

Do you Have What it Takes to Be a Responsible Pet Owner?

Responsible dog ownership is a serious lifelong commitment that requires time and close attention. Before you get a dog, be sure you are ready to commit to responsible dog ownership.

When adopting, you are making a commitment to care for an animal for the rest of his life—that could mean 10 to 15 years for dogs and up to 20 years for cats. As you go through lifestyle changes such as moves, the birth of children and new jobs, will your animal remain a permanent part of your life?

Can You Afford a Pet?

Owning a dog or cat costs more than the initial adoption fee. Food, veterinary care, spaying or neutering and proper identification—that means a collar with tags or a more permanent form of ID such as microchipping. These basic expenses can range from \$300-\$1300 per year depending on the size and breed of a dog. You will need to be diligent about flea control; if you're not, your dog can suffer hair loss, allergic reaction, and worms. You also risk infesting your house and family members as well.

Can Your Lifestyle Fit a Pet?

If you work very long hours or travel frequently, your lifestyle may not be appropriate for a pet. Consider whether or not you are willing to make adjustments to your lifestyle to accommodate a pet in your life. If not, now is probably not the right time to get a pet.

Do you have physical limitations?

A chronic health condition or injury can make it difficult to care for a dog - especially a larger breed. Be sure you have someone else who can help when necessary. What about dog or cat allergies? Allergies can seriously debilitate a person, often resulting in the choice to give up the dog or cat. If you or someone in your household has allergies, spend some time around these animals to see if the symptoms can be managed. It is simply unfair to give up a pet for this reason if it can be prevented.

Is Your Home Appropriate for a Pet?

While a fenced yard is not a requirement for owning a dog, it does help. Your dog needs a safe environment to go to the bathroom, whether in a fenced yard or on numerous leashed walks throughout the day, proper supervision is important. Companion animals look to us for protection. The safest place for your new pet is inside your house.

Did You Know...

For every human baby born in the United States, seven puppies and kittens are born. There is no way all of these animals will find homes

