



# What to Expect When Adopting a Peace Academy Graduate, Dogs with a History of Being Jumpy, Mouthy High-Energy Dogs

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You're considering adopting a dog that graduated from Wayside Waifs' Peace Academy program... Now what? First off, you should know you are adopting a new family member who has an excellent foundation of training started, and it's now up to you to continue the structured training, exercise, and socialization that this dog needs. Wayside Waifs' highly skilled and trained staff and volunteers have worked to get your new family member on the path to becoming a well-rounded adult dog. If you feel at any point while reading this handout that a high-energy dog is not the right fit for you, please talk to an Adoptions Counselor, and they can help you find a dog that is.

**Determining whether your home is the right place for an energetic dog:** The Peace Academy program is a group of Wayside's staff and volunteers who work with high-energy, high-arousal, and often highly intelligent dogs to help them to learn to appropriately behave in new and/or stressful situations. Often times these dogs are energetic, adolescent dogs that lack basic obedience skills and structure. The staff and volunteers work with each dog on basic and intermediate obedience training. They also work on specific behavior issues as well, such as leash reactivity, jumping up/height seeking, bite inhibition, and other arousal issues. They all have also learned to look to their handler for direction while on leash.

**What to Expect When You First Get Home:** Since your home will be in a completely different environment than where they have been living and learning, they will need time to acclimate before a lot is expected of them. Although it is very important that the new dog has a sense of structure and a routine from the first day, they should also be given a few days to get used to the sights and sounds of their new home before you focus a lot on their training. That doesn't mean you can't ask them to "sit" or "wait" when needed so they learn their boundaries, but you should be careful not to overwhelm them too much, too soon.

However, it will be very important to make sure that your new friend has plenty of physical AND mental exercise right from the beginning. Why? Your dog needs to release its energy to help them to feel less stressed, to help them to be able to focus on training, and just like the old adage says, "A tired dog is a good dog." It's also important to mention that, while they are adjusting to their new home, they shouldn't go on new adventures too soon. Trips to the pet store, groomer, dog park, or to a family member's or friend's house may easily overwhelm your new dog, and should be avoided for the first two weeks.

**Establishing a Routine:** It is crucial that your dog has a sense of what to expect when he wakes up each day. They are going to need someone who can not only continue their training but also provide them with plenty of physical and mental exercise every day as well.

- **Exercise and Train Every Day** Physical exercise in the morning and afternoon/evening is ideal. If you are gone during the day for work, make sure they start their day with plenty of physical exercise, which will help them to be calm and tolerate being left alone while you are gone. It will also help ensure that your new dog isn't a wild child when you come home from work. If your dog does well in playgroups here at Wayside Waifs, you may want to consider doggie daycare so your dog gets lots of exercise and socialization while you're at work. When you leave, it's a great time to give your dog something mentally enriching (like a puzzle feeder), to help them focus on something. Once your dog has had a couple of days to adjust to your home (they're eating, playing, and sleeping well), it's time to start implementing training sessions in to your day-to-day routine.

- **Cool Down Time/Quiet Time** It's just as important that your dog learns that there are times to be calm and settle down. Whether this time is when you are gone during the day or after exercise and training time in the evenings, it's important that the dog is able to let their body calm down after activity and excitement. Just like children, young dogs need time to decompress and relax. There are many things you can do to help your dog relax, like using Suzanne Clothier's Relaxation Protocol, Tellington Touch (T-Touch), naps in the crate, canine massage, etc.

- **Suzanne Clothier's Relaxation Protocol** This will teach your dog how to relax his body and mind:

<http://www.trainerswithheart.com/resources/Documents/REALLY%20REAL%20RELAXATION%20PROTOCOL.pdf>

**Exercise! Exercise! Exercise!** Exercise is the key to a well-behaved dog. We cannot stress enough how crucial it is not only for health benefits, but it also helps keep the dog happy, engaged, and out of trouble.

- There are many forms of exercise, and certain things are more exciting and effective for some dogs than for others. Many of our Peace Academy dogs are part of our Waif Runners program, where they run three miles throughout our surrounding neighborhoods with their handler. Some of our dogs love to swim in our kiddie pools, others excel on our agility course, while others love to play fetch with different toys in our play yards. Take the time to figure out what works for your dog.

- Every dog will benefit from daily walks. Walks help decrease extra energy your pet may have, from having slept all night or being left alone all day. Walks can calm down and reduce hyperactivity, excitability, and even nighttime restlessness. All of the sights, sounds, and smells that the dog experiences on a walk are excellent mental enrichment too. Just because these dogs are active and enjoy being outside for walks does not mean they are outdoor dogs. They are all very affectionate, need to be indoors, and want to be a member of the family; otherwise they will become destructive and unruly if left outdoors for the majority of the day.

Although a Peace Academy graduate will benefit from getting out and walking every day, they are going to need a lot more than just a daily walk or two. They need time to run, play hard, and use their brain. Putting the dog out in a fenced yard usually won't do the trick; they need you to interact with them. You can do things like hike, swim, take obedience classes, compete in agility, play fetch, or play with an interactive toy together. There are many ways you can interact with your dog in a mentally stimulating way (see the section on Mentally Enriching Games below).

• **There Are Behavior Issues That Can Arise Without Proper Exercise**

- Destructive behaviors, like chewing, digging or scratching
- Investigative behaviors, like getting into the trash and counter surfing
- Hyperactivity, excitability, and activity at nighttime
- Unruliness, knocking over furniture and jumping up on people
- Play biting and other rough and rude play behavior
- Attention-seeking behaviors, like barking, whining, howling

• **Benefits of Exercise and Play** The good news is that keeping your dog healthy, happy, and out of trouble with daily exercise is a lot of fun, and provides many benefits, including:

- Helps reduce or eliminate the common behavior problems listed above, such as digging, excessive barking, chewing, and hyperactivity
- Helps keep dogs healthy, agile, and limber
- Helps reduce digestive problems
- Helps timid or fearful dogs build confidence and trust
- Helps dogs sleep through the night
- Helps keep dogs' weight under control
- Watch this video about the importance of exercise:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wf9-q1\\_I3hs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wf9-q1_I3hs)

**Mentally Enriching Games** In terms of mentally stimulating games, there are lots of things you can do with your dog, both interactive and things they can do on their own. Mental enrichment is important because, even if a dog is physically worn out, their brain may still be going strong, which does not help create a calm, happy dog. Most of our dogs are too smart for their own good!

• **Puzzle feeders and slow feeders** are great for keeping dogs busy, especially when you're gone; here are some examples:

[https://www.google.com/search?q=puzzle+feeders+for+dogs&espv=2&biw=1280&bih=899&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0CacQ\\_AUoAmoVChMIj\\_ORkKnbxgIVkFWSch0NIQNI](https://www.google.com/search?q=puzzle+feeders+for+dogs&espv=2&biw=1280&bih=899&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0CacQ_AUoAmoVChMIj_ORkKnbxgIVkFWSch0NIQNI)

• **Teaching your dog the "find it" game** helps them use their brain and their nose while you're home; here is a link with that game and more:

<http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/pets/dog-training/indoor-games-for-people-and-dogs>

• **Dog agility** is a great way to keep your dog mentally and physically stimulated; you can also practice in your house: <http://www.mnn.com/family/pets/stories/how-to-create-a-dog-agility-course-at-home>. <http://3lostdogs.com/a-beginners-guide-to-dog-agility/>

**Basic Training** As mentioned before, your new dog will be familiar with most, if not all, of the basic behaviors: Sit, Down, Come, Off, Look, and Target. Wait and Stay will have been introduced but may not be a solid behavior yet. Some dogs may have also learned "drop it" with toys and "leave it"

with treats on the ground, depending on their needs with impulse control. Please ask an adoptions counselor or behavior team member to demonstrate the hand signals your dog was taught.

**Intermediate and Impulse Control Training** Not only will your dog be familiar with basic training, but they will have also been started in intermediate training. They will be familiar with, and should be consistently responding to, some of these commands: Wait, Stay, Leave It, Drop It, and Gentle. These behaviors are also considered Impulse Control Training. Our impulse control exercises are incorporated into our NILF training.

- NILF training, which stands for **Nothing In Life is Free**, refers to teaching an animal that it must offer a good behavior (e.g., sitting quietly) to get anything and everything it wants throughout the day before doing something fun at the shelter.

- NILF can be used in everyday life situations, like house manners, going for a walk, greeting new people, and also when it comes to the dog's food and eating routine.

- NILF helps the animal to focus on their handler more often and more readily while you teach them more suitable behaviors for them to do in place of other, more undesirable behaviors (for example, teaching them to sit quietly to get your attention instead of jumping up on you for attention).

- NILF training helps the dog feel like they have control over what comes next while also learning to respect their handler. There's a common misconception that people perceive that the dog will feel powerless, but in actuality, the opposite is true.

- NILF training does not mean that you have to restrict the attention your dog would normally receive from you. If anything, he is interacting with you more, looking for direction as to what comes next.

***If, after trying these suggestions, you are still experiencing undesirable behaviors in your dog, SUBMIT QUESTIONS by clicking the link under Ask A Trainer on the Behavior and Training page of the Wayside Waifs website: [www.waysidewaifs.org](http://www.waysidewaifs.org).***

Written by the Wayside Waifs Animal Behavior Team

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### **Helpful Links and Additional Information:**

- Five New Things to Teach your Dog in Five Days  
<http://youtu.be/rvt57v0EdHs>
- Sit/Down/Leave It for Hyper Dogs  
<http://youtu.be/rvt57v0EdHs>  
<http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/virtual-pet-behaviorist/dog-behavior/teaching-your-dog-sit>  
<http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/virtual-pet-behaviorist/dog-behavior/teaching-your-dog-lie-down>  
<http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/virtual-pet-behaviorist/dog-behavior/teaching-your-dog-leave-it>
- Jumping up  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49A12LPsE8M&feature=youtu.be>  
<http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/virtual-pet-behaviorist/dog-behavior/teaching-your-dog-not-jump-people>

- Biting the Leash  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IR7TvrUQ\\_1k&feature=share&list=PL792002EA4B90960A&index=4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IR7TvrUQ_1k&feature=share&list=PL792002EA4B90960A&index=4)
- Pulling on Leash  
<http://youtu.be/wqURxL6v4ds>  
[http://youtu.be/U-VY\\_H\\_TG\\_Y](http://youtu.be/U-VY_H_TG_Y)  
[http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/virtual-pet-behaviorist/dog-behavior/teaching-your-dog-not-pull-](http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/virtual-pet-behaviorist/dog-behavior/teaching-your-dog-not-pull-leash)

[leash](#)

- Leash Reactivity  
[http://youtu.be/8zyjiA9bD3E?list=PLPugdw1kM-IEAx0EjoW490c\\_TnyxyH\\_IH](http://youtu.be/8zyjiA9bD3E?list=PLPugdw1kM-IEAx0EjoW490c_TnyxyH_IH)  
<https://youtu.be/EUCl6ndLN7Q>  
[http://youtu.be/U-VY\\_H\\_TG\\_Y](http://youtu.be/U-VY_H_TG_Y)  
[http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/virtual-pet-behaviorist/dog-behavior/dogs-chasing-bicycles-](http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/virtual-pet-behaviorist/dog-behavior/dogs-chasing-bicycles-skateboards-and-other-moving)

[skateboards-and-other-moving](#)

<http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/virtual-pet-behaviorist/dog-behavior/dogs-who-are-reactive-leash>

- Recall  
<http://youtu.be/w525cY5FP7k>  
[http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/virtual-pet-behaviorist/dog-behavior/teaching-your-dog-come-](http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/virtual-pet-behaviorist/dog-behavior/teaching-your-dog-come-when-called)

[when-called](#)