

# Decompression Tips For New Foster Dogs

## STEP 1: Chill out time. AT LEAST 3 days, UP TO 2 weeks depending on the dog.



Shelters are stressful environments full of strange noises and smells. All of that can be overstimulating for a dog. Your new foster is going to need quiet time in your house before anything else. Basically, the dog needs to CHILL OUT, which we call "decompression time." Skipping this step is a sure-fire way to make sure you have problems.

- Set up a quiet, crated area for your new foster to decompress in
  - Crates are not a form of punishment here! Crates give dogs a safe, "den-like" to relax
- Provide your foster with lots of ways to be stimulated mentally (Kongs with frozen peanut butter, interactive toy games, food releasing Kong toys, etc).
- Have music playing 24/7 in the room. Specifically, classical music to slow down racing heartbeats if they are stressed
- Feed your foster breakfast/dinner in the crate. No feeding with other animals in the home.

**Stressed dogs destroy crates and act out. Calm dogs do not.**

This period of time is referred to as 'crate and rotate'. This means that while your personal animals are OUT, your foster is CRATED. While your foster is OUT, your personal dogs are CRATED (or in a separate room).

## STEP 2: Smell Before See. See Before Touch. Repeat.



Dogs learn a lot about the world through their nose. It is their most powerful sense. Not only does decompression time let the dog relax, but it also allows the dog to explore your house with his nose, while crated and secure while still learning about your other pets, children, etc without the stress of a face-to-face meeting where body language might be misunderstood.



Foster explores the house (supervised) while personal pets are outside.



### Smell Before See.

**GOAL: New dog smell = GOOD.**

- Using 'crate and rotate', allow your personal pets to sniff the new fosters' area (while the new foster is outside or in another room)
- Switch to allow the new foster to explore your house and sniff your personal dogs areas (while your personal dogs are outside or in another room)



### See Before Touch.

**GOAL: Sight of new dog = GOOD.**

- Using 'crate and rotate', allow your personal pets and new foster to SEE each other from a distance while the foster is safely crated
- Don't let them sit in one spot and stare at each other
- Take turns treating your personal pet and new foster so they associate the sight of one another with a positive experience