

# Moving with a dog... Ask a Trainer

By Nan Arthur, CDBC, CPDT, KPACTP

Dear Trainer,

We are moving to a new home in the next couple of weeks and wondered how to introduce my dog to the new house? Any suggestions to make it easier for him would be wonderful. My dog is 3-years-old and has lived in our old house since he was a puppy.

Signed,

*Moving on Up*

Dear Moving,

Congratulations on your new home, but I don't envy you the actual moving part. Moving is considered one of the greatest stressors for humans, right up there with divorce and death in the family, so that is your first consideration for your dog. If it's stressful for the humans involved, it will have an impact on the dog as well!

## ***Start now***

To help your dog with the transition start now to make things easier for him. Begin with keeping his regular routine as normal as possible as you begin to pack things. If you are finding that difficult to do, consider a dog walker or ask friends or family members to take your dog on some field trips to get him out of the mix of things while you concentrate on getting things ready.

With all the in and out foot-traffic of a move, your dog many have extra chances to escape, and you will want him to be covered with identification. Make sure you have your dog's tags up to date with an identification tag that has a cell phone if your new phone number is going to be different from your current phone, or your service is going to be delayed. Also, be sure to update any microchip information, or if your dog is not microchipped, now would be a good time.

As moving day gets closer, make arrangements to take your dog to the new house. Take some of his favorite toys along and play with him in the new yard, and let him explore around the house so he gets a sense of his new digs. This will help him build a positive association with the new place before the actual move. This will also give you the opportunity to check out the fence to make sure everything is secure to avoid any surprises after you move.

While you are checking on the fence, also take time look for things a dog could climb on to get over a fence, as well as loose screens on the house, or other areas where a dog might escape. Keep in mind that your dog knows your old neighborhood and would likely come home if he got out, but in your new neighborhood, he won't know where to go if he escapes.

## ***Moving day***

Many dogs are lost on moving day since doors are often left open with everyone focused on getting things into trucks and such. This would be a good day for your dog to be

confined in a room with a sign on the door that says, “Do not open.” If you do use a room, be sure to leave toys, chews and water for your dog, and set a timer so you remember to check on him every hour or so since, he is likely to need to urinate more with the added stress of the change in routine.

Some people arrange for their dogs to go to a boarding kennel during the move, and others park their dogs with friends or relatives to ease the stress of moving and trying to keep an eye on their dog at the same time.

If your dog is the nervous type, you may want to talk to your veterinarian about a sedative or look into some of the natural herb treatments that are designed for stress to help take the edge off during the actual move.

### *After the move*

Yahoo, the moving part is done, but there is still that unpacking to do. Make it a priority to unpack all of your dog’s favorite things first so you can get him settled in right away. Try to place all of his personal items, such as water bowls, beds, toys and such in locations similar to his old set up. Remember, you can’t explain being in a new place to your dog and he will be more readily comforted if his routine resumes as quickly as possible.

While you are still in the unpacking stage, be sure to watch out for potential hazards in boxes or things left around before you get to putting them away. Chemicals, plants, or things that might be dangerous for your dog to chew should be kept out of your dog’s reach. Also, be sure that stacked boxes won’t be knocked over if your dog bumps into or puts his paws on them to see what might be in there.

Finally, one of the major complaints of people that have just moved is housetraining, or the lack thereof. Even if your dog was perfectly housetrained at your old place, in your new home he may not get it figured out right away. Approach this as if he is not housetrained and take him out to his potty area on a schedule of every hour for the first day or two. Be sure to go out with him so you can praise and reward when he gets it right, and if he has an accident, just ignore it and vow to take him out more often.

Good luck and I hope you and your dog enjoy your new home.

Nan Arthur, CDBC, CPDT, KPACTP  
[www.wholedogtraining.com](http://www.wholedogtraining.com)