

5 things to ask yourself before getting a puppy

Puppies are cute and snuggly – so full of joy. And it may be very tempting to choose to make a puppy your next family member. The truth is that puppies are a lot of work, and you shouldn't make the decision lightly.



Here are five questions to answer before bringing a puppy into your home:

1. **Do you have time for a puppy?** This is an extremely important question to ask yourself as puppies are time consuming. If you are gone for long periods of time, a young pup is not the best choice. Feeding, potty breaks and training sessions are all important for your baby's well being. This all takes time out of an already busy schedule. (A puppy should not be crated more than one hour X the puppy's age in months – e.g., 3 hours for a 3 month old puppy.)
2. **Can I afford a puppy?** It's a simple truth that all puppies cost money. When I hear the statement, "I got a free puppy", I cringe. There is no such thing as a free puppy! Puppies and all dogs need appropriate vet care, food, toys, and in a lot of cases you will have to pay a pet deposit. These are just a few of their basic needs and when you bring a new furry friend into our homes, you accept the associated responsibilities and expenses.
3. **What type of puppy suits my lifestyle?** A new pup should always fit your lifestyle. A athlete would do better with a pup that is active and will be ready at a moments

notice to run, jump and play with its owner. If your idea of exercise is kicking back, watching a movie and flipping burgers on your grill, choose a calmer breed that needs less exercise and can be content curled up against you eating popcorn and catching the latest flick. You also need to find out which breeds are allowed by your landlord and/or homeowners insurance. Some breeds are excluded from certain areas, so check out your options carefully.

4. **What age puppy would be best?** This should be a major consideration as the younger the puppy the bigger the investment. If you are short on both patience and time, consider finding an older pup or even a young dog. Do not forget our many senior dogs just waiting for the perfect family to share their golden years with. There are many dogs at shelters or in foster care that are already potty trained and have good house manners.
5. **Are you ready for a 10 to 15 year commitment?** Dogs are for life. Before bringing home a new friend consider what you would do if you have a lifestyle change (e.g., moving, having a baby, allergies, financial strain). In these hard economic times the shelters are bursting at the seams, and it is important to consider what would happen to your new friend if your circumstances changed.