



The Intuitive Connection

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Providing a Safe Environment for Your Pets

Recently, our family adopted a new puppy from the local animal shelter. We already had Montezuma, a 7 year old shepherd/husky mix. However, we wanted another dog for him to interact with. Since Monte isn't so great with older dogs, we thought bringing home a puppy would be the perfect solution.

Enter Shilo, a 2 1/2 month old vizsla, pit bull, terrier, we're still not sure, mix of a puppy. It's been a long time since any of us had a puppy, and boy did we forget some crucial things that come along with that. Things like biting, whining, potty training (or lack thereof), biting, energy, eating everything, did I mention biting? Not only that, the introduction between him and Monte wasn't perfect, and is still, at times, a work in progress. So in hindsight, there are things that we could have done to be better prepared before bringing home baby.

Let's take a look at some tips that the experts recommend you do before bringing home that new fur bundle of joy.

- **Adequate shelter:** Whether they will be indoors or outdoors, make sure that you have an appropriate place for them to remain dry and comfortable. Outdoor pets need shelter, or someplace where they can escape the sun, wind, rain, or other elements. Animals need a place to stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer. If it's cold/hot outside for you, it is for them too. If the animal will remain indoors, there are still shelter needs that create a safe space just for them, whether it be crate, kennel, cage, room, or bed.
- **Boundaries:** If they will be going outdoors, make sure you have adequate fencing or some type of safe space for them to roam. If they are going to be indoors, you still want to create some boundaries for them so you don't end up with chewed up furniture, plants or rugs that you have to replace (not to mention those things aren't healthy for them to eat). This is one area that we originally "failed" at. We have a large yard/area for the dogs, with a 5 foot no climb fence separating them from our horses. However, we didn't take into account that Shilo was very small, and he squeezed under the fence into the horse area on more than one occasion. Luckily the horses were busy eating so they never came face to face. We have since put up the equivalent of "baby gates" and he can no longer "play" with our 1000 pound horses.
- **Environmental Hazards:** There are many potential hazards to look out for whether your animal is indoors, outdoors, or both. Some things to be alert for are:
 - **Empty containers:** Throw away those used bags, boxes and plastic bins in a place your pet can't reach.

- **Plants/Flowers:** There are many varieties of plants that are poisonous to your pets, so do some research, and remove them. Even if the plant isn't poisonous it can still pose a danger. We have 2 pine trees in our backyard and Shilo is always picking up the pinecones and chewing them. While pinecones themselves are not poisonous, they could pose a threat if he swallows a large enough piece that can't safely pass through his system.
- **Insects:** While many are not harmful, there are several that could make your pet sick or worse. I've never looked up so many insects in my life as I have since we adopted Shilo. He puts everything into his mouth. Besides having to remove any black widows (which was a no brainer), we have tarantulas (not toxic, but painful if bitten), tarantula wasps (extremely painful if stung), beetles, crickets, and the latest, a brightly colored caterpillar, which I caught him gagging on after he put it in his mouth. Luckily, it was not a toxic one, but Shilo is very quick to find new bugs and mouth them before I can even see what he is getting into. It's worth the piece of mind to do some research and know what insects are common in your area.
- **Wild animals:** We live out in the country, so we also have to be careful of rattlesnakes and coyotes. But there are other creatures that we have to watch out for too, such as owls, skunks, scorpions, and frogs. Again, do some research so you know what wild animals live in your area and take precautions if needed.
- **Human medications:** Some human medicines can be fatal to your pets, so make sure they are out of reach, even if they are in a bottle.
- **Human Foods:** While most food is safe, there are a few that can be toxic to your pet.
 - For dogs avoid: Garlic, grapes, raisins, chocolate, onions, nuts, mushrooms, avocado, persimmons, peaches, plums, raw eggs, raw meat/fish, salt, sugary foods, yeast dough, baking powder, baking soda, dairy products, alcohol, anything containing xylitol, anything with caffeine, fat trimmings, and bones.
 - For cats avoid: Green tomatoes, raw green potatoes, chocolate, grapes, raisins, sultanas, currants, avocado, alcohol, onions, garlic, chives, meat trimmings, raw eggs, anything with caffeine, anything with xylitol, milk, cooked bones, salt, and yeast dough.
- **Toxic chemicals:** It may be obvious to avoid things such as rat poison, bleach, cleaning products, fertilizer, insecticides, solvents and antifreeze, but there might be other products in your house that you just wouldn't think of as toxic. For example, potpourri, scented candles, and the latest in room deodorizers could affect your pet. Even essential oils, if they are not certified therapeutic grade pure could be hazardous, or if the dosage they receive is too high for their small bodies to handle. Other toxins to avoid includes cigarettes, nicotine patches, and chewing tobacco. You even have to be careful about the flea/tick products that you use, especially those sold at your local market.
- **Toys:** Make sure that the toys you provide are safe and don't have items that can break off and be swallowed. Even the toughest toys should be monitored carefully. We buy the "tuffy" toys for our pets, and both of my dogs have a way of chewing on the same spot over and over until it wears out. Then it becomes a fun game to remove the stuffing and or squeaky that was inside.

- **Food/Treats:** Just like people food, not all pet foods and treats are created equal. Many use low quality products, fillers, binders, dyes and other things your animal was never meant to eat. Rawhide chews are especially dangerous. If you haven't watched the video on how these treats are made, it is eye opening and downright scary. Do your research, read labels, and be careful of where the food/treat comes from. Unfortunately many products from China or other countries are filled with things that are not safe for your pet, or possibly contain contaminants. Here are some websites you can check out to help you make an informed decision:

<https://www.dogfoodadvisor.com>

<http://petfoodtalk.com/catfoodreviews/>

- **Electronics/Cords:** Make sure to put up your electronics and/or cords, including securing or covering cords that can't be put away. This is a very real threat. So far, Shilo has managed to chew through 2 cords (luckily they were not plugged in at the time), and he even pulled the remote control off of the table, chewed the back off and chewed on the batteries. The sad part is that we were home when most of these instances occurred. He is so fast, that all you have to do is turn your back and 2 seconds later tragedy can happen.

Bottom line, we have had to "puppy" proof our house including closing all doors, cabinets, drawers, putting things up high, and leaving nothing out for Shilo to get a hold of. At his age, animal communication isn't quite working, as he is just a puppy with no concept/knowledge of the rules. But the joy that he brings far outweighs the inconvenience of having to pick up shoes or close some doors. Shilo makes us laugh on a daily basis, and my big dog is happier. Every morning, afternoon, and evening, we get the pleasure of watching a WWE match between the two dogs as they play, wrestle, flip, and run around like crazy. Not to mention it keeps us moving as we chase after a lunatic puppy who runs away with yet another shoe he has managed to get a hold of. The communication and knowledge will come with time, I just have to be patient. My new crazy life, but I wouldn't have it any other way.



Shilo



Shilo and Monte

Upcoming Events

Healing Arts Festival

Scottish Rite Masonic Center
6151 H Street
Sacramento, CA
September 22nd and 23rd
10:00—6:00
10:00—5:00



Trinity Healing

STACEY
FERRELL

Prescott Valley, AZ
Phone: 707-631-0052

E-mail:

contact@trinityhealingconnection.com

Website:

www.trinityhealingconnection.com

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*For your convenience, services can be scheduled
in person or remotely*

Referrals

Needing a service I don't provide? I recommend the following:

Anne Angelheart

Transformational Coach, Channeler, Author & Speaker

Website: www.anneangelheart.com

Email: info@anneangelheart.com

530-755-4767

Kris Tondee

Psychic Reader

Website: readingsbykristondee.com

916-605-9091