

Are You Ready for a Dog?



A dog will do his best to please you and keep you smiling. He will curl up with you when you are feeling down or need some serious relaxation. He won't hold your mistakes against you or prejudice you for your looks, faults or lack of know-how. He'll forgive you for all your mistakes, never holding them against you later. Sleeping at your feet and loving to please, he will enjoy just spending time with you. He'll do his best to protect you, because you will be his master.

However, a dog also relies on you for everything – from food, water, shelter, exercise and grooming to his companionship, training, veterinary care and protection. Know what you are getting into. Are you prepared to spend the next 10-15 years of your life taking care of your dog? That is about how long your dog will live. Can you afford the added expense of a dog? When you get a dog, it is a life-long commitment and should not be treated like a piece of furniture that you can just “get rid of” when you get tired of it. After all, this dog will be part of your family. Would you get rid of your children because you were tired of them wetting their beds? Before you bring a dog into your home, you must think long and hard about the decision you are about to make. Are you prepared for the responsibility?

The decision to get a dog needs to be carefully thought out. Do you honestly have the time to take care of a dog? What kind of dog should you get? Some people think a dog is a dog and don't care what breed of dog they get. There are many different breeds with many different personalities and needs. Honestly think about it and do your homework. Think about your family as it is right now, and how it will be in the future.

Every family has its own needs, schedule, personality, medical problems, space and time limitations. If you take a good hard look at your family's situation, you can match a dog that will fit into your lives nicely and not just make things more awkward and difficult.

Is anyone in your family allergic to dog hair? Are you bothered by hair on everything from your clothes to your toast? Some breeds are heavy shedders, while others hardly shed at all. Do you have children? Are you going to have children in the next 10-15 years? Do you have friends or relatives who visit your home that have children? Some dogs are excellent with children and would be their best friend. Some are only good with children when they are raised with them from puppyhood, while others are very sensitive and may bite a child if they are pestered by him or her. Do you mind holes being dug in your yard? Some dogs like to dig, while others are less likely to dig. Do you mind hearing a dog bark all the time? Some dogs love to bark and do it all the time, while others are more quiet, barking only when necessary. Some dogs will attack your cat, while others will be your cat's best friend. Do you have time to exercise your dog? Some dogs need daily vigorous exercise and you would need to take them out every day for a run or nice long walk, while others will get enough exercise simply by running around the inside of your house. Get the point? All breeds are different as all families are different. Find a dog that fits well into your family, so you and your dog can live in harmony. Having a dog can be the most rewarding thing you have ever done, or it can be your worst nightmare. It's your choice. Do your homework. Research the different types of breeds and take a long hard look at your life.

