



Advice if you are Adopting a Blind Dog

Your dog's blindness is much harder on you than it is for him/her! Eye sight ranks third in importance compared to smell and hearing to your dog.

Dogs pick up easily on our own feelings. Even though you are feeling sad for your dog, try to talk to him often in a "cheery voice" and try not to "baby" your baby!

If you have other pets at home you can get bells at any craft store that can be added to the collar of other pets so your blind dog can easily tell where they are.

Having a "home base" is helpful as they learn to "map" out the house and garden. Bed, crate, or food bowl makes a good "home base" and if he/she becomes confused can start out again at home base.

Leave a TV or radio playing softly near the pet's bed (or wherever they spend the most time when you are gone) the sound is soothing.

If your dog uses a crate use a bungee to hold the door in place. This way your dog doesn't need to worry that the door may only be partially open.

If you have a small dog, avoid picking him/her up to "help" them get to food or other areas. They need to learn on their own, and actually become *very* confused when picked up and set down.

Your dog will learn to "map" home and garden in its mind when ready, but you can also put dog on a short lead and encourage to walk around room to room, and around garden using treats if needed.

If your dog hesitates learning to "map" the house, get down on all 4's with him, as this is fun for pup and you can slap door, floor, and furniture with your key word for warning a obstacle is in it pathway.

Check the garden look for low growing branches etc that could poke the dog in the eye & trim them back.

If you have young children have them put on a blindfold and crawl around so they can *see* that things are different for their new friend.

Start teaching your dog help words like "Stop" - "Step up" - "Step down" - "Easy" - "Careful" - "Danger" - "Right" - "Left" etc.

Hearing your voice is very soothing, so talk to you blind dog often. Let him know when you are walking out of a room etc. Even just some "silly chatter" is enjoyable to a blind dog.

Remember to speak to your dog when you are approaching to touch (especially while sleeping) to prevent startling him/her.

It's best to walk you dog on a harness. You will have more control if the dog pulls, with less stress to the neck & eyes.

If you've always enjoyed moving your furniture around now would be a good time to pick your "favourite" layout and keep things in the same location for your blind dog. Keep floors clear!

Use a baby gate screen to block stairs until your dog has mastered them.

Carpet sample squares are cheap and while your dog is learning the layout of the house put carpet squares in the doorways going into each room to make it easier to find the door openings. Place a carpet mat at both top and bottom of stairs so the dog knows when it's at the top or bottom of the stairs. Teach stairs by placing a "treat" on every step or two. Stand in front of dog, holding collar or harness, and gently encourage (without pulling), practice until he is able to go up and down smoothly.

Plastic place mats placed under the food and water bowls will help your dog "feel" when they are right up close to the bowls.

A carpet "runner" down a hallway can make a great "runway" for playing ball indoors. A ball with a bell inside is great fun for a blind dog and your dog will know that as long as he is on the "runway" it is safe to go full blast! Latex toys also work great for fetch the squeaker is a plus for fun, but the latex toys have a unique sound when they hit the ground, and most bounce several times... giving dog extra time to find them.

A wind chime near the back door can be helpful to your dog in getting headed back to this door after going outside. Door mats at all outside door entrances are also very helpful.

There are a number of companies that make pet water fountains that make it easier for your dog to "hear" the water running when they want to drink . This is not a necessity just a suggestion!

Socialisation is **so** important especially for blind puppies and dogs. Visit parks & other places where your dog can socialise! When your dog is out socialising, let people know that he is blind so they don't reach out to pet unexpectedly.

Try to have something familiar to the dog -- toy, blanket, bed, etc. -- for comfort when going to a strange new place.