



## **The Reality of the 3-3-3 Rule**

The 3-3-3 rule—allowing newly adopted dogs three days to decompress, three weeks to adjust to a routine, and three months to feel at home—is well-intentioned but not always accurate. For many dogs, particularly those from mills or shelters, the adjustment period can take significantly longer. Some may need closer to two months just to begin decompressing.

### ***Why Does This Matter?***

- Setting realistic expectations for adopted dogs is key to ensuring their long-term success in their new homes. Understanding that each dog adjusts at its own pace helps create a supportive environment.

### ***What Can Two Months of Decompression Look Like?***

- **Keep Their World Small**– Limit introductions to new people, pets, or environments. Allow them to feel secure in your home first. If guests visit, provide a safe retreat space.
- **Forget About Formal Obedience (for Now)** – Your dog doesn't need to sit for food or to go outside. Instead, focus on reinforcing positive behaviors naturally as they appear. Training can come later.
- **Encourage Natural Dog Behavior** – Provide opportunities to sniff, chew, lick, and explore at their own pace. Let them take in their surroundings without pressure.
- **Build a Connection Gradually**– Even if it's just sitting nearby and speaking softly, let your dog become familiar with you on their terms.

### ***The Bottom Line: Go Slower Than You Think***

There is no set timeline for when a dog will feel safe and settled. Take it slow—slower than you think—and allow them the time they need to truly feel at home.