



Adopting a Dog: Advice for New Pet Parents

Adopting a new dog or puppy can be one of life's most rewarding experiences because he will provide you with years of love and companionship. But before you decide to add a new puppy or dog to the family, you need to make sure you're ready – and able – to care for a pet:

- Are you ready to make a long-term commitment? Dogs typically live 10 to 15 years or longer. Consider the life changes you might experience during that time before you bring home a new dog. Your pets are depending on you, so be prepared to include them in your long-term life plans.
- How much time can you dedicate to your new dog? Be sure to assess your lifestyle — like how often you are home and how much free time you have — before adopting. Older dogs are recommended for busy families, while families who are home more often may thrive with new puppies that require a lot of attention.
- Are you financially able to provide for your dog's needs? Expenses will vary, but adopting a dog can add up. From initial adoption costs to veterinary visits, food and toys, ensure you can afford your dog's initial and long-term costs.

What kind of dog should I adopt?

One common mistake of new pet parents is to choose a dog based on his looks and not his personality. Consider your lifestyle and living arrangements then think about what dog personality would best fit your family – and remember, there are plenty of great dogs at your local shelter just waiting for the right home.

How do I find a shelter?

Visit PetFinder.com, where you can learn about adoptable dogs in your area.

When visiting the shelter, remember that dogs may act differently in a kennel than they would at home — after all, even the best shelter can't compete with a loving family. If you see a dog you're interested in, ask a staff member if you can go into a quiet place to spend some one-on-one time with the dog, allowing him to relax and show his true personality.

How do I make my new dog comfortable?

Bringing home a new dog can be an adjustment for you, your loved ones and your furry friend. For

dogs of any age, research has shown the following can help them adjust to their new home:

- Designate a dog-safe area equipped with a water dish, durable toys and a crate where he can get away when he becomes stressed.
- Talk with your children about how to treat your family's new dog, like doing their best not to overwhelm him.
- Let your new pet explore his surroundings, especially the important areas, like where you want him to potty.
- Adopting a puppy? Also read our [tips for bringing home a new puppy](#).

If your dog is exhibiting signs of stress, also consider trying an all-natural dog behavior solution like Comfort Zone® with D.A.P.®, a pheromone-based product shown to help calm your new dog — the safe and natural way. [Learn more about Comfort Zone® with D.A.P.® >>](#)

With a little planning and a lot of love, your new dog will thrive — so take your time, do your homework and adopt a great pet this year!

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