Under Socialized Dog

Shy dogs are a **HIGH FLIGHT RISK**. Some under socialized dogs are easily startled and can be masterful escape artists or lightning fast opportunists when given the chance to bolt out an open gate or garage door. When they go missing, it's often difficult to recover them.

- Perform all initial leash training inside a securely fenced area. Don't let the dog off the leash until you're certain he can't escape.
- Periodically check your fence/gates for holes, loose slats or malfunctioning latches, especially after strong winds. If your fence has a gate accessible to the public, consider installing a locking mechanism to prevent passersby from opening the gate.
- Set up an exercise pen or baby gate at all exterior doors that lead to unfenced areas.
- Use a martingale collar/leash system. We suggest using a well-fitted cinching harness as well, with a safety clip attached to the collar as a backup.
- If you bring your dog outside a securely fenced area, even if you carry them, keep them on a leash at all times.
- Secure your dog in a crate or doggie seatbelt when riding in a car.
- Keep a collar and personalized ID tag on your pet and up to date microchip information
- Bring your dog into an enclosed room or crate your dog initially when guests or other visitors may be coming in and out of your home.
- Don't get complacent. While your dog may act calm one minute, they can bolt the next.
- Discuss fears and strategies with your entire family, and even friends and neighbors, so that everyone in your circle is committed to keeping your new family member safe. Teach them about the likelihood of running away and to keep gates latched and doors closed.

- DO NOT CHASE: When you first bring your dog home, he/she may be fearful of your approach. Chasing the dog will increase its fear. Until your dog becomes comfortable in your home, you can leave a lightweight leash ("drag line") on when supervised. With the leash attached, you catch the dog by grabbing the leash as he goes by without apparent chasing. Do not drag the dog toward you, simply keep the leash taut as you approach. Talk softly and have high value treats in hand!
- EATING: Some of these dogs might feel more comfortable eating alone or at night. It may take time for your new dog to feel comfortable enough to eat around other animals or people. Hand feeding high value food may help them become more comfortable.
- HANDLING: When we see a frightened animal, our first inclination is to pick it up and comfort it. This can be very frightening for an under socialized dog who has rarely been picked up or held. Instead, move slowly and calmly, using a quiet voice. Squat or sit on the floor, getting on your dogs' level. Ideally, encourage the dog to come to you. If he/she is food motivated, using high value food treats (baked chicken, cheese bits, meat treats) is very useful in building trust. When you must pick the dog up, go slowly, using one hand under the belly, the other under the chest. Hold them close to your body so they feel secure. Gentle, consistent handling pays off. Many dogs will learn to love attention and return the love tenfold!
- HOUSETRAINING: Some fearful or under socialized dogs may not be housetrained. Surprisingly, many learn rather quickly. A housetrained sibling dog is a great teacher!
- UNDER SOCIALIZATION: While adjusting to home life, some dogs will avoid you or even hide at first. All the sights and sounds inside a home are new to these dogs, so many of them are scary. Do not overexpose them to crowds of people or public activities too soon. Use positive reinforcement (food treats, gentle talk) to mark behaviors when the dog exhibits curiosity or interest in engaging with you. The greatest gift you can give an under socialized dog is your patience and understanding!