

## DOMINO'S JOURNAL

### A Fearful First Week In America

#### DAY ONE

Transition from the Islands to USA

Sunday Evening At Home, Day One For Domino:



By the time we arrived home with our new two year-old, male "potcake," Domino it was fairly late and all three of us were exhausted. For Domino it had been his first ride in any motorized vehicle and he had spent over 9 hours in a crate aboard a Cessna 337 at ten thousand feet above sea level. He had landed at three different airports and only got out once for a walk and some water before arriving at his final destination, Daytona Beach, FL. After such a grueling day it was no time to introduce our dogs to Domino and visa versa so Paul called Jake and Kate (our resident dogs) into the house while I let Domino out of the car and

took him for a walk around the yard then fed him a light meal. He was very timid and did not want to drink water but he did eat. Our new dog did not try to mark any territory in fact he didn't pee or poop at all. I wondered if he was afraid of marking another dog's territory. Because it was going to be around forty-five degrees this night I moved the animal carrier into the house by the door and put a reluctant Domino inside. I'm sure he wasn't thrilled about being in a cage for several more hours but we needed to keep him contained in the house not knowing what he might do on his own. As a rule our dogs are only allowed in certain parts of the house under supervision at best of times.

#### DAY TWO

First Full Day in New Home

We kept the dogs separated until after breakfast and then introduced them on leashes inside the yard today. We first let Kate, our eight year old, female, mixed breed and Domino meet and then Jack, a very hyper, male, Australian Shepard who started whining. Domino barred his teeth to his new hosts but was not aggressive. Paul and I took the two males on three walks together, one inside our property and two along the sidewalk outside. Domino seemed really scared and did not want to walk close to Jack. Jack is but so far Jack has not nipped or growled except when Domino barred his teeth and started a little tumble...Domino really has some teeth and looks very intimidating when showing them so guess he might want to be the dominant male here...not sure...we fed them treats together when we walked them and even let them free together briefly for a short supervised time... When Domino was not on a leash with me he was tied in front with plenty of rope but he spent most of the day in his crate overlooking the property with Kate supervising. He growled at her when she got close to him but did not bite. About 2100 hrs I put Domino on a leash and boy was he happy to be leaving

the property. His treat was a late walk out side our compound just before bedtime. He definitely got a chance to get rid of all that food and water stored up in his system before bed. This time he was happy to crawl inside his little cave for bed.

### DAY THREE

#### Still Tense

Our two dogs were fed in the back of the house and Domino in front as he is a bit slow and I didn't want the other dogs to steal his food. Right after breakfast Paul and I walked Domino and Jack out around the neighborhood. They both seemed fine as long as one human was between them but Domino kept a close eye on Jack and constantly looked around to see if anyone was coming up behind him. During our promenade I scooped up some of Domino's droppings along the way. After the walk I deposited Domino droppings in the yard and we took the dogs to our



second story back deck and let the three of them hang out together while I did paperwork at the dining table. All three dogs laid down in separate places and seemed watch each other out of the corners of their eyes. Jack, our Australian Shepard continued to whine as usual when he is tense. The phone rang so I went inside to answer and after a few minutes I looked outside to see Domino heading for the front of the house, Jack in tow..I called to Jack and he returned. Then I I went to the front of the house to get Domino and coax him back.

When all three were on the deck again Jack and Kate walked briskly towards Domino at which point he barred his teeth and I feared a three way tumble. I yelled "STOP" and all three briefly halted but before I could approach, Domino was gone.



After about two hours hiding in his box on the front porch I thought It was time for another encounter. Paul and I walked the two male dogs and then led them back to an area Paul calls "dog country," a screened in porch attached to Paul's work space where he could supervise. Jack continued to whine and remained near Paul, Domino went to farthest corner. I fed them some treats and they seemed a bit more relaxed and got closer but after I left they both curled up at opposite ends where they remained for a few hours.

I let the dogs out of "dog country" and led them around near the pool deck without a leash. They seemed to mingle fine when I was around or in between and I could see jack and Kate occasionally stealing quick sniffs of their new pack

member. After about ten minutes I felt that they had had enough of each other so I walked back to the front with the three of them following. I settled into a wooden deck chair near Domino's carrier. To see what they might do. Jack sat at my feet and whined, Kate curled up on the carpet by the door (her usual spot) and Domino crawled back into his carrier, facing outwards. When Jack got close Domino growled and barred his teeth but the episode was not as dramatic as on previous occasions.

It was time to go out for the evening so I put Domino and Jack each on a leash on opposite ends of the house. When I returned I put a leash on Domino and strolled towards our gate, he joined me at a brisk pace able to see the reprieve that awaited him beyond the compound gates. Jack spent the night locked in dog country and Domino was placed in his carrier inside as the cool temperatures persisted. Kate, in her old age had a room reserved in a special place near our kitchen.

At this point I was beginning to worry that we might not be able to integrate the dogs into a family. Domino was still very scared and the growling worried both Paul & I. We weren't sure who would end up getting hurt if a fight broke out.

#### DAY FOUR

##### Progress

One thing I noticed about Jack (our resident male) was that he knew Domino was getting attention and he did not want to be left out for even one second. Jack remained in constant vigilance for any signs of Paul or I exiting our home to sit with his new competition... We did not want Jack to feel threatened or ignored so he Domino and Kate got equal attention. This was tiring but we felt necessary... They also got more treats when the three were together in stressful situations.



Domino still had to be coaxed with a hearty pull on his leash into the back yard where Jack spent most of his time. I could tell that he was afraid because he often looked around, front, back and sides as if something would jump out of the bushes and get him..and well, I couldn't rule out that possibility as Jack was pretty hyper and did sometimes do that to Kate as a game.

Right after breakfast Paul and I took the dogs for another walk around the neighborhood together and noticed that they could walk side by side without any signs of fear or aggression. After the walk we took them home and removed the leashes. They both followed us around the yard to the river, then we took them for a walk along the dock (on leashes) and back to the yard again. Kate followed without a leash and seemed very cool about the whole deal. The three dogs remained on the porch until we went inside..then Domino high-tailed it back to his box in the front.

#### DAY FIVE

##### Breakthrough

This is the day that we had been waiting for. I got up early, let Domino out of his carrier. Jack bounded from around the corner and appeared at my side along with Domino. Together we walked to the front gate to retrieve the paper. Both dogs pranced and frolicked...even getting close enough to touch noses and bump into the other...no growling at all. I let the two males follow me into the back yard which they did and began to walk around the yard a bit...then back to the deck where Kate was there waiting. The dogs remained together unsupervised on the deck while I cooked and served Breakfast on the. Paul had to remind our dogs to keep away from the table and began teaching Domino the same.

After Breakfast I fed all dogs in the same area but not in the same room. I wanted Domino to have an escape plan if necessary but they could see each other and I supervised. There was no growling or stealing. When all food was eaten I asked the dogs to follow me around the yard and they happily complied for about fifteen minutes. Then we returned to the deck and I went inside.



I felt that Domino trusted me enough now to bathe so he got a quick bath with baby shampoo as he was sticky and dirty feeling when we petted him. He wasn't thrilled but tolerated the whole deal just fine. I think he especially liked being rubbed vigorously with the towel afterwards. He dried quickly as he is short haired, and we do live in Florida, so it's not that cold outside.

Yvonne, my good friend showed up to help me walk the dogs and to become acquainted with Domino as she will be caring for all three next time we go out of town. Our other two dogs love Yvonne and Domino took to her immediately. As he tucked his head under her hand he even smiled, something I'd seen him do several times already other folks, including me. I noticed that he would make a sneer with his teeth barred that appeared threatening but his prancing, nuzzling and tail wagging suggested otherwise.

We exited through the side gate for our walk as we will begin training Domino not to go beyond the front gate when cars enter or exit. The other dogs are already trained to do likewise.



For the rest of the day Domino hung out on the back deck with the other dogs unsupervised. While watching them from inside the house I did notice Domino snarl once or twice at Jack when Jack tried to get between him and the sliding door. During the day both dogs got close, Jack even jumped up on Domino without any negative response while I was with them.

For the first time ever since he arrived Paul and I

decided to take a scooter ride left all dogs alone and untied. All three escorted us to the gate and looked longingly at us as we departed. We found Domino well and happy waiting in his crate and the other two on the back deck when we arrived home. Domino joined the other on the back deck as I cooked dinner where he remained until sometime during the night. At some point as we slept he returned to his doggie home by the front door.

## DAY SIX

It's looking good for Domino

I thought Paul was being a bit optimistic when he said we'd give Domino a week to adjust but looks like Domino heard and understood. I found him in his crate this morning but he quickly climbed out with a smile as he pranced and danced all around me. Jack joined in and the two frolicked a bit with me and together as I collected the paper. I went inside briefly and then came out again. Jack had already gone to the back but Domino was still in front. I tried to coax him without a leash to follow me but he seemed fearful again..looking around and not following. Since there was a bit of sprinkler action in the area he feared to go I had him follow me in the other which worked fine. Guess he had never seen sprinklers before.

All three dogs were fed in dog country with my supervision and so far no fights or growls.

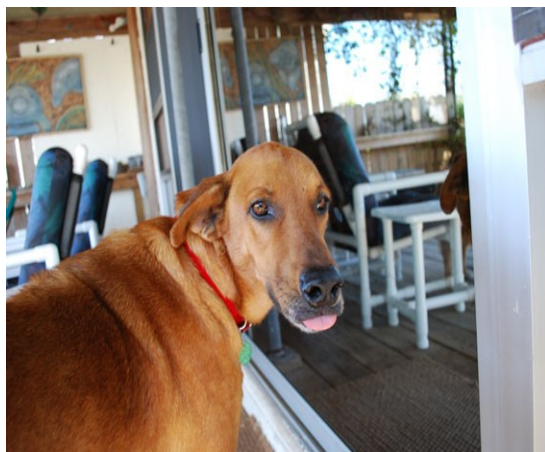
As the day progressed I noticed a few things about Domino. He would sleep at the top of the deck stairs overlooking the yard. On a few occasions I found him staring down Jack who stood at the bottom of the stairs and visa versa. I also caught him giving a warning bark to Kate and Jack when he couldn't see me on the other side of the sliding doors.

## DAY SEVEN

Island habits

Domino hates to walk in grass, especially wet grass. guess because they don't have it where he comes from. He will walk on the squishy green turf when he needs to go to the bathroom because he has no choice at our place.

Domino seems to have adjusted nicely. He still doesn't hang out too much with Jack but he doesn't seem afraid either and doesn't growl when Jack jumps on him during a frolic at least when I'm around. I took him for a truck ride twice but Domino still doesn't like it much although he will get in when I lower the gate and coax him into the back...then give him a treat (I cut up some hot-dogs into small piece and microwaved them till they were dried out). I had to take Jack on the second ride because he showed up as I was coaxing Domino and I didn't want any jealousy (I once had a jealous German Shepard that killed my calf).



We are also teaching Domino to sit for treats and he is a quick learner. He kept sitting in different locations on the deck as he followed me, even after the lesson...till my bag-o-goodies was almost empty! Good luck with your new rescue dog. *Mary Lightfine*

