

De- Compression

Hi ya,

It's wonderful of you to look to the shelter when searching for a dog to add to your family.

This is not just charity blurb, it is the truth, you are setting your first footstep on the experience of a lifetime by adopting a lifelong devoted friend, your dog!!

Shelter's and humane societies are overflowing with perfectly healthy and awesome dog's which desperately need good homes where they can live out their lives. The fact that you have decided to go there first instead of buying a dog from a breeder or on-line is truly compassionate and wonderful.

But all that greatness could be meaningless if you do not do your homework first.

I'm not even talking about general dog stuff like behavior and training. There is something even more important that you must be aware of, be cognizant of, and be prepared to implement the moment you take that dog from the shelter.

SHELTERS ARE NOT FUN PLACES

If you have ever walked through the kennels of an animal shelter you surely can attest to the stress of the experience. !

They can be very very loud.

You will be amazed by the barking, howling and yelping. The sound can be deafening at times and if you are not used to it or it is your first time, it can cause a heavy dose of anxiety to rise up your bones and make you want to turn around and walk out.

Now realize that **YOU CAN** turn around and walk out. **Those dogs can't.** They are there all day, all night, all week and all month. It shouldn't take too much thought to realize this isn't the ideal setting for any dog. SCAN is a no kill Charity we keep our dogs until we find the right new home for them, some dogs can be there for months on end.

The longer they are in there the worse the mental trauma can be.

While some dogs will completely shut down others seem to amplify their stress by developing numerous anxiety based behaviors that border on neurotic. While the observable behaviors might be different, the source is the same, stress from being in **there**.

Recognizing that this type of experience can have an impact on a dog's state of mind, it baffles me how people think that simply putting a leash on the dog and taking it home means everything is suddenly going to be O.K. As if anything is that simple!

Many of these dogs end up back at shelters for a wide variety of reasons, including aggression, because their well intentioned new family did not take the time to research the proper way to bring a dog from this type of environment home, nor did the Shelter take time to explain stress properly. When the dog starts acting in inappropriate ways or even worse, everybody is quick to blame the dog's "troubled past".

It's not the dog's past, it is the dog's present which needs addressing.

The first day in a new home is not the day to meet extended family members, loud and energetic toddlers, other dogs, the cats, super " helpful " neighbor who wants to give your new dog hugs and kisses....

NO.....NOT AT ALL.....

DECOMPRESSION

If you consider that a diver who has descended to a great depth cannot expect to **immediately** rise from the dark depths, and the intense pressure on their bodies and break straight through into the bright sunlight and welcoming hands , they cannot, they have to undergo a regime of De-Compression, slowly, disciplined and probably boring.

Your dog needs to De-Compress.

The name is indicative of the controlled love and affection your dog needs to be given to successfully eliminate the physical and psychological pressure and stress he or she has been through ,and, to give the continuity and security they need, this is what needs to be addressed. The dog has been under a lot of stress and pressure bring them to normality slowly, this may take 2 to 3 weeks or a week there are no norms such as on a de-compression table, you have to know, understand AND MONITOR YOUR DOG, AND, IF NEED BE, ASK FOR HELP AND GUIDANCE.

SCAN is here for you

The dog needs to get back to a balanced state of mind. This will not be achieved with going from one crazy high activity place to another.

The dog **should not for instance be immediately** introduced to the couch for endless hours of belly rubs on day one because you feel bad the dog may have had a rough past.

That makes YOU feel good.

This isn't about you and what you like, this is about what is best for the dog

For at the first few weeks, your new dog's life should be incredibly simple and boring. Keep the affection constant



A nice calm and quiet beginning is essential

but not over the top, keep talking, and training to essential levels through routine.

You want as much tranquility, calm and love as possible.

Have a daily routine or schedule 100% planned out prior to the dog coming home. This should be the dog's day mapped out. From bathroom breaks, to crate time, to short walks in quiet boring places, the entire day should be on a schedule.

Dog's find exponentially more comfort in routine than they do belly rubs and cuddles. For that reason, keep the affection to a routine of praise and praise hugs.. This is not the time to shower the dog with OTT affection as all that will do is reinforce an unbalanced state of mind and confuse the dog, the dog needs to understand a **YOUR** role in their lives.

The premise behind decompression is allowing the dog to get back to a neutral and relaxed state of mind, the opposite of what it just came from.

Your dog needs leadership and calm predictability.

These are the things that are crucial to the dog becoming appropriately integrated into your home. Allowing the dog time to decompress without having to deal with a whole new set of intense stimuli, doing this will help set you all up for a successful future.

RESOURCES

I just gave you the summary and basic idea of what decompression is and why you should implement it. There is already a TON of material out there explaining the steps and the specifics so I chose not to reinvent the wheel but rather get it.

If you invest 20 minutes of your time educating yourself on what is best for the dog, then you will understand the gift that is indeed sharing your life with you.