

All
About
Dogs



Choosing the Right Dog

If your couch and your heart have seemed a little empty lately, maybe it's time to get a new four-legged friend. Owning a dog is a big commitment, and there are many considerations to keep in mind.

SPACE

Dogs need room to roam, run, eat and sleep. Scale your dog appropriately to your space. If you live in a tiny apartment, a Great Dane might not be the best choice. Also bear in mind energy levels. A border collie or other high-energy breed won't do well cooped up all day and may resort to destructive behavior to keep entertained.

BUDGET

Some dogs are more high-maintenance than others. Dogs with certain coats need regular trips to the groomers, for instance, and other dogs may need a special diet or more veterinary attention than others. The ASPCA offers some great tips for budget-friendly dog ownership, like scheduling routine vet care and keeping those appointments, brushing your dog's teeth, grooming your dog at home and buying quality pet food.

LIFESTYLE

If you're on the road a lot, keep in mind how your road-warrior schedule could affect your dog. While places like airlines and hotels are becoming more pet-conscious and pet friendly, you need to consider the needs of your dog. Dogs are intensely social creatures; they don't appreciate being locked away from you all day. If you're an active and



fill your days with running and hiking, pick a dog with a high energy level as your trail buddy. Likewise, if you're more into Netflix and chill, choose a dog that prefers lounging to a 5K.

FAMILY

Before choosing a dog, consider who

else already lives with you. Do you have young children? Cats? Other pets? Everyone needs to be on board with adding a new pet to the household. If you have other animals, consider how they'll interact with a new friend and research how best to introduce them. Talk to your vet or to a local pet store for

tips and products that can help.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Research local laws and rules about pet ownership and make sure you can abide by them. These may include leash laws, registration, breed regulations and vaccinations.

Adopting a New Dog

About 6 million companion animals end up in shelters every year, according to the ASPCA, and more than 1 million are euthanized for lack of a home. You can make a difference by adopting your new dog from your local shelter.

SHELTER DOGS

You can find purebred dogs in a shelter, but most of the animals available there are likely to be mixed breed pups. Don't hold that against them! There are many benefits to owning a mixed breed, like avoiding many of the health problems that can plague purebred dogs.

HEALTH

Many people think shelter dogs are less healthy than those from a breeder, but, in fact, the opposite is true. Adoptable dogs often have their first rounds of health care covered by the shelter, including spay/neuter surgeries and vaccinations. The shelter staff will also have a good idea of your new friend's personality and any quirks you will need to be aware of, like an



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over-fondness of cats.

TAKING HOME A MATURE PET

Sure, puppies are cute with their wide eyes and playful attitudes, but shelters are also brimming with older dogs that would make a great addition to

your home. Often times, these dogs also come housebroken, leash trained, kennel trained and with their vaccinations out of the way. And that adage that you can't teach an old dog new tricks? Not so. Visit a local pet shop for tips and tricks on how to teach a dog of any age how

to behave in your home.

QUESTIONS

The Humane Society recommends asking the shelter staff plenty of questions, both about your potential new pet and about the adoption process. These questions include:

- What is the animal's background and history?
- What medical and behavioral assessments has the animal had?
- What's the timeline of the adoption process?
- How should I treat any post-adoption illnesses?

What to Look for in a Breeder

Adopting a pet is a great idea, but if your family prefers purchasing a dog to adoption, here's are some tips for finding the best breeder from the American Kennel Club.

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

There are two types of breeders: hobby breeders and professional breeders. Hobby breeders may have an additional full-time job and won't always have puppies available. Either type is fine; just make sure you find a breeder that you're comfortable with and that is knowledgeable about the breed.

MAKE A VISIT

Visit the breeder's home or kennels. Make sure the animals and the grounds are clean and there's no odor. Note how the animals behave toward the breeder. Are they eager to see him? Do they shy away from her? Animals should be lively, engaged and well-fed. Eyes, noses and coats should be clear, clean and shiny. While you're there, ask to see at least one of a puppy's parents. This will give you a good idea of your dog's temperament and size.

GET THE PAPERS

A reputable breeder should



be able to provide you with health paperwork, pedigrees and a contract for your new puppy on the spot. Reluctance to show any of these or failure to provide a

contract stipulating conditions for care or return of the puppy should be a red flag.

Never accept an offer to send papers or certifications later.

AFTER THE SALE

A good breeder won't let the puppy leave its mother until at least 12 weeks of age. This is necessary for good health and proper socializa-

tion.

Once your puppy is home, a good breeder should be happy to be a great breed and behavior resource for the duration of your dog's life.

Get the Essentials

So you now have a new four-legged friend. What else do you need? Keep reading.

FEEDING

Choose a high-quality dog food that's appropriate to your dog's life stage. Don't feed a dog from your plate; while dog food may not look good to us, it's nutritionally balanced for them. Follow the guidelines for feeding on your dog food's label. You'll also need bowls for food and water. Some dogs may benefit from raised bowls to help them eat and drink. Always provide fresh water for your pup, especially if it's hot outside.

INSIDE GEAR

Your dog will also need a comfortable bed that's appropriate for his size. This is a space just for him where he can feel safe and secure. Some dogs prefer a flat bed while others like the comfort of a tunnel or cover. Take your dog to the pet store and rely on the expertise of the staff there to find what you need.

A kennel, like a bed, can be a safe space for your pet to seek refuge. If you're planning on kenneling your dog while you're gone or at night, train him properly and never use it as a punishment. Teach him a command to enter the crate and lay down. Kennels should



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be big enough to hold your dog comfortably and not force them into a certain position the whole time they are in there. If you're going to be leaving your dog in there for a long period, add a water bottle and make sure it's kept fresh.

You'll also need some toys.

If you've got a puppy or an adult dog that likes to chew, pick toys that can take the abuse. High-energy breeds may also benefit from puzzle toys that dispense a treat. Other dogs like a lovey or a soft toy they can cuddle with. It's all up to your pooch's personality.

OUTSIDE GEAR

Your dog should wear a collar with tags on it that have his name and a way to reach you should he become lost. Depending on local laws, you may also have to have a tag with his rabies vaccination displayed. You'll also need a leash and, depending on your

dog, a harness or other form of lead. Your local pet store can help you pick one out.

If your dog is going to stay outside at any point, you need to provide adequate shelter, food and water. Choose a dog house that's a good size and put it in a spot that isn't too wet.



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Dog Ownership and Your Health

Aside from being a great friend, your dog can also bring you lots of great health benefits.

“I’m a believer in the beneficial effects of having a pet, and I’m impressed with the ability of dogs in particular to form bonds with human beings,” Dr. Greg Fricchione, director

of the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine, told Harvard Health Publishing. “I think the science is starting to support their special ability to do that.”

HEALTH BENEFITS

Dogs give their owners lots of love and companionship, and those may be the most obvious benefits of ownership, Harvard says. There’s also the activity benefits of getting out and

about with your pup, and the social benefits of talking to people you meet along the way.

HEALTH RISKS

Dog ownership may also come with some risks, especially for older people who have balance or gait issues and have a dog underfoot. People can also be allergic to dog dander and some people, particularly those with compromised immune systems, can get

sick from the parasites and bacteria dogs bring along with them.

FAMILY BENEFITS

Having a dog can also teach your children quite a bit about responsibility, love and caring.

Let your children help care for the dog by feeding it, helping with bathing and brushing, or, if they’re able, help walk the dog and clean up after it.

Dog Etiquette

Dogs are highly attuned to our body language and paying a little more attention to theirs can make a big difference. Here are some tips for how to keep interactions with your dog and with others positive.

SAY HELLO

When you first approach a new dog, make sure you use a non-threatening posture. Don't lean directly over the dog, the Connecticut Humane Society says, and stay out of its face. Keep your voice low and calm and allow the dog to approach you and sniff you on its own terms. Remember to keep your touch light and gentle.

If you have your dog with you, let the dogs meet and greet each other on their own terms, but keep a close eye on body language. Raised hackles, bared teeth and stiff legs are all indications that the meeting could go south. Never force dogs together.

WITH GUESTS

If you're having guests in your home, make sure to tell them that you have a dog or dogs and what size they are. Don't let your dogs jump on guests and try to minimize barking. Instruct your guests



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on how to properly greet your dog. If he's fearful of men, say so, and help your dog and your guests be comfortable together.

If you're going to someone else's home, clear bringing your well-mannered pup with your

host. Never show up with a surprise canine, even if he's the best dog ever. Clean up after your dog and keep his interests in mind. If he doesn't like new places, maybe he's best left at home.

IN PUBLIC

Research and always obey local ordinances regarding dogs outside the home. Many places require dogs to be on a leash at all times and require you to pick up after them,

including any waste. Also, be respectful of others' boundaries and stick to the rules, even in open spaces, like a park. Some people are fearful of dogs and their intense emotion may spark an unexpected response.

Socializing Your Dog

Properly socializing your dog is critical to it becoming a beloved family member. With the right experience and good leadership, dogs are less likely to develop fear issues, aggression and may even save his life. Read on for tips on how to properly socialize your dog.

PUPPIES

Puppies undergo a critical period of development from 7 weeks to 4 months old. During this time, the experiences a puppy has help to form its personality. Socialization involves exposing your puppy to a variety of sights, sounds and people in a positive way to develop him into a happy, well-mannered dog.

OLDER DOGS

Just because you may have missed the window, don't fret. Old dogs can learn new tricks, too, but you may have to be more gentle and understanding during the process. Slowly introduce the dog to new sights, smells, sounds and people with careful supervision and a positive attitude -- and lots of treats and praise. Any aggression or intense fearfulness should be discussed with your veterinarian.

SOCIALIZATION TIPS

The AKC recommends introducing your dog to a variety of places and people, keeping the entire experience as positive as possible. Think of it, the club says, like a scavenger hunt. Introduce the dog to different surfaces, like grass, tile, wood and carpet. Find and have them interact with old people, young people, people in wheelchairs, as many different



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people as you can find and still keep the interactions positive.

While you're introducing your dog to all these new things, remember to keep

calm yourself. Your dog easily picks up on your own feelings, so stay upbeat and positive. When your pup does what you want, break out the treats and

praise. Keep the family involved and remember to go slow and take baby steps -- don't overwhelm him with too much at once.

Level up by taking your pup to dog or puppy obedience classes. Check with your vet or with local pet stores for recommendations.