



Vaccinations:

Puppy:	6 weeks,	9 weeks,	12 weeks	(then annually)
Kitten:	9 weeks,	12 weeks		(then annually)

Dogs and Cats should be vaccinated against Rabies at 12 weeks and then annually according to the State Vet.

REMEMBER THERE IS NO CURE FOR RABIES. RABIES KILLS HUMANS AND ANIMALS. IF THERE IS AN OUTBREAK AND YOU CAN NOT PROVE YOUR ANIMAL HAD VACCINATIONS, THE STATE VET MAY EUTHANISE YOUR ANIMAL ON THE SPOT.

De-worming:

Every 3-4 weeks until 6 months of age, then every 3-4 months as an adult.

- Treatment according to age and weight of pup/kitten.

If your pet has worms (you may not always see it in their faeces), they may develop a slight diarrhoea after de-worming, but there should be no blood in it, the animal should not be ill/off food and the diarrhoea should pass within 12-24 hrs.

Puppies do have occasional bouts of vomiting/diarrhoea, but they should not be ill/off food, there should not be any blood in the diarrhoea/vomit and it should pass within 12-24 hrs. = remember they are like babies - dehydration kills them. Rather have them checked by the vet if you have any concerns.

Flea & Tick Treatment:

Every 4 weeks with a safe and effective treatment according to the puppy's/kitten's weight and age.

Frontline Spray - Can be used on 2 day old pups/kittens

Frontline Plus - From 8 weeks of age

Advantix (DOGS) - also repels flies - from 7 weeks of age

Revolution (CATS) - From 6 weeks of age (does not kill ticks, but does ear mites - common problem in cats)

** The difference (and often price difference) between products usually relates to the product efficacy (what percentage of flea/tick burden it will kill after treatment) and product safety margin (how easy it is to poison/kill the animal with this product)**

If you ever change a puppy/kitten's diet, do it gradually over a period of 5 days by phasing the one diet in and the other out (mixing). This will prevent intestinal upset. All puppies should be on a puppy diet suitable for their age, breed and size. Puppy/kitten diets have a different energy/protein and calcium formulation to make sure the growing pup/kitten has all the nutrients available for correct development and so avoiding problems as an adult.

Large breed puppies (who will be over 25 kg as adult i.e. Boerboel, German shepherd etc.) need to be on a LARGE BREED PUPPY DIET. This will control their growth so that they reach their adult weight at around 12 months and not at 6 months, so as to avoid strain on their immature joints. This will help prevent joint problems later in life! Many dogs are euthanised at an early age due to weak joints, especially hips - by feeding the correct diet you can try and prevent this from happening.

(Source: Cullinan Animal Hospital)



Are you a proud owner of an African Grey parrot? Congratulations! You have around 30 to 40 years or so of wonderful times with your intelligent pet! However, the wonderful 40 years to come won't be wonderful at all, if you and your parrot start on the wrong foot from the very beginning.

- So, what are the things you should expect in the first few days of having your pet inside the house? First, expect your parrot to be cautious around you. This is natural. All African Grey parrots have the tendency to be wary of strangers. When you take one home for the first time, you are a complete stranger to him. You are not the person who used to give him food and water. Don't expect your parrot to take an instant liking to you. Give him time to know your voice, your face, your scent and all will be well in your home.
- Second, expect that your parrot won't obey your commands instantly. This still has something to do with you being a total stranger to your new pet. Just like young kids, African Grey parrots are quite intelligent and are capable of thinking. He just won't obey somebody he doesn't know. Be patient and wait for your parrot to learn trusting you. When you gain your parrot's trust, you also gain the right to give him simple commands to follow.
- Third, expect that your parrot won't start saying words as soon as you enter your door. Your African Grey is not an automated toy that you can switch on and off at your pleasure. Your pet is a beautiful creature with a mind of its own. Nobody, not even you, can control the exact time that he will utter words or sounds. Just like trying to make him follow commands, don't rush it. Wait for your parrot to talk in his own time.
- Fourth, expect that your African Grey parrot won't gobble up all the food that you give him. This still has something to do with his trust in you as his new care-provider. Slowly approach your bird in his cage, talk to him in a soothing voice and give him his meal. This could make your pet parrot proceed to his food dish with care but also with trust. However, you should develop a feeding routine with your parrot. Set up a feeding schedule that will be regularly followed so as not to stress-out your pet.
- Fifth, as your African Grey parrot is in a new environment, expect him to be a bit moody or temperamental. African Grey parrots are naturally wired to be this way. Ignore the moody or temperamental behaviour but praise the positive ones. This will tell your pet that behaving well has its rewards.
- Sixth, even if your African Grey parrot is new to your home, you have to give him ample time outside his cage to stretch his wings. The physical exercise is good for your pet and the freedom you give him will allow him to check out the entire house to become familiar.

See, the first few days are not as difficult to manage as they seem! You simply have to know what to expect so that you can react appropriately to any situation that may come up with your African Grey parrot.



Now that you have picked out a nice healthy snake, the fun part starts: bringing your new pet home. But wait... Have you set up its enclosure or cage properly? Before you even consider bringing home a ball python, you need to make sure that your cage is set up and ready for its new inhabitant. Having the cage set up before your python comes home speeds up the acclimation process.

Once you have made your purchase, take some time to inspect the bag or container that the ball python has been placed in. Make sure that it is secure, so that the snake will not escape on the way home. Ball pythons and other snakes have been lost in cars on more than one occasion when the transportation bag or container was not secure enough for the ride home. Do not place the container or bag in an area of the car where it will be in direct sunlight or under a heater vent. The ball python can seriously overheat and die within a relatively short time when exposed to temperature extremes. Stopping for a bite to eat on the way home during a warm or a cold day could also pose a threat to your new ball python. If the trip home will be a long one, bring an insulated transport container with you, one with adequate ventilation holes. This will help protect the ball python from temperature extremes. When possible, go directly home with your new snake.

Quarantining

If this is your first and only snake, then quarantine procedures will not be as important for you. However, if this is not your first and only snake, then you will need to quarantine your new arrival. All new ball pythons (and all reptiles in general) that you bring into your home should be quarantined for at least 30 days and perhaps as long as 60 days. This process is a must and could possibly save you headaches in the future. It is best - if possible - to house your new acquisition in a different room, away from your established collection. This snake should be fed last and cleaned after your other animals to avoid spreading any disease the new snake may have. Any tools or equipment that you use to work with this snake should also be thoroughly disinfected after you are done using them. Wash your hands thoroughly before and after handling your newest snake.

During quarantine, you will be able to thoroughly observe your new arrival to make sure that it eats properly, has well-formed stools, has no signs of a respiratory infection or other illness, and does not harbour mites. Following proper quarantine procedures can save you and your other reptiles a lot of trouble by preventing mites (or worse, a deadly virus) from being introduced into your collection. Once the time allotted for quarantine has passed and you are satisfied that your new snake is healthy, introduce your new arrival to its own proper place in your collection.



The day you bring your bird home is the day the world changes for you both. For you, this is the grand moment when all your research and admiration of birds suddenly becomes quite real.

For your new bird, this momentous day can be downright scary. The breeder's home may have been the only world he has ever known. Even if your bird came from a pet shop and is used to a constant parade of strangers, your home is something new, and so are you. If you purchased a budgie or cockatiel, his interactions with humans have been restricted to being netted out of a group of his buddies to be shipped to a pet store to wait to be netted again when purchased. Can you help these birds become confident pets?

Or maybe you've taken on a real challenge, a bird that has been sold and sold again, passed from owner to owner and perhaps mistreated along the way. This character views the world with cynicism and fear, and he figures you're bound to be another disappointment. Can you really change his outlook? The trick in all cases is patience, consistency, and knowledge. Getting your bird settled in comfortably and establishing your relationship is a two-part process: You have to ensure that your bird's physical environment is satisfactory, and then start working on his attitude toward you.

Setting up the cage

The cage is your bird's castle, the place where he will spend much (or all, in the case of finches or budgies) of his time. A cage protects your bird and shields your stuff from your bird, who is perfectly capable (if he's a parrot) of reducing prize antiques to toothpicks with his powerful beak.

Choose a location where your bird can be adjacent to family activities, but not in the centre of them. Your bird will feel most comfortable if his cage is against a wall, so he can watch the goings-on without having to worry about anyone sneaking up on his backside. For the same reason, place the cage where your bird won't be surprised - for example, away from large furniture that may block his view of the room and the comings and goings of family and friends. Birds don't like to be startled any more than we do!

Position the cage far enough away from a window so the sun doesn't fall on your bird and overheat him. Putting the cage near a window so your bird can see out isn't a bad idea, though. It'll keep your pet entertained. Although the kitchen may seem like an ideal place for your bird's cage, think again. The potential for your bird to breathe deadly fumes, such as those from burning non-stick cookware is too high to take a chance. Situate your bird's cage someplace else where the people in your home hang out.

Don't get too enthusiastic about toys right away - two or three are fine, but more may be overwhelming. Use a variety of natural and store-bought perches, and position them so they aren't directly over food and water dishes. You don't want to encourage your bird to poop into his dishes. Line the cage bottom with newspaper or another safe product, and you're ready to introduce your bird to his new home.

Traveling home

Bigger parrots require a couple of accommodations, one for traveling and one to call home. That's not the case with little birds; one properly sized cage is plenty. The temptation to buy a bird, buy a cage, stuff the former into the latter, and race for home may be inviting, but let it pass. Large or small, your bird will be more comfortable in a small box or carrier, with a towel draped over it to darken the space and relax him. (Make sure to leave a couple of air holes.) Put a towel in the bottom of the box or carrier to provide the bird with secure footing and stop him from sliding around, even if a perch is available. Place the carrier where it won't move around or fall. You can put it on the passenger-side floorboard or put the seat belt through the handle to secure it in the seat.

Don't put the carrier in the boot - exhaust fumes can kill your new pet. And don't put your small bird in a small carrying box on the dashboard while you are driving home - that would be a bad experience for both you and the bird.

Settling in

When you get home, put your bird in the cage and let him be. He needs time to adjust to his surroundings. No matter how cute he is, how much you want to show him off, or how much the kids want to have him perch on their fingers, let your bird be. Give him three days of peace to adjust. You'll have the rest of your lives together, so laying off for a mere 72 hours really isn't asking a lot. This doesn't mean you can't talk to your bird; in fact, you should communicate with your new family member - gently, and with the utmost respect for how frightened he may be. Sing to him. Read the newspaper to him.

Make eye contact and tell him he's beautiful and you love him. But as for physical contact, hands off for now. You have to change the cage liner, clean and refill food and water receptacles, and add and remove fresh foods, but do so slowly, calmly, and deliberately. Don't be insulted if he chooses to move as far away from you as possible; your day will come.

(Source: By Gina Spadafori and Brian L. Speer from Birds For Dummies)



You've made your decision. A Canary will be moving into your home. How exciting! Before you bring your new pet home, you have to make preparations. Your bird will need a cage, with at least two perches, three dishes, food suitable for a canary, cuttlebone and a couple of toys that a canary may enjoy.

First we will talk about the cage. A canary loves to hop around quite a bit, so please make sure the cage gives him plenty of room to move. The cage should be long enough that he gets to flap his wings moving from one end to another. Canaries do not climb on the bars, like a budgie does, so the bars on a canary suitable cage are usually vertical instead of horizontal. The more room your canary has to move around, the happier he will be. Many people allow their canary outside the cage to fly around for a little while each day. Try to place the cage in a location where he will see and hear his people frequently. He will love the attention. Do not place the cage in a spot where he will be subject to drafts from a heat vent or air conditioner. He will like to be near a window, but not where he will receive too much sun at any time of the day.

Next, we will talk about the perches. The cage probably came with two perches – either wood dowel or plastic. If they are plastic, please throw them away and find some wood perches for your bird. You can purchase wood perches from a pet supply store or cut a branch from a tree that you are sure has not had any pesticide sprayed on it. Apple tree branches make great perches if you know someone who has an apple tree in their yard and doesn't mind letting you cut small branches off. If you have two perches, one on each end works great as long as you have them far enough from the end of the cage that your canary does not hit his tail every time he turns around. If you have a third perch, it is good to put one down lower, so he can hop down and back up again. Please do not use the sandpaper covers for perches. Those are very hard on a bird's feet and do not keep the nails trimmed as they say they do.

Next, we will talk about the dishes. Many cages come with two dishes – one at each end near the bottom of the cage. I find that these dishes placed in those places usually end up with bird droppings in them on top of the food and in the water. I prefer to purchase three dishes that hook onto the cage bars and allow me to place them where bird droppings will not fall into them. I usually place them on both ends of the lower perch – the two food dishes (regular canary seed and treats and/or fruits/vegetables) at one end and water at the other end of the perch. A cuttlebone provides your canary with something to chew on as well as needed calcium and should be attached to the cage bars where it will not have droppings falling on it.

Now – about the toys. I bet you thought that canaries didn't play with toys, didn't you? Canary toys are certainly different from macaw toys, but they do like canary appropriate toys. Canaries love swings, mirrors, small bells and small things to peck at. Take a look at a pet supply store for more ideas of canary toys.

Have the cage and supplies all set up before you bring your new canary home. Remove him from the travel box that you brought him home in and place him into his new cage. Often it works best to just open the container and let him hop into his cage after placing it right at the open door.

Leave him to settle in, but talk to him to get him used to your voice. If this is a young canary, it might take a couple of weeks before he begins to sing, but if he is a little older, he may begin to sing almost immediately. If he has not started to sing after a month, it is quite possible that you have a female canary. It is impossible to determine the sex of canaries visually, but many breeders watch and listen to their birds and will place all singing birds together. Sometimes a mistake is made and a female will be sold as a male or a male will be sold as a female though. Most breeders will exchange if you ask them.



It's a good idea to make certain you are fully prepared before bringing home your new Chinchilla. Make certain the cage is ready, the food has been purchased, water bottles have been washed and are ready, and you've picked the prime location for your Chinchilla's cage. Be certain everyone in your family is prepared for the responsibility, make it a family affair and have everyone participate in the preparations. Once you're prepared go pick up your Chinchilla.

A few questions many new Chinchilla owners ask is "Why does my Chinchilla hate me?"; "When I go near my Chin's cage it stands up and barks, chirps, or squeals at me, is this bad?"; "My Chin isn't sleeping, it is ALWAYS watching me"; and my personal favourite "Help, my new Chin peed on me!".

The first thing you need to do is relax. This is all VERY common behaviour for Chinchillas. They are very set in their routine and their environment so any changes to their lifestyle, cages, or owners will affect them and they may react in ways that aren't very pleasant.

To answer these commonly asked questions:

1. Your Chinchilla doesn't hate you. Chinchillas can take a while to settle in to their new home and environment ESPECIALLY if it is a lot different, i.e. barking dogs, children running around, loud TV's etc... The best thing you can do is give them some space. Let them have some time to get comfortable with their surroundings before you try to really form a bond with them. Chinchillas are very light sleepers they are very aware of any kind of noise or movement around them. They can and will sleep with their eyes open in an unfamiliar environment. So don't panic if they seem to be always staring at you, they are trying to get used to their surroundings and you and they are very sensitive to any new movement or noises. The best thing you can do for your Chinchilla is put him/her in a room by themselves during the day. If that isn't possible then make sure their cage is not in the main traffic areas in your house, i.e. the living room where the TV is always blaring, the kid's room where they are playing all day, or the kitchen where most families seem to congregate. Once your Chinchilla is used to the varying noises, movements, and distractions in your house they will probably settle down and start sleeping with their eyes closed.
2. Chinchillas are VERY good at letting you know when they are unhappy with something. Barking, Squeaking, Chirping, standing up very straight whenever you come in the room, these are all common Chinchilla behaviours when they are settling in. Again I must stress that your Chinchilla DOESN'T hate you. It is simply that he/she doesn't know you. When they stand at attention and bark or chirp at you it can sound very threatening. It is meant to sound this way. This is their first line of defence against predators. The best thing you can do is sit quietly in front of the cage each evening (make sure this is done in the evening, DO NOT try to alter your Chinchilla's normal nocturnal habits) and speak softly to them. Let them get used to your presence and your voice. Some suggest reading to them, others singing, it is all a personal preference. Make sure there are no other distractions in the room with you, i.e. TV, other pets, small children (if you have small children it is a good idea to let your Chinchilla get used to you first, once they trust you they will be ready to go on to meeting others), any distractions that may arise can break the process causing you to have to start all over. The most important thing you need to teach your Chinchilla is that you are not a threat, that you would never hurt him/her. Never do anything to frighten your Chinchilla such as chasing him/her, yelling at them, spraying them with water, etc... They WILL NOT forget this and you will never gain their trust if you do this.

Don't be surprised if when you approach the cage and begin this ritual they pee on you. Chinchillas can and will spray urine for various reasons and one of those reasons is if they feel threatened. Be prepared for this and try to just laugh it off and go again.

Once your Chinchilla quits threatening you when you come in to the room or sit in front of the cage you then

you can gradually step up the bonding process. Try feeding a treat from your hand. Please remember only ONE treat per day. It is very bad for them to over indulge in treats and it can be very easy to be swayed by them, they are very convincing, especially when they haven't wanted anything to do with you up to this point and now they want treats and will come to you! Too many treats can cause serious health problems, the most common being diarrhoea which can be fatal to Chinchillas.

Once you get your Chinchilla comfortable enough with you to allow you to sit in front of the cage, feed them treats, not freak out when you try to change the cage bedding or their feed and water, you are ready for the next step.

Try opening the cage door and just setting your arm inside the cage. Let your Chinchilla come to you, they will probably crawl on you, nibble your fingers (this is a "test bite" it isn't meant to cause harm. It can be rather startling but please be assured it is not done in anger it is simply their way of introducing themselves to new things), crawl up your shoulder, etc... Make sure you block the cage doors with your body so the Chinchilla can not get away and have his/her run of the house because if they do that and you chase them you will be back to square one.

Once you feel comfortable that your Chinchilla will return to you, that it is not afraid of you, once you can pet them, they don't shy away from your touch at all, and they willingly greet you at the cage doors, then and only then is it safe to allow them to have a free run time.

Please remember to try not to chase your Chinchilla. Before allowing your Chinchilla free run time please make sure the room is completely Chinchilla safe, that there are no possible escape routes, that there is nothing they could chew and endanger themselves or you, etc... Also please realize they will chew EVERYTHING they can find, this includes, walls, baseboard trim, paper, etc... Be prepared for this, you really can not scold them for it because they don't understand and you will be back to square one.

Chinchillas are very good about knowing when they have had enough run time. Chances are very good if you sit in the room while they run they will come to you and probably fall asleep in your lap or on your shoulder or they will return to the cage. It is a good idea to make sure they can always return to their cage if they want to. It is not uncommon for a Chinchilla on their first run to stick very close to the cage and run back in every time they are exposed to something new or there is a slight noise. Their cage is their safe haven and they will use it.

This process is quite lengthy and while your Chinchilla could come around right away and it could take 2 days, it could also take weeks, months, or even years. Don't get discouraged. I always try to keep in mind Chinchillas have an average life span of 10-15 years so you have plenty of time to become friends.

Finally, one thing I feel is VERY important, even though your new Chinchilla looks cuddly and cute, they are very independent and very active animals. While they enjoy the company of another Chinchilla (well most of them do), they do not like to be carried around, snuggled with, or hugged all of the time. The best part about having a Chinchilla is watching them. Letting them be themselves, and free to explore and act out as they are naturally inclined to do will insure your success and a life long bond with your Chinchilla.



Cockatiels are highly social birds who enjoy interaction with humans. How you interact with your cockatiel in the first few days after bringing him home will directly impact the type of bond you will share with your new feathered friend. Earning your Cockatiels trust is crucial to the bonding process and can help to establish a positive and rewarding relationship.

Items you will need

Treats

Step 1

Give your feathered friend some time to adjust. While you may be eager to play with your cockatiel right away, he would benefit from some alone time in which to explore his surroundings and get settled into his new digs. Let your cockatiel hang out in his cage without disruption for at least a few hours after you bring him home so that he can adjust to the idea of being in an unfamiliar place.

Step 2

Spend some time near your Cockatiels cage. Once your feathered friend has enjoyed some alone time and explored his surroundings, make it a point to hang around him so that you are visible, but not directly engaging him. Take a seat near his cage and read a book, watch TV or do something else that you enjoy. Stay close enough for your bird to see and hear you, but not close enough to make him anxious. Pay attention to your feathery friend's body language to determine his comfort level and sit as closely as you can without riling him up. The idea is to give your cockatiel a chance to get used to you being around.

Step 3

Talk to your feathered friend. Using a soft and soothing tone of voice, say hello to your little bird and share a few kind words with him. This would also be a good time to make kissy noises or whistle a tune to your cockatiel that will catch his attention and pique his curiosity about you. Each time you interact with your bird, let his body language guide you so that you stay within his comfort zone.

Step 4

Give your feathery friend a yummy treat. As your cockatiel becomes more comfortable with your presence, offer him something tasty like a sunflower seed or a piece of fresh fruit. Hold the treat close enough to the cage for him to grab it, but not so close that you invade his personal space. If he accepts the treat, wait a few minutes and try it again so that he begins to associate you with the positive experience of getting a treat. If he doesn't accept the treat right away, spend a bit more time on the first three steps and then try again.

Step 5

Let your cockatiel out of his cage for a play session. Once your bird is comfortably eating out of your hand, open the cage door and wait for him to step out. If he doesn't leave the cage right away, keep the door open and give him time to assess the situation. Try to entice him by talking to him softly or holding a treat near the outside of the door. You can also slowly place an outstretched finger in front of him near the bottom of his belly while giving him a "step up" command. Once your feathered friend trusts you enough to perch on your finger, continue talking to him softly and make slow, deliberate movements that keep him at ease.

(Source: Kristina de la Cal, Demand Media)



Once you bring a new gecko home, there are some things you should be aware of so that you don't get worried too fast. Here are a few of the questions we are frequently asked:

1. When should I hold a new gecko?

Try not to hold a new gecko for a week or two. This is really hard to do! But it will allow your new gecko to settle in quicker without causing extra stress. Also when you do hold it, start by holding it in the cage for short periods of time until it gets accustomed to your hand. Then you can begin to take it out of the cage and lengthen the time you hold your gecko.

2. What if the gecko doesn't eat right away?

One of the first things every new gecko owner wants to do is feed their new pet; however, many new animals don't eat right away. They are stressed to be in a new environment and to be getting all of the attention a new pet often receives. This stress is amplified if there are other geckos in the same cage. This means your new gecko may not eat and it may even change colour or become lethargic. It is not uncommon for even the healthiest of geckos to take several days to eat and maybe even more than a week.

3. How long should I wait until I place a new gecko with my existing colony?

Of course, purchasing your gecko from a reputable vendor will increase your confidence that the animal you receive is healthy. However, if you are planning on putting a new animal with your existing animals, regardless of whether you purchased your new pet from a reputable breeder or reputable pet store, you should sequester the new gecko for several weeks. For the first few weeks you should wash your hands after you hold it and make sure that you do not share hides, water dishes, or food between animals. Once you are confident that your new purchase is healthy you can place it with your existing colony.

4. How can I tell if my new gecko is getting along with my older geckos?

Whenever geckos are housed with other geckos, they experience a certain level of stress. As a new gecko is placed with an existing colony, watch for signs of stress. These signs may include colour change (usually darker), bad shedding, runny stool, lethargic behavior, and not feeding. Watch your new gecko to make sure it is getting its share of food and that it is growing at a good rate. Also watch to see that it is not being attacked or attacking any of your other geckos. Most of the time geckos adjust to each other fairly quickly, but being left in a stressful environment for extended periods of time can lead to other illnesses, so monitor the situation closely.

There may be other questions and certainly different answers that work, but these are the ones that have worked for us. Purchasing a new gecko is exciting and worrisome, but if you know what to expect and are prepared for gecko ownership, you will likely have a great experience.



Moving into a new home can be overwhelming for little gerbils. Everything they're used to will change when they come home with you. They'll have new people to get used to, a new tank to get used to, and maybe even a new type of food or bedding to adjust to. There are some things that you can do to make the transition a little bit easier for your new rodent friends.

Prepare Their Home

The first and best thing that you can do is to get your gerbils' tank and supplies ready before you bring your gerbils home. You can learn how to prepare a home for your new pets in the [What Should I Do Before I Bring My Gerbils Home?](#) Chapter of our Gerbil Care Guide.

Give Them Some Space

We know how anxious you'll be to meet your new pets and play with the cute little gerbils who have just become part of your family. But remember that they are in a new world. They're probably a little bit frightened, and even if they aren't scared, they probably do feel very stressed and overwhelmed. Gerbils love exploring new places, but because so many things have changed at once, it's best to give them some time to adapt to their new home and to rest from all the excitement of the day. If at all possible, for the first 12 to 24 hours, try to avoid picking your gerbils up, taking flash photography of them, or sticking your hand in the tank unnecessarily.



Goldfish are relatively tough compared to other popular tank fish, but this doesn't mean you can just toss your new pet into a new environment and expect him to thrive. To give your goldfish the best start in his new home, take the time to let him acclimate by floating the bag in the tank before releasing him.

Acclimation

The reason for floating the plastic bag in the tank when bringing home your new goldfish is to let him slowly acclimate to the new tank temperature. Dumping him into water that is cooler or warmer than his current surroundings could cause him to go into shock and is hard on his little body. Letting the bag sit in the tank lets the water inside gradually match the temperature of the aquarium. This slow change is much easier on your new goldfish. Ideally, the temperature in the tank should be between 16 and 20 degrees Celsius.

Time

The amount of time it takes for the water in the plastic bag to become the same temperature as the tank depends on the amount of water in the bag and the difference in temperature. In most cases, 15 minutes is sufficient for the temperatures to become equal. If there is a lot of water in the bag, however, or if you can feel a large temperature difference, it may require more time. It's not an exact science, but if you can feel a difference between the water in the bag and the water in the aquarium, give it more time to adjust.

Water Exchange

After the water temperature has equalized, open the bag and transfer 1/2 cup aquarium water into the bag and let it sit for minute or two, then add another 1/2 cup water from the tank and wait again. Repeat this process several times until the bag is filled with aquarium water/ double the original volume. Once your goldfish is surrounded mainly by water from the tank, gently lift him out of the bag with a net and release him into the tank. Alternately, you can open the bag and release him, but you may also release any dirt or bacteria contained in the water from the store.

Other Considerations

Rapid changes in light can stress your new goldfish, so don't carry him around in just the clear plastic bag when transferring him from the store to the car and the car to the house. Place the plastic bag in a paper bag or a small ice chest. Prepare the water in the tank about two weeks And at least a week before bringing your fish home. This will give any chlorine plenty of time to dissipate, beneficial bacteria time to grow and sufficient time for the pH to become balanced. It will also give you a chance to ensure that all of your equipment, such as pumps and filters, are working properly before your fish's health depends on it.



This content will give you a step by step guide on bringing your new hamster home.

Step 1:

The first thing to do is take two or three handfuls of your hamster's old litter into the hamster's new cage. Now fill up the food bowl and the water bowl.

Step 2:

Carefully place the hamster into its new home. If you were given a cardboard box, put the hamster (still inside the box) in the cage. Now carefully open the lid of the box so that the hamster can come out on its own.

Step 3:

Now comes the time when you must be very patient. Please do not go and pick up the hamster straight away, this will cause stress on the little hamster. But now it is very satisfying to watch your hamster explore its new surroundings. Now close the cage door and sit quietly and watch your new hamster take possession of its new surroundings.

Step 4:

Once the hamster has explored its new cage, it will probably dive straight into its little house and stay there for quite some time. Please be patient and do not dive straight in and go and pick your little hamster up.

Step 5:

Besides from providing your hamster with new food and fresh water, everything should proceed this way for a week. Under no circumstances should you wake up your hamster or lift up its sleeping house! Gradually your little hamster will come out and explore its surroundings once again. Your hamster will start to mark its territory with its own scent by licking the sides of its body and rubbing itself on the cage.

Step 6:

Now your little hamster should look like it has lived in your house for weeks. Once your hamster sleeps inside its little house in the afternoon and come out at night and does its night activities. It means that your hamster is completely relaxed in its new environment and it means that you can start to pick up your little hamster and he can now become hand tame.

(Author: Ivana Perestrelo. Source: www.hamster-club.com)



Coming Home

Here are a few tips to make everything runs swiftly when you bring your new baby home:

- Change can be very stressful to some hedgehogs, so it's best to give your new friend a day or two to adjust to his/her new home.
- Provide them with an old sweatshirt or tee shirt with your scent, so they learn to associate your scent with safety.
- Try feeding the same food the breeder was feeding your hedgie, to prevent further stress from an upset stomach.
- When you are ready to take your hedgehog out for the first time, simply scoop him/her up and place them in your lap. Your hedgehog may be in a quill ball at this point, don't distress, let your hedgehog set the pace. It may take a little while before your hedgehog feels comfortable enough to explore.
- If your hedgehog seem particularly shy, you may want to try bribing your hedgehog with treats, like baby food or mealworms. Try not to feed mealworms or other treats with your fingers - this might cause nipping.

****Even if it seems to be taking a long time for your hedgehog to warm up to you, be persistent. You must socialize your hedgehog daily, ideally for an hour or more, every night. ****



What do I need to buy for my kitten?

Before you bring your kitten home make sure you have all the necessary items he will need:

- **Litter tray and cat litter:** There is a wide variety of cat litters on the market these days, some better than others. It is best to avoid clumping cat litter with kittens. Litter trays come in all shapes and sizes such as self cleaning, covered (or hooded), un-covered.
- **Scratching post:** cats have a need to scratch and enjoy scratching. Providing your cat with it's own scratching post will reduce the chances of your cat using your furniture or carpet.
- **Food/water bowls:** You can buy cheap plastic ones, metal ones, pottery ones, automatic ones and even drinking fountains. My personal favourite are the pottery ones as they are more sturdy and therefore there is less of a chance of the bowl being knocked over, plus they can be put in the microwave should you decide to warm the food before feeding your cat.
- **Cat carrier for those trips to the vet.**
- **Cat toys**
- **Cat bed:** There is a vast array of cat beds on the market from relatively plain to fancy. A kitten will do just fine with a cardboard box and a soft blanket or a specially made cat bed, you are only limited by your own budget, taste and imagination.
- **Cat food:** A premium quality brand is the best, and select one for the appropriate age of your cat. For example if you adopt a kitten, then buy kitten food etc.

Preparing for your kitten's arrival:

It is important to kitten proof your home and also check out the list of plants which are toxic and non toxic to cats, if you have plants which are toxic to cats ensure they are out of reach. There are safe alternatives for your plant to nibble on should the kitten want some greenery. Before the kitten arrives home, make sure you have set up a comfortable room for your kitten to be confined in for the first few days, just while he settles in. You can gradually open up your house over a period of a few days.

What should my kitten eat?

It is best to stick with the food your kitten has been eating in his previous home. If you want to change to another brand, do so gradually so you don't cause a tummy upset. It isn't necessary to give your kitten cow's milk and in fact may cause a tummy upset. Instead, provide your kitten with a bowl of clean, fresh tap water. Water should be changed daily.

Settling your kitten in:

Your kitten may be unsettled for a few days and miss her mum and littermates. So it is up to you to help ease the kitten's transition into your new home. Once your new kitten arrives home, confine your kitten to one room with a litter tray, food, water and a comfortable bed and give him/her some time to become familiar with their surroundings. Cats are fastidiously clean animals and it is necessary to make sure the food and water bowls need to be kept as far away from the litter tray as possible. After a few days and when the kitten is well settled, you can gradually increase the area your kitten can explore.

Some ways to make the kitten settle in quicker include:

- Put a ticking clock in the kitten's bed.
- Give the kitten a hot water bottle. Make sure it isn't too hot, and wrap it in a blanket.
- Your kitten may be reluctant to eat, you can encourage it to take food by slightly warming it in the microwave. Make sure before you give the warmed food to the kitten that you give it a stir to ensure there are no hot spots in the food.
- Introducing the kitten to other pets: Let your new kitten settle in before you attempt to introduce it to other pets you have. The introduction needs to be slow and at the animal's pace. Some pets will become

firm friends almost immediately, however it is common for resident pets to be upset at the arrival of a new pet for weeks or even months. This is completely normal behaviour and needs to be met with sensitivity and understanding. The worst thing you can do is rush the situation.

Children:

As with introducing pets, introducing your new kitten to children needs to be done slowly and carefully. Let the kitten settle in before you introduce it to children. If your children are young, never leave them unattended with the kitten. Ensure you teach your children how to properly handle a kitten and provide the kitten with a safe place it can retreat to should it need to get away. Explain to your children that kittens and cats should never be disturbed if they are sleeping or eating.

Vaccinations:

All kittens will require vaccinations at the ages of 8 weeks and 12 weeks. This applies to cats living in Australia, please check with your own veterinarian for information on vaccinations in your area.

Desexing:

If your kitten has been adopted from a breeder or a shelter there is a high chance that it will have already been desexed prior to you bringing it home. If this isn't the case then it is up to you to ensure the kitten is desexed. It is best to speak to your own veterinarian to see when he/she recommends desexing of your kitten - 6 months of age is considered correct. But please bear do ensure your kitten is desexed, not only are there health benefits to the animal but socially it is the responsible thing to do.

Parasites:

Your kitten should have been wormed prior to you adopting him/her, a proper worming regime is something which will need to be maintained throughout your cat's life. There are many excellent products on the market to make worming so much easier, these include topical medications which are applied to the back of the cat's neck. If fleas are a problem in your area then you will also need to ensure you maintain a proper flea regime. Your veterinarian will be able to advise you on parasites and medications for your cat.

Veterinarian:

It is always a good idea to take your kitten your own veterinarian in the first week at home with you for a check-up. This will be a great opportunity to have your cat's health properly checked and discuss vaccinations, desexing and feeding.



Cesar walks us through the process of bringing a new dog or puppy home for the first time.

Homeward Bound: Meeting Your Human Pack

You've located the perfect dog with the right energy for your family and lifestyle. You've researched the breed, decided you can handle any special needs, and have everyone in the household ready to take on the role of Pack Leader. You go through the adoption process, including microchipping and spaying or neutering, and today is the big day — time to bring home your new dog.

This is the point in the process when many people make the biggest mistake, frequently out of excitement over having a new family member. They drive home, bring the dog out of the car and to the front door, throw the door open, take off the leash, and let the dog loose to explore her new home . . . and the poor dog has no idea what's going on or where she is. It may look like she's excitedly investigating as she runs from room to room, sniffing everywhere, but she isn't. You've just thrown her into a completely alien environment with no direction, and these early associations are going to stick. The place is unfamiliar, it smells different, and there doesn't seem to be any way out. If you have previously had pets in the house, it will smell like them, and your new dog will be uncertain about invading someone else's territory.

So let's back up from the front door and back to the car, and back to the shelter. Before you even bring the dog to the car, take her on an energetic walk. This will help use up the pent-up energy from being in the shelter. Once you are in the car, stop a few blocks from home and take your dog on another walk, this time to your doorstep. This allows her to get used to the smells and sights of the new neighbourhood, and to begin to feel confident about being there. She will also get to know you and your energy, and you will begin to establish trust.

Finally, when you arrive home, it's not time to let your new dog go bounding inside yet. Lead her to whichever door you enter through, and then make her sit, waiting until she shows calm, submissive energy. When you open the door, you and the family must enter first. Only then, invite your new dog in, but keep her on the lead for now — and make sure that everyone practices "No Touch, No Talk, No Eye Contact."

The idea is that you slowly introduce your new dog to her new place, one room at a time, and you should begin with the room where she will find her food and water, making her wait until you have gone through the door and invited her in. Have her sit while you get her food and water ready. After she has eaten, she should be even more relaxed. Now you can give her the tour of the rest of the house, avoiding rooms you do not want her to enter.

As with that first room, make her wait at the threshold to every room until you invite her in. Keeping her on the lead, let her sniff and explore each new place before leading her to the next. What you are doing with this process is telling the dog, "This is my territory. I own it, but I am allowing you in." It will help build your dog's respect for what is yours from the beginning.

Once you have completed the tour, it will be time for your new dog to meet each of the human members of the pack, one at a time. Let her smell them first, and don't allow anyone to show affection until the new dog comes to them. Pack leaders do not go to their followers; their followers come to them.

Read more: <http://www.cesarsway.com/dog-training/the-basics/Book-Excerpt-Bringing-Your-New-Dog-Home#ixzz2npDyBuw1>

Puppy's First Night At Home

If you've raised a puppy before then you probably know this is where the real fun begins.

The first few nights at home may be difficult for both you and your pup. At night the puppy will feel lonely and will probably demonstrate this by whining (Oh, you betcha!). These are a few things that you can do that might make the puppy feel at home.

Your puppy's sleeping quarters should be in a small crate. – I had a large crate with a partition and put a blanket over it to make it seem more cosy. Keep the crate in a draft free area next to your bed. For approximately the first three weeks, if your puppy cries, take him out, on leash to relieving area. After relieving put him back into his crate. Do not give him any treats or any play time. Put him right back into his crate and he should go back to sleep.

Give the puppy a stuffed dog toy to snuggle with – I was told to bring a toy with me to GDA when we met the litter and get each of Stetson's littermates scent on the toy. Then when it was time to crate Stetson for the first night he could snuggle with the toy and smell his littermates scent.

Under no circumstances take the puppy to bed with you. This will form a very undesirable habit - trust me... it's difficult to avoid doing when your puppy is whining all night, but it's very important to leave him in his crate.

Puppy's First Feeding

This will be your puppy's first meal by himself. Once your puppy's food is prepared, you will start having your puppy sit and wait for his food. Hold your puppy by his collar by slipping your thumb in his collar and set his food about two feet away. As soon as he stops wiggling, say the words "O.K." and release your puppy. This should be done at every meal throughout training.



We need to be concerned about more than just temperature. The aquarium water chemistry is just as important as the temperature when it comes to acclimating fish.

Don't be afraid to ask the fish clerk for store's tank pH, ammonia, nitrite and nitrate readings. When you get home, test your own water to see how much the two sets of results differ. This can provide you with some insight into how slowly and for how long you should acclimate your fish.

There are a few different recommended methods for how to acclimate fish to your aquarium and we'll talk about each of these methods.

The most common tropical fish acclimation methods are:

The Floating Bag Method

This is probably the most common fish acclimation method and it works well. You just need to be careful when floating a bag full of unknown water in your tank.

After you leave the fish store you will want to go straight home to avoid ammonia accumulating in the bag (in the form of fish waste). Once you get home, open the top of the bag and remove about 25% of the water from the bag. Replace this water with the same amount of water from your tank. Float the bag in your tank and bring down the hood opening on the open end of the bag to help keep the bag secure. Every 10 minutes add about 1 measuring cup (use less if the bag is smaller) of your tank water to the bag. Repeat this process for about an hour. After an hour has passed use a small net to get the fish out of the bag and gently place the fish into your tank. The main idea here is to slowly get the fish used to your tank water (acclimated). Do not dump the bag water into your tank! If you do, you risk exposing your tank to any parasites or diseases that were in the dealer's tanks.

Some fish may be difficult to net while in the bag and you don't want to damage the fish while trying to net them. If you're having difficulty netting the fish, get a large bowl (large salad bowl works well) and carefully pour the bag water into the net, allowing the bowl to catch the water. You could bypass the bowl altogether and do it over a sink but make sure that the drain plug is in place just in case you miss the fish with the net. By slowly adding small amounts of water from the tank we are slowly acclimating the fish.

The Bucket Method

This fish acclimation method is basically the same as the floating bag method, but instead of floating the bag in the tank you're putting the bag inside a clean bucket instead. The bucket method is better than the floating bag method because you don't have to worry about any of the bag water entering your tank. Open the top of the bag and remove about 25% of the water from the bag. Replace this water with the same amount of water from your tank. Every 10 minutes add about 1 measuring cup of water to the bag. Repeat this process for about an hour. After an hour has passed use a small net to get the fish out of the bag and gently place the fish into your tank.

Acclimating new fish to your aquarium is a critical step and should not be taken lightly. Getting into the habit of using proper acclimation methods is a good way to ensure your long-term success in this wonderful hobby!



BEARDED DRAGON

Relocation Stress

Some Bearded Dragons go through something called relocation stress. This is when the Bearded Dragon is moved to a new place, or sometimes just when something in the tank is changed, and the Bearded Dragon reacts by going off his food, not being as active, and being generally less chipper. This doesn't happen for some Bearded Dragons, but in most it does. It can last from a couple of days up to two weeks. If your Bearded Dragon is going through relocation stress, keep the handling to the minimum and be patient. Before you know it they'll adjust and be back to their normal selves.