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# Things New Owners Should Know About Adopted Animal Rescue Dogs

By **Donna T**

Adopting a dog from an animal rescue group is a great way to help save an animal. Often these dogs are simply no longer wanted by their owners or have behavioral issues that made them unsuitable for their former homes. Many animal rescue groups specialize in specific breeds. The pets these groups save usually fit into the above categories and are a popular way to find a pure bred dog in need of a good home.

Other animal rescue groups focus is their efforts on saving animals that have suffered from abuse and neglect. Among these groups are those who help dogs saved during animal rescue operations. In these cases, the dogs have generally been removed from deplorable conditions which include overcrowding, lack of fresh food and water, and complete neglect. Many times when this type of rescue effort takes place the number of animals taken from the neglectful owner many number fifty or more.

Some of these animals have been so neglected or abused that they will not survive but others will live and lead happy lives if given the necessary care and attention.

Do not overlook the possibility of bringing a rescue dog into your home when contemplating a four-legged addition to your family. Rescue dogs do bring some challenges and extra work with them but are well worth the effort.

If you are considering bringing a dog from an animal rescue into your home there are a few things you should consider and plan to deal with.

The number one challenge of adopting a animal rescue dog is that you will have no idea what your new companion has survived. You will most likely not receive any information about the background of your new animal rescue dog. Rescue groups are often not allowed to provide information because of on-going police investigations. Many times the animal rescue groups don't know much because the large group of rescued animals are separated and taken in by animal rescue groups from across the state or geographic area.

A rescue dog is examined by a veterinarian to determine any life-threatening issues or infections that require treatment. Your rescue dog will most likely have been spayed or neutered. If this has not been done you will be required to have the procedure performed as soon as possible. All rescue groups require this to help control the animal population. It is advisable for you to your new rescue dog to your own veterinarian for an unbiased opinion of his condition and recommendations about helping your dog. Most animal rescue groups will accept a dog back if there is a problem the new owner is unable to deal with.

Rescue dogs, especially those who have suffered neglect and poor living conditions, will be underweight. Their fur will have a coarse quality and their coat may not look very nice. A dog food high in protein with good nutritional qualities is key for your rescue dog. Your vet or an educated pet-store employee will be able to assist you in selecting the best food for your pet. Within about three months your rescue dog's fur should begin to show a marked improvement.

Severe malnutrition causes more problems beyond poor fur quality. Our rescue dog came to us full grown weighing only 19 pounds. His current, healthy weight is 45 pounds. He was so malnourished that his body systems had begun shutting down and his body had been begun feeding on his muscle tissue. For the first two years we had him he suffered problems resulting from malnutrition issues.

Your rescue dog may also be suffering from hidden injuries. One rescue dog had absolutely no sense of smell at all. This may have been the result of an injury but more commonly, this is the result of living in high concentration of urine for an extended period of time. A dog with no sense of smell has a low interest in food or treats. Obedience training is difficult if the dog doesn't care about the reward. This can be very frustrating for new owners attempting to train their animal rescue dog. A professional dog trainer may be able to work with you and your dog to find an alternative reward system.

Living under very stressful circumstances affects a rescue dog's ability to deal with some everyday situations. Patience and a willingness to work around your dog's

unusual quirks will help him overcome some of them and help you learn to accept the others. Even after more than five years one rescue dog is terrified of going to the groomers or any other location where there are animals in cages and being noisy. He panics, drops to the floor and tries to glue himself to his owners. After one groomer required he be tranquilized before a grooming, the owners learned to bathe him and trim his fur at home. Another dog froze when encountering a grate during walks. Continual gentle coaxing from her owners helped her overcome this fear. Some behaviors of this sort can be overcome but some are just too stressful for your rescue dog and are best avoided.

Owners who adopt a dog from an animal rescue must be aware that their new pets, especially older ones, may have developed bad habits and extra patience is needed while working to break the habits.

In general, animal rescue dogs are smart creatures. The woman who operates Petsearch of St. Louis, an organization that places pets from animal rescues, explained this by pointing these animals must be smart simply to survive in such terrible conditions.

The adoption of an animal rescue pet brings along with it a few challenges but the rewards are great. Rescue dogs seem to understand that they were saved and are being given another chance. It is important to realize that you may need to devote a little more time to your adopted pet in the beginning but the reward is worth it.

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