feels at ease in his indoor environment, the more he will want to be there.

2. Praise and reward the dog every time you are successful in getting him to come inside. Help him see that the act of coming inside predicts good things.

3. Keep the dog on a long leash (at least 10 feet or more) while outside, so you can easily leash walk him inside. The long leash gives him the freedom to wander around the yard and have privacy for doing his business, which many dogs prefer. When it is time to go in, you can pick
up the leash and gently “reel him in” to go back inside. This prevents situations where the dog finds a corner of the yard or some inaccessible spot and refuses to budge.

4. If your dog is afraid of walking through the doorway, see our section on Walking through Doorways below.

“My dog is afraid to walk through doorways.”

This is an extremely common characteristic of puppy mill breeder dogs and other fearful dogs. Some dogs fear what is on the other side of a doorway and are afraid to venture through. Or, they may be nervous about walking through a narrow space of any kind. There are some games we play to get the dog accustomed to this.

Hula Hoop

Place the hula hoop flat on the ground in front of you. Ask the dog to come to you and see if she will stand in the hoop. You can also use treats or a toy to encourage her into the hoop. After the dog has easily accomplished this and does not show fear of the hoop, slowly lift up the hoop so that it is vertical. Encourage the dog to walk through it by using treats or tossing a toy through.

Using Chairs

1. Set up two chairs about ten feet apart. If your dog walks okay on leash, put her on leash and walk in between the two chairs with her next to you. Praise and reward her when you reach the other side! If she succeeds...

2. Move the chairs slightly closer together. Walk through again and remember to praise and reward. If she shows resistance, go back to the ten-foot spacing and stick with that until she gets more comfortable.

3. If she does not walk well on the leash, you’ll need to start with a different strategy. Try guiding her through by tossing high-value treats and walking through with her. Or, toss her favorite toy to the other side and encourage her to get it. You could also have someone she likes and trusts sit at the other side of the chairs, so she could run to that person. The dog may “cheat” and run around the outside of the chairs. Be patient and start over until she gets it right.

4. Gradually move the chairs closer and closer together until they are about three feet apart (the approximate size of a doorway). Once your dog is successful at that, try our Hula Hoop game (above)!

5. When your dog is comfortable and reliably walking through a three-foot space, vary the game by moving the chairs to different locations in the room. Eventually, you can put them by the entrance of the doorway.
Prop the door open and walk back and forth through the chairs (and thus through the doorway) with your dog until she is comfortable going into the room.

6. You may find it helpful to put something with which your dog is familiar in the room where you want her to go, such as her dog bed, favorite toy, or another family member. You can also try placing a trail of treats into the room or toss them near and through the doorway.

7. As a final step, remove the chairs and continue the walking through activity as long as needed until your dog in no longer afraid of doorways. You can, of course, do without the chairs and start immediately with the doorway – rewarding with any step toward the opening.

Remember to go slowly and realize this process could take days or weeks. Patience is key!

“Walking on leash is a big challenge.”

Walking on leash can sometimes be difficult to learn. Most of these dogs have never been on a leash before coming to rescue – they lived in cages, kennels, barns or have been left to roam on a farm. Not only are they unaccustomed to wearing something around their neck, they may feel uncomfortable being held only six feet away from a human, especially if very undersocialized. We recommend either a Martingale style collar or a harness (either front clip or back clip) since many dogs can slip out of their collars if they back up in fear. Many dogs prefer being led by a harness around their body as opposed to being leashed by the sensitive neck area. We must, therefore, be very patient using a leash. Keep the following tips in mind.

1. When clipping on a leash, lower yourself by squatting or sitting next to your dog, if possible. Sometimes bending over the dog is scary to them, and they may learn to associate the leash with negative emotions.

2. Gently move your dog’s collar around so the clip is in the front instead of behind her head. This way, she can see what you are doing.

3. Clip the leash on as slowly and as quietly as possibly – avoid startling your dog in any way.

4. Try your best not to pull or force the dog on leash and resist dragging her to get her to go where you want. Sometimes the more tension you create, the more the dog will resist. If the dog refuses to budge, try the “pull and release” method. Softly pull the leash for two seconds, then release the tension. Repeat this and see if it works for your dog. Use gentle words of praise.

5. Once your dog starts to walk, trot briskly to keep her moving. Continue praising gently and enthusiastically.

6. If she refuses to move in one direction, try walking in the opposite direction.

7. In addition, look at the environment from your dog’s point of view and try to figure out if there is an unfamiliar obstacle or noise in the direction the dog does not want to go. If so, remove it if possible and try again or choose an alternate path.
You’ve made it outside but barely to the end of the driveway. Now what? Arm yourself with high-value treats and the adventure begins!

1. Remember that walking with another dog will often give your adopted dog confidence to venture outside of her comfort zone. Your “mentor dog” is usually the best choice, but a friend’s dog is also an option. Preferably, a family member or friend will walk the other dog, so you don’t have to handle both.

2. Don’t allow other people to invade the dog’s space by trying to pet or talk to her. Avoid stopping to chat with anyone else on the walk. Your goal is to get the dog accustomed to a walking routine first before introducing anything else. Explain to people that your dog is in training and needs her space. It is very important to be your dog’s advocate in this respect – protect her and keep her safe, especially during the first few months, so it strengthens the bond between the two of you.

3. Start with very limited, short walks on low traffic/low noise streets and use those high-value treats generously as you walk. You want your dog to start associating the high-value treats with outdoor excursions.

4. When your dog is ready, gradually add a little more distance, perhaps an additional block. When you feel she’s ready for a street with a little more noise or traffic, feed her treats as you are approaching the street – before she can hear the noise. Then walk normally and stay calm and confident. Walk straight ahead with your eye on the goal and keep moving forward. If possible, limit this to one block, then head back to a quieter street. Eventually you can add a second block and then a third as she gets accustomed to the noise.

5. As with other challenges, go slowly – don’t rush the process! It may be weeks before you can attempt that longer distance or busier street. That’s okay, all dogs progress at their own pace!
MEETING NEW PEOPLE

You will no doubt find that even when your dog has started to show increased comfort and trust with you and other immediate family members, the presence of an unfamiliar person may cause anxiety and fear. Here are some tips for dogs that are very fearful of people to use when introducing your dog to new people.

Treat/Retreat

We covered the Treat/Retreat exercise earlier; however, this training technique is also good for meeting new people. Treat/Retreat is a training technique attributed to Suzanne Clothier, an internationally recognized dog trainer. Please visit this site (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGP5ZawSrN8) for a video demonstration by Risë Van Fleet.

Greeting People Outdoors

1. To begin, avoid having the new person approach your dog, look at your dog, try to pet your dog, give your dog treats, or otherwise engage your dog in any way. This may be hard for people who are dog lovers and want to make friends! You’ve heard it from strangers before, “All dogs love me!” You will need to be your dog’s advocate and insist that the process go super slowly, following the steps below.

2. With your dog on leash, walk her past the new person from a good distance away (approximately 20 feet) several times, decreasing the distance a bit each time ONLY if the dog shows no negative reaction.

3. Each time your dog looks at the new person, reward her with a high-value treat.

4. Continue decreasing the distance between the dog and the new person, rewarding for calm behavior, until your dog can remain comfortable when in close range with the person. Please note – this
may likely not all happen during the first session; it will take several sessions to reach this point.

5. Only allow the dog to approach the new person if she is comfortable and willing. Continue to feed high-value treats as your dog approaches.

6. It will be helpful to have the new person sit down on a bench or even kneel on the ground, so he or she is at the dog’s level – this is less intimidating than standing.

7. When your dog finally approaches the new person, the person should simply allow your dog to sniff him or her and proceed as she chooses. The person should not attempt to reach out and pet your dog during the first approach. Sometimes reaching out to pet will cause the fearful dog to back up and not want to approach again. After your dog approaches several times, then the new person can start petting her chest with a low hand (he/she should not reach over your dog’s head).

8. Keep sessions short and always end on a positive note! This is the process that should be followed each time a new person is introduced toward whom your dog shows fear. Eventually, the dog’s behavior will change from an emotional response (fear) to a positive response (at ease).

Meeting People Indoors

Sometimes your dog may bark at strangers entering your home out of a response to their fear of unfamiliar people. So it is important to teach your dog immediately that new people aren’t so bad. Try the following process when you are expecting guests.

1. While your guests are still in the driveway or path to your home (not at the front door), bring your dog outside on a leash.

2. Have the people ignore your dog, so the dog can sniff them. You and your guests may acknowledge your dog with a “good girl!” You can reward her with a high-value treat. Once your dog appears relatively comfortable, everyone walks into the house together. Keep your dog on leash until your guests are seated. If your dog does not settle down or is still at a high level of fear and anxiety OR if your guests are not able to keep from trying to pet your dog, it may be best to gate her in a quiet room until your guests leave.

3. If your dog settles down, you can quietly ignore her and reward her periodically with high-value treats. If your dog is responding well, you could even try to have your guest feed a high-value treat.
STEP BY STEP (USING STAIRS)

Start by sitting on the bottom step (yet leaving a gap, so there is a pathway to the top) and have some tasty treats. Call the dog to you and reward with a treat. Back yourself up one step, call the dog to you and see if she will put a paw on the first step. Reward her with a treat anytime she touches the step with her paw.

Continue to back yourself up, step by step, and repeat the process.

If sitting on the steps does not work, try turning your whole body around and walking up step by step while rewarding with treats.

Sometimes, dogs will be more likely to follow a person when the dog is attached to a leash. Try leash walking the dog up the stairs.

Also, other dogs are great teachers, so if you have another dog that will run up and down the stairs, use that dog to teach your shy dog. Once your dog learns to maneuver the stairs, she will act like she’s been doing it all her life!

“Faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase.”

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.
BABY YOU CAN DRIVE MY CAR
(GETTING IN AND OUT OF CARS)

When there are two people:

1. Open both back car doors. Have one person with the dog on leash on one side and have the other person on the other side of the car, peering through the door so the dog understands, “Oh, you want me to go through the car to get to my person.” The person should have treats or a toy to reward the dog once she gets inside.

2. Together, lift the dog into the car.

3. Place the dog’s bed or crate in the car. If your dog has something familiar, she may be more likely to jump in. If not, lift. Crates are a great way to travel, especially with shy dogs that may have a tendency to bolt when the car door opens. A crate also keeps them safe while traveling.

When there is only one person:

1. Try tossing the dog’s favorite treat or toy onto the seat.

2. Try lifting front legs first, then rear legs.
WHERE TO GO? TIPS FOR HOUSERTRAINING

Puppy mill survivors can sometimes be a challenge to housebreak

Understandably, they are confused where to “go.” They have been forced to defecate in their living areas and have had no other choice. Now, there is a choice where to go potty – but we must patiently teach them where that is. Unfortunately, there is no magic cure. However, by maintaining a routine and sticking to it, you should get results. Keep in mind that some dogs take longer to learn than others.

What goes in must come out

Feed your dog at the same time every day. Doing this will help create a regular “potty” schedule.

Routine

Keep your dog on a scheduled potty routine consistently at the same time every day – as much as possible. Your dog will then know when she can expect to go outside and do her business.

Let’s potty outside!

Take your dog out often, even if it means 2:00 a.m. potty breaks for a week. If you are home, take your dog out an hour after he has eaten and every two to three hours after that for the rest of the day. If you are not home all day, do this as often as possible.

Safety in numbers

If you have other dogs, they can help! If she sees them going potty outside, she is likely to imitate them. It also helps if she can smell where they have pottied.

Can I have some privacy here?

If you have a fenced yard, allow your dog to roam freely to do her business instead of on a leash. Even though you want her to have space and privacy to go, it is important that you go outside in the yard with her instead of letting her out and closing the door. Being outside with her is important for a few reasons. First, you can direct her to the smelly pee area and instruct her nicely to “go potty!” and pointing in that general direction. If you are inside, she will likely sit at the door whining or scratching until you let her back in. If you are outside, you can confirm that she pottied. You may need to wait her out until she goes, be patient! If you do not have a fenced yard, try using a long leash (over 10 feet) to give your dog some space and privacy. You may need to pretend you are ignoring her and not watch what she is doing.
“I pee’d outside, can I have a cookie?”

When your dog does finally potty outside, reward her immediately! This means taking treats outside with you and rewarding as soon as she lifts her bum off the ground. If you wait to reward until you go back in the house, she may be confused thinking she is rewarded for returning to the house.

**Crates are also an option, but first you will have to teach your dog to become comfortable with the crate.**

Many shy dogs are fearful of crates, but there are also many that prefer the smaller space of a crate. Make the crate a cozy place to live by putting a blanket and some toys inside. You may even choose to put a blanket over top of the crate to create a seemingly smaller, more private space, if your dog prefers that. There are many ways to acclimate your dog to a crate, especially if she is food motivated. Feeding her in the crate or giving her a peanut butter-filled Kong are good starters.

If your dog is not fond of the crate, but you want to prevent potty accidents on your living room carpet, try a baby gate. This way you can keep your dog in a designated area and still give her the space she needs.
RECOMMENDED READING AND RESOURCES

Positive Training:
The Power of Positive Dog Training - Pat Miller
Bringing Light to Shadow - Pam Dennison
Bones Would Rain From the Sky - Suzanne Clothier
Decoding Your Dog - Debra Horwitz, DVM

Shy & Fearful Dogs:
A Guide to Living With & Training a Fearful Dog - Debbie Jacobs
The Cautious Canine - Patricia McConnell
Help for Your Fearful Dog - Nicole Wilde

Reactive Dogs:
Scaredy Dog - Ali Brown
Click to Calm - Karen Pryor

Resource Guarding:
Mine! - Jean Donaldson

Separation Anxiety:
Treating Separation Anxiety in Dogs - Malena DeMartini-Price

House Training:
Way to Go! - Patricia McConnell

Here are a list of websites of internationally recognized positive dog trainers that are great resources:

Fearfuldogs.com - Debbie Jacobs
Drsophiayin.com - Sophia Yin
Peaceablepaws.com - Pat Miller
Risevanfleet.com - Rise Van Fleet
Greatcompanions.info - Ali Brown
Nicolewilde.com - Nicole Wilde
Patriciamcconnell.com - Patricia McConnell
Siriuspup.com - Ian Dunbar
K9nosework.com - Nosework for dogs, a great activity for shy or reactive dogs
GRRR would like to acknowledge and thank Delaware Valley Golden Retriever Rescue (DVGRR) for creating Project Homelife and extending their authorization for GRRR to edit for our use.

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