



10 tips for successful DOG PARENTING

Your choice of dog is crucial!



Choose a dog whose size you're comfortable with. If you're intimidated by big dogs, don't choose a big dog. If you're not a fan of small dogs, don't choose a small dog. The size of the dog should also be compatible with your living space.



Choose a dog whose energy level is compatible with your lifestyle. If you're an active person, don't choose a couch potato dog. If you're a couch potato, don't choose a high energy dog.



Choose a dog whose shedding habits are OK with you. If you don't want to do much clean up of dog hair, don't choose a long haired, large dog. If you want a minimum of clean up, a hypoallergenic dog may be your best choice.



Choose a dog whose barking tendencies are OK with you. If you have no patience with a dog barking, don't pick breeds where the dog tends to bark – terriers, dachshunds, etc. Training can affect the degree of barking to some extent.



Choose a dog whose play style matches yours. If the dog loves to fetch a ball, and you have no interest in throwing the ball for your dog, don't choose that dog. If you have to play fetch every day, don't choose a dog who is totally disinterested in a thrown ball.





Your care of your dog is crucial!



Having a good relationship with your dog is as key, just as having a good relationship with any roommate is. If you scare or punish the dog harshly, neglect its needs, don't work on your relationship, the dog will not be as responsive to you as you'd like. A scared or hurt dog can become an aggressive dog. Don't use harsh or punitive methods in training the dog. Praise the dog profusely every time he does something good. Your praising your dog has to be immediate, as a dog's attention span is very short. Dogs thrive on praise (just as we do).



Measure your dog's food, and track its calorie intake. 80% of American dogs are overweight. An overweight dog puts excess stress on their joints, and can cause other health issues that shorten their life. Use a measuring cup to measure the food, and account for whatever treats/extras you add in each day as well. Read labels as treats can be very high calorie. Simply eye balling the food in the dog's bowl can easily lead to an overweight dog. Measure his food every meal. If the dog starts to look pudgy, cut back on his food and/or treat/extras intake. If it doesn't go in his mouth, it can't get on his body.



Be sure to put a visible ID on your dog with your phone number – a tag, imprinted on his collar, etc. Also microchip the dog in case his collar is lost. The American Humane Association estimates that 10 million dogs and cats are lost or stolen in the United States every year. They have found that 1 in 3 pets will become lost at some point in their life.

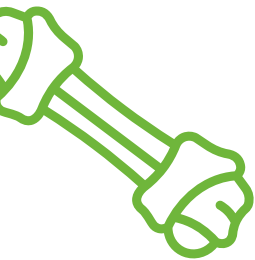




Take the dog to a kind professional groomer periodically. Most dogs love to be clean! They may even prance after their grooming. A groomer is another set of eyes on your dog to notice issues you may have missed – a budding ear infection, an odd bump, an injury, etc. If the nails are too long, the vein in them will grow down into the nail, and make future nail cuttings more painful and difficult for the dog. Extra long nails can curl under and even grow into the dog’s pads! We take our dogs to the groomer every 2-3 months, as needed. A clean dog is easier to love, easier to live with.



Commit to meeting your dog’s needs, particularly their health needs. Regular vet care as recommended by the vet, flea/tick/heartworm medications given as needed, and attention to the care of your dog’s teeth. Exercise your dog daily as needed to help your dog release it’s energy, expand its life. A walk to a dog is very stimulating – their hearing, smell, and sight are engaged. A walk opens up your dog’s life. It’s healthy for your dog, and for you! The American Heart Association has found that dog owners are healthier than the general population and live longer. Give your dog lots of SAFE toys if it’s into toys. Dogs get bored, just like we do, and variety is the spice of life! Best of all, love your dog, and have fun with it.



“A very worthwhile cause. Support a small charity and watch them become successful.”
- Donor

“I love my dog! It helped me get out and gave me independence I’ve never known before.”
- Recipient

“A new meaning to my life: Fun and rewarding. And I met a lot of new people.”
- Puppy Raiser

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