

ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE of BOSTON



A champion for animals

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Welcome A New Pet During the Holidays? *Animal Rescue League of Boston Offers Tips and Resources for Families*

* Photos of adorable animals currently and previously in ARL care can be found in this [Dropbox link](#).

At a time when many families are welcoming new pets into their homes, Animal Rescue League of Boston (ARL) shares expert resources and advice about settling furry family members into a new environment. Resources include ARL's [Pet Behavior Helpline](#) – a free service that can answer basic pet behavioral questions. Whether it's excessive barking, crate training, house soiling, or another issue, pet families with questions can call the Pet Behavior Helpline at (617) 226-5666 or via email behaviorhelpline@arlboston.org.

"It's very special to welcome a new family member to the household, especially during the holiday season. These first few weeks as a family are very important and ARL is here with the resources and guidance to make the experience positive and joyful for pets and their new families," says ARL Animal Behavior Manager, Laney Nee.

Tips for early days with dogs and cats

- Have a 'safe space' for your new pet set up and ready for them – somewhere they can call their own that may contain their special toys, bedding, scratching trees for cats or a crate for dogs – this space helps them get comfortable

- Less is more when introducing your pet to their new life, so be aware of all the new things your pet is experiencing and recognize when they might be overwhelmed and need a break
- Go back to basics with house training for dogs and provide easy access to food, water and litterboxes for cats until they get used to their new spaces

Tips for daily routines

- Create a routine for you and your new pet right from the beginning
- Change can be overwhelming so creating a routine for your new dog is a key to success. The routine should have set times for potty breaks, meals, walks, playtime, and independent time in their own space with special toys and treats which get put away till the next time they are back in their safe space.
- A routine can help ensure your new cat has the opportunity to follow their instincts which includes their need to hunt, catch, eat, groom, and sleep. There are many ways to accomplish this with many homemade items such as boxes, egg cartons, paper bags, toilet paper and paper towel rolls for treat puzzles.

Tips for relationship building

- Get active
 - Sniffari walks– let your dog stop and sniff!
 - Explore a new neighborhood – the usual neighborhood walks can get boring and routine – consider walking or driving to a different neighborhood to explore
 - Two toy fetch – alternate tossing two toys to your dog while walking

Keep them engaged

- Use a snuffle mat or wrap some treats up in a towel and let dogs use their nose to snuffle around and find all the food, or make a “licky mat” with canned food, peanut butter or cream cheese – smear it on a lick mat and they can spend time licking it until it’s all gone
- Enroll in dog training classes and teach your dog new skills, ARL has a variety of offerings at our Dedham Campus, visit arl.boston/dog-training to learn more
- Interactive play for cats can be done with wand teaser cat toys, chasing little play mice or balls with bells or make a small investment for automated toys that move if the cat walks past them or interacts with them

Helpful Videos

- “Name Game for Dogs” — incorporate this game into your routine to create a bond and help your new dog respond quickly when you say their name. Visit arl.boston/dog-name-game to watch a demonstration
- “Greeting Exercise” — practice this with family and friends so your dog can learn to greet people and other dogs politely. Visit arl.boston/dog-greeting-exercise to learn more

At ARL, we believe that positive reinforcement, reward-based training methods are the best course of action, especially when teaching dogs new things or desensitizing fearful dogs to new experiences.

More digital resources, including new dog and new cat guides, are available at ARL’s website.

ABOUT THE ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE OF BOSTON:

Pets are family. This belief is at the heart of everything we do at the Animal Rescue League of Boston.

ARL is the first female-founded animal welfare organization in Massachusetts and is proud to carry on a legacy of kindness and compassion, helping more than 20,000 animals annually since 1899. Recognized for innovative, award-winning programs that go beyond sheltering, ARL addresses the root causes of the issues facing animals and the people who love them. By partnering with communities, ARL helps animals heal and thrive, keeps pets and people together, and protects animals from harm. Because there is no government funding for this important work, animals must rely on people like you to get the care they need, when they need it most, 365 days a year. For more information, visit arlboston.org and follow ARL on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).