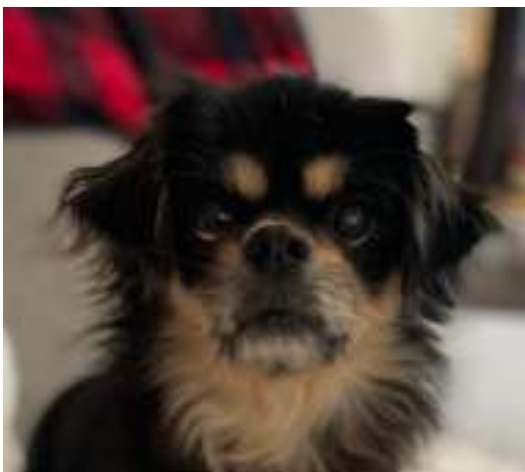




## WELCOMING YOUR NEW TIBETAN SPANIEL

We hope you're as excited as we are for you to welcome your new Tibbie into your home. This is a great opportunity for a sweet dog to have a wonderful life full of love, happiness, adventures and security and for you to gain a new, wondrous family member. This information is important for helping your new family member adjust. Often, we don't know much about the background of Tibbies that come into our care – such as those from shelters or hoarding situations – but most rescue dogs come with some kind of “baggage.” It's important that you be patient in dealing with your new best friend.

### Traveling



We require a crate for traveling in a car when taking your new Tibbie home for the first time and recommend it always when traveling in the car. Tibbies are known escape artists, and they will be with you – a stranger or strange family – for the first time. They likely will be confused and stressed. A crate will help minimize stress by giving them a secure place to be. It also will prevent them from getting loose when you open the car door. When you get home, we highly recommend taking the crate into your home or another closed, secure area before letting the dog out. If you can't do that, then be sure that you have a death grip on their leash and that the leash is securely attached to their harness before letting them out. This may sound like overkill, but we prefer to take all precautions to ensure that everyone stays safe.

### Exploring the Home

At first, they may be scared, confused, and possibly skittish. They may want to stay away from you and possibly any other animals in your home. Please don't take this personally – it's not you; it's their lack of worldly

experience. Please don't try to force them to interact with you or other pets you may have. *The quickest way to help them feel comfortable is to let them adjust at their own pace.*

Let them explore as much of your home and yard as you're comfortable with them doing, but try not to hover – we know, it's hard with a new pup in the house! It's best to leave a leash and harness on them in case they burrow into someplace inaccessible to escape. Having a leash to move them is easier (and less likely to result in your potentially getting nipped) than trying to grab them with your hands, which can scare them. Also, having placed many Tibbies in new homes, we know that they will find ways to escape if at all possible. A long leash will be your friend when allowing them to explore your yard. Dogs are experts at finding new and unusual ways to get out of yards. Again, this isn't personal; it's their nature.



## Interacting

*Keep periods when you engage with them brief, but have many, many, many of them every day.* Again, keep contact to a minimum; as they get more comfortable with you, you will be able to touch, brush, pet, hug, etc., for longer periods. But please let those periods come as your dog is comfortable with them. At first, just let them be in the same room or area as you. Toss a treat on the floor/ground when they come near. The softer and yummiest the treat, the better. They may ignore it at first, but keep trying. Let them learn that you are not a threat and that you won't force them to do anything scary. Please avoid head pats – most dogs don't care for them, and scared dogs really don't like them. Butt scratches, chest rubs and, if you just can't avoid that cute, round head, stroking with the flat of your hand are all better.

## Feeding



Help them learn that you are a wonderful, trustworthy and fun person by hand-feeding them. Let them take food from your hands, which they may not do at first, or place the food on the floor for them after letting them watch you prepare it. If you feed at regular mealtimes and don't leave the food out forever, they will eventually (within a couple of days) start eating it. At that point, knowing that the food came from you will help them trust you.

If they don't want to eat, try putting down a very small amount of food and leaving it down for 10-20 minutes five or six (or more) times a day. Don't hover over the food! Just put it down and walk away so they can eat without worrying whether you're going to snatch it back. If they don't eat, pick it up and try again later. They will eventually eat, and then you can progress to offering it from your hand.

## Training

We advise letting them use your yard as a bathroom until they are comfortable with you. We recommend keeping a long line on when they are in the yard, as mentioned above. They are amazingly good at finding places to escape or at trying to go over a wall if you have anything stacked near it. If you try to walk them on a leash, they may be scared because they may now be used to leash walking. If leash walking is the only option, be sure they are secure in a harness and start with short walks at first. We recommend a harness so their necks/tracheas aren't hurt if they pull.

All of that said, exposure to many things, places and people is important. However, with adult dogs, you must take things more slowly than you would with a young puppy. Until they gain confidence, avoid scary situations such as strange dogs jumping at them unexpectedly, vehicles driving by with sirens wailing, and strangers swooping down on them. **Please, please, no dog parks!** It's too hard to control the environment at those, and it likely would be overwhelming.

When it comes to training, **please do not** use harsh/punishing methods like hitting; rubbing noses in messes; yelling; or shock, choke or prong collars. In general, Tibbies are very sensitive and will respond best to positive reinforcement methods. Positive training does take time, but it's the difference between having a child who is eager to try new things because they love being praised for doing the right thing and a child who is scared to do anything because they might get punished. Worse, the latter leads to aggression as the dog becomes more and more scared. If you need a catch phrase to help, it's this: **DO NO HARM.**



We recommend these training materials:

**Pat Miller:** [peaceablepaws.com](http://peaceablepaws.com)

Books, all available on her site: "The Power of Positive Dog Training," "Do Over Dogs; Give Your Dog a Second Chance for a First Class Life," "Positive Perspectives 2."

**Victoria Stillwell:** [positively.com](http://positively.com)

Book, available on her site: "Train Your Dog Positively." Also, she has a myriad of videos that show you how to train the right way.

We do not recommend Cesar Milan's training methods. They are based on punishment and force, not on the science of behavior. Although he appears successful on his show, remember that shows are edited to avoid showing what didn't work. With sensitive dogs like these, Milan's method will end up backfiring on you.

Think about it this way: You are basically starting from scratch. If you let them acclimate slowly and always help them to be confident and feel safe, you'll have years and years of wonderful companionship.

I have been studying, training and helping improve the behavior of dogs, attending seminars, teaching classes and individuals, and studying the science of behavior and how dogs think, act and react for 25 years. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or help with any issues.

These are the best ways to reach me.

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I can't always answer phone calls. If anything needs to be handled quickly, I am more likely to see your communication one of these ways. However, if you call but I don't answer, leave a voice mail and then text to tell me you left a message.

-- Maryanne Dell