

# **ADJUSTMENT PERIOD FOR MY TIBETAN MASTIFF**

As you researched Tibetan Mastiffs you probably heard from experienced Tibetan Mastiff owners and breeders that Tibetan Mastiffs are different than most other dog breeds.

## **Believe them.**

It takes some TMs a long period of time to adjust to any change. **The adjustment to your home is not going to occur immediately. It may not happen in two weeks and probably not even in two months.**

You may see some immediate or very quick adjustment in some areas, but other areas will be slower. This slowness to adapt to change is one of the characteristics that make them the supreme natural guardians and devoted companions.

This article has been prepared to help you understand your TM's character traits, what he might be experiencing, what you might expect and how you can help.

## **TM CHARACTER TRAITS AND WHAT THEY MIGHT BE EXPERIENCING**

Here is a list of these characteristics to help you understand what your TM may be experiencing and what you might expect.

***TMs bond very closely to their humans, their pack and their territory.  
TMs are sensitive to change.***

You have adopted a dog with an unknown history. She may have developed a close bond with the people or other animals in her former life. She also bonded with the territory she lived in. Your new dog is feeling displaced and abandoned. She does not understand why she is not with her former humans and her animal friends.

Your new dog does not know you or your house and she is confused.

Your new dog may "shut down". He may lie around, drool, and look somewhat "frozen". This is because he is overwhelmed.

### ***TMs are aloof with strangers.***

TMs tend to be aloof with people they do not know. They do not wag their tails and jump up and down to greet strangers. They may sniff, tolerate a pet or two and then they usually ignore the person.

You are a stranger to your new companion. It will take some time and work on your part to help them trust you and for them to truly interact with you.

Do not expect this to happen quickly. Pretend that your new dog is a feral cat you are trying to tame.

### ***TMs are watchful***

TMs watch everything, everything, and everything. This can sometimes be overwhelming to them, especially if they have not had a lot of *socialization* to different places.

*Socialization* is more than introducing your dog to people. It is helping your dog cope with objects and situations that are new to her so she can come out of those experiences with confidence.

You will be *socializing* your new companion to your home and routine.

Your TM may “shut down” or may react with fear to new objects and situations (remember everything is new).

### ***TMs are barkers, especially at night***

TMs have hundreds and hundreds of years behind them serving as guardians of flocks and people and possessions. They bark at noises, people and movements they perceive to be a possible threat. They announce, “I am here! Don’t come near!” Especially as the sun is going down and when it is dark. Your TM may bark at night, even in the house. Remember this is all new to her.

When (not if) your TM barks, investigate. Ask, “What is it?” then go find out. If there is no sign of anything out of the ordinary, reassure the dog of that fact. “It’s okay. Thank you.” If the dog persists in barking, do not assume that this is just “recreational” barking. Remember that the dog’s senses are sharper than yours. Listen to the tone of the barking. If it sounds as if the dog is sincerely upset about something, investigate further. You’ll learn to recognize the different types of barks: “I’m bored”, “I just want your attention”, “I need to go out and pee”, and “OMG there’s a bear in the yard!” Your TM needs to be able to trust that you will react appropriately to real warnings – and that you will see through attempts to manipulate you...

### ***TMs can have issues about food***

If they are stressed they may not eat. They may not eat unless they are alone. They may not eat unless you are there. They may not eat if other animals are around. Your TM may not eat without some help and consideration.

### ***TMs can be chewers, especially if they are anxious.***

Wood, plastic, paper, small electronics. Nothing is safe. Your TM may opportunistically chew on things to relieve anxiety, much like some people chew their nails to relieve stress. She is not doing this because she is mad at you and trying to get back at you. She is trying to relieve her anxiety. Provide something appropriate to chew.

## **WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOUR NEW COMPANION ADJUST**

### ***Make a plan for introducing your new companion to his new home.***

If possible plan to visit your new dog at her current home a few times before you take her home.

Plan to bring her home at a time when you can be at home with her for a few days.

Have everything you need ready for him and a plan for a routine for you and your new dog.

### ***Be kind, quiet and gentle with your new dog. SMILE and talk to him/her in a pleasing voice tone.***

### ***Make a safe retreat place for your TM***

If your TM comes to you crate trained, have a crate ready for him before he comes to your home. Put this in an area that will be quiet, but where your new companion can observe what is going on. If needed you can use a sheet to cover the back part of the crate (not the front, let him see out).



We recommend a wire type crate. An average size TM requires a 48 inch crate. Large TMs require a giant breed crate.

If you do not know if your new dog is crate trained, assume he is not. Find a place where you can put a mat that would help your TM establish his “safe” area. A crate can be introduced later.

DO NOT let children, animals or others bother your TM in his safe spot or crate.

### ***Establish a routine***

Start right away with getting your TM used to your routine. Even if you are staying home for a few days with your TM before you are leaving the house for work and other errands, get up at your normal time, feed him at the time you have planned, feed him in the same area you have planned, go outside at the same times and go to bed at the same time. Talk to your new dog, time to eat, time to go out and so on. He will watch you and for your signals about what is about to happen and will quickly learn the routine. Staying in a routine will help him adjust.

### ***Avoid having “company”***

Until your TM is used to you and you get to know him avoid having a lot of visitors. After your dog has settled a bit, then you can start to introduce him to friends and family members that visit frequently. You may want to make sure your TM is comfortable with a crate before you have visitors, because you may need to crate him during the time visitors are at your home.

### ***Take your new companion out on a leash***

In the beginning, even if it is just out in the yard, take your TM out on a leash or a long line so the two of you can get to know each other better. This will ensure you will not be chasing your TM around the yard when it is time to come, which may seriously compromise the trust you are trying to build. As your TM begins to trust you, you can start to let her loose in a securely fenced yard.

### ***Introductions to other animals in the home.***

If you are introducing your new companion to other canines in the home, it is suggested they meet in an area that is not familiar to either one of them. Preferably a spacious area outside that is enclosed with a fence.

We suggest you review the recommendations of dog trainers and behaviorists about introducing new animals into the home. Here are some links to suggestions. There are others on the internet.

<http://bestfriends.org/resources/introducing-dogs-each-other>

[http://heartforanimals.org/introducing\\_new\\_cat.php3#cats\\_dogs](http://heartforanimals.org/introducing_new_cat.php3#cats_dogs)

**Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or for suggestions. I am willing to help anyone who has adopted a TM from a shelter.**

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