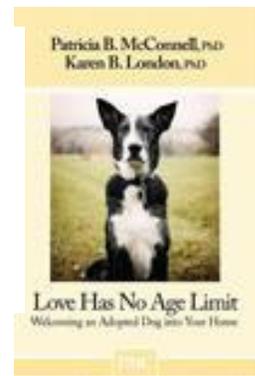


An excerpt from

## ***Love Has No Age Limit – Welcoming an Adopted Dog into Your Home Coming Home: The first Day***

by Patricia B. McConnell, PhD & Karen B. London, Distributed by Dogwise Publishing  
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### **What to do first?**

You're home, now what? Before you do anything else, take your dog outside on leash right away and let her sniff around. Even if you have a securely fenced yard, we suggest keeping her on leash, making sure it's attached *before* you let her out of the car. "Secure" fences often aren't as secure as you think, and if you have a slightly shy dog she may be hard to call back to you or to bring into the house. Please take this caution about keeping a new dog on leash seriously; an escaped dog is one of the most common problems that people experience with adopted dogs. Remember, almost all young puppies will automatically stay close to you, but most dogs over the age of five or six months are going to be far more independent. You can avoid a lot of stress and heartbreak this important difference between puppies and older dogs.

### **House Training 101**

Besides making friends, house training is "job one" right now. The first few hours and days can make all the difference between this going smoothly or turning into a problem. For now, act as though you just brought home a puppy who has no idea where the bathroom is, because in a sense, you did. Grown dogs may be potty trained in one house, but not in another. Make no assumptions, no matter what anyone has told you, and start off right away teaching your dog the location of the bathroom.

If you're reading this before you've brought her into the house, take your dog outside where you want her to potty and walk around with her. She may not go—often dogs who are feeling a tad anxious won't—but that's okay, you gave it a try and can take her out again soon. Once inside, don't let her run around the house by herself. Take a page from puppy training books, and ensure that she is always 1) in clear view inside, 2) in a crate or other small area or 3) outside with you. That way you'll avoid a quick "mistake" that can lead to a bad habit of sneaking away and relieving herself in the guest room. Things usually go best if you introduce her to just a few rooms at a time. Close off the little-used guest room or basement, and keep her in the rooms where you spend the most time. Gradually allow her access to other areas of the house, but only when you are confident she has learned to potty outside.

Take her out often, at least every thirty minutes or so, and don't wait for her to "tell" you she has to go potty. It's your job to get her outside to the right place, don't leave that burden on her shoulders. Besides, she might have been telling you in dog language for 20 minutes, but you think she's coming up to get petted. (If dogs could write books, they'd put this in bold, capital letters.) If you take her out and she doesn't go, be prepared for her to trot inside and want to go on the living room carpet. Frustrating though it may be, this is

extremely common. Just develop the habit of watching her carefully, taking her out long before she needs to go, and being patient when you take her outside.

When she does potty outside, be ready to reinforce her with treats. Keep some handy beside the back door that you can grab on the way out, or in your pocket so that you can give her a treat immediately after she eliminates. Don't wait to give her a cookie when you're heading back inside together—that's reinforcing her for leaving the yard, not going potty in it. You're better off casually following her around, saying "good!" as soon as she finishes, and immediately giving her treat. Some dogs are resistant to eliminating when they are on the leash, so be patient and persistent. We like to put eliminating outside on cue. ("Get Busy" is a common cue, though "Hurry Up" is appropriate during winter in northern climates!) Establishing a cue will help you later on when you're late for work and you need to get her out one more time before you leave.

### **Oops, Somebody Had an Accident**

If (when?) you catch her having an accident in the house, don't yell or rub her nose in it. That will at best confuse her and more likely alarm her so that the lesson she learns is either "Never urinate or defecate in front of a person," or "I need to be careful. This person is a little crazy." Take this advise seriously; we've known a multitude of dogs who would hold off urinating outside while beside their owners, wait until they could get back into the house and find some privacy, and relieve themselves on the bedroom carpet. If you see her start to go in the house, distract her with hand claps or "Uh Oh!" and immediately take her outside, giving lots of praise and treats for going outside. If you find a puddle or pile after the fact, say nothing to her, roll up a newspaper, and hit yourself on the head with it for not taking her out earlier. Put her in another room, and clean it up with a good enzymatic cleaner designed for the purpose (avoid strong household cleaners because they can set the stain or the smell permanently,) and ponder what you might be able to do to prevent it from happening again.

**Patricia B. McConnell, Ph.D. and Karen B. London, Ph.D.** are Certified Applied Animal Behaviorists and professional dog trainers who specialize in evaluating and treating serious behavioral problems in domestic dogs. They are both Adjunct Professors as well as nationally and internationally respected ethologists who combine the best of science and practical experience to improve the lives of their favorite species, people and dogs. As behaviorists and dog lovers, they have extensive experience bringing adolescent and older dogs into new homes, including their own.