

When to Get a Dog

The first question should always be, "What do I have to offer a dog?" Not just, "What will a dog do for me?" Unfortunately a lot of people get dogs for the wrong reason. So here are some questions to ask yourself and your family before getting a dog. You should give this a lot of thought before adding a dog to your family:

How much time do you have to spend with a dog?

Dogs are pack animals and they spend all had an night with each other. **You and your family will be their new pack.** Dogs need vet care at least once a year, if your dog is healthy. Dogs will need to be bathed. They also need to be brushed quite often depending on the breed.

Research your breed, use Internet or books in the library. Visit at least two breeders of the breed you would like. Consider a mixed breed or shelter dog. Dogs are mostly born good and taught bad. Consider house training for example, from start to finish it takes most dogs 6 months to a year to become house trained and that is if the dog is properly trained. Puppies need to be taken out every 20-40 minuets to start and schedule food and water on time, ideally 3 to 4 times a day.

Spend time **taking a training course** from an experienced trainer with multi-breed experience and at least 10 years in the field. Short sessions 2-3 times a day 5 minuets each is a good start. Puppies need to be introduced to lots of people, children, sounds, and smells at this critical time. They need toys to play with, things to chew on. Your furniture works quite nicely if you do not supply the chew things they need.

Most important is **dogs live 12 to 20 years**, they should have a loyal owner to hang with. The Bible says a good man cares for his animals, but even the kindness of a bad man is cruel. The reminds me of how I have heard, for over 30 years, how someone will comment how their dog has a large fenced in yard, a big dog house, and food and water. But, from the dog's point of view, they would say "I am so sad. I love my owner but he only comes to see me once a day and maybe he will throw a ball for me once a week. I have no one to be with, to touch, to play with for 23 hours a day by myself everyday." Please **don't do dogs a favor just to live alone outside**, or in, day after day. They are pack animals and they need a pack; they think and feel and get sick just as we do.

Many people bring home a dog thinking they will automatically behave. When the dog starts to act out, they are sold or given away again and shuffled from home to home. I'd say at least half are **sold or given away again and again** 3 or 4 times until they are fortunate enough to get a good man to take them and give them the attention they need. The end is good but most of these dogs go to the pound and are killed because there are no homes for them as **we are a throw-a-way people** and our dogs are the ones who suffer.

Dogs are wonderful animals and can give so much to a person and family and really **enrich our lives**, so please really think about all that is involved with bringing a dog home and **be prepared to give them the love they give us.**