



## **ULTIMATE** New Pet Guide

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# CHAPTER 1: PET-PROOFING YOUR HOME

Congratulations on your newest household addition. You're now a proud pet owner! Before you fully welcome your furry friend, it's important to take a moment and recognize that it's now your responsibility to ensure his or her new home is as safe and accommodating as possible. To help you, here's seven easy things you can do to make sure your new pet will feel as comfortable in your home as you do.

## 1. Close and Latch ALL Lids

Dogs and cats both have a habit of getting into places they don't belong. To prevent messy incidents from recurring, make sure everything in your house that has a lid is secured. Try using childproof latches if necessary; it's a great way to quell your pet's mischievous misadventures.

## 2. Organize Loose Wiring

One habit puppies and kittens have in particular is chewing on soft cables, so make sure you keep yours covered up or far out of reach. You can do this by bolting your TV, cable, and/or any other electronic wires to the walls, or simply head to the nearest hardware store and check out affordable plastic cord covers.

## 3. Put Away Toys & Games

Dogs and cats love to eat. Unfortunately, that means they'll often try to swallow anything they can fit in their mouths. To prevent this, make sure small toys and other similar items are put away when they're not in use so your pet doesn't end up swallowing something it shouldn't have.

## 4. Make Sure Your Plants are Pet-Safe

Surprisingly, there are a few household plants, such as lilies, aloe plants and cyclamens, that are poisonous to pets. Check online to ensure that any plants in your house, or even in your yard, won't cause any harm to your new little friend.

## 5. Secure Hazardous Chemicals

Put all cleaning supplies on a high shelf or in a locked cabinet so they're well out of your pet's reach.

## 6. Designate Your Pet's Eating & Sleeping Areas

Make sure everyone in the house is on the same page in regards to where your pet will be eating and sleeping once he or she arrives. If you decide any rooms are off limits, put up a baby gate to set proper boundaries for your pet.

## 7. Hide Collectibles

New pets can be quite rambunctious, so it's a good idea to keep any expensive or rare items stored away until your new pet learns how to behave in its new home.

# CHAPTER 2: ADOPTION TIPS

Adopting a cat or a dog from an animal shelter is a great act of kindness. Often abused, neglected or abandoned, these animals need more than just a new home: they need an especially compassionate individual who has the means to provide them with the love and care they have been missing. However, adopting a pet takes careful planning and patience. Here's what to expect:

## PHASE 1: THE APPLICATION PROCESS

### 1. Get Your References Ready

The first step of the adoption process is application. Reference checks are actually quite common at this initial stage. Let your friends, family members, or whoever else you've decided to list as a reference know they should be expecting a call from the rescue.

### 2. Set Aside Time to Apply

Adoption applications are usually online, but they do tend to be somewhat long, taking anywhere between 25-40 minutes. They'll ask you for detailed information about your personal qualities, your history with dogs and cats, your home and more.

### 3. Be Patient

Most rescues have limited manpower, which might mean you have to wait a few days to a week before you get a response. If enough time passes, don't hesitate to contact the shelter and check on your application — just like with a job, calling and checking on your application status will only show you're serious about this endeavor. Eventually, the rescue will arrange a meet and greet between you and your prospective pet.

## PHASE 2: THE MEET AND GREET & HOME CHECK

### 4. Don't Be Afraid to Ask Questions!

For your meet and greet, prepare and ask a lot of questions. Also, keep in mind you may not be the only applicant for ownership of this pet, so treat it like you're competing for a job. Make a wonderful first impression and try to wow everyone you encounter during that first meeting. If you have any other pets or children, bring them, too! This will be a great opportunity to see how everyone gets along.

### 5. There May be a Home Check — Prepare for It!

After the meet and greet, the rescue may send someone to your home, which could involve anything from an examination of the pet's potential living space to a yard check to getting to know you more. Make your home presentable; lock up any harmful household items such as cleaning supplies and loose wires. If all goes well, the contract will be next!

# CHAPTER 2: ADOPTION TIPS

## PHASE 3: THE CONTRACT

### 6. Take the Time to Bring Forth Any Concerns

More often than not, rescue animals come from less than ideal backgrounds. When the contract is presented, take a moment to learn as much as you can about your animal's past and what you can do to accommodate its specific needs to be the best pet parent you can be.

### 7. Review the Contract Thoroughly

The contract will likely be a written agreement that details your new responsibilities as a pet owner. It should also include any policies regarding the return of the pet in a worst case scenario. Take care to go over every section of the contract, stopping to ask questions when you feel the need.

### 8. Be Prepared to Pay

Fees vary, but puppies typically cost the most because shelters spend the most resources caring for them.

## PHASE 4: AFTER ADOPTING

### 9. Prepare Your Home

You are now a pet owner! Make your new pal comfortable by providing all the new pet essentials. For a dog, make sure you've got a leash, harness, and collar to start with, while a cat will need a litter box most of all. Chapter 5 will more thoroughly detail all the essentials. Have fun, and don't be afraid to call the shelter if you ever need assistance!



# CHAPTER 3: TRAINING TIPS FOR DOGS

Besides being Man's Best Friend, there's one other thing dogs are most famous for — their tricks! While some breeds are more receptive to learning a wide array of fun commands (and unlearning unwanted ones), every dog has the ability to learn at least a few things when taught with patience and care. Here are some tips for teaching your pup.

## 1. Listen!

If you want your dog to listen to you, you need to listen to it. If he or she appears uncomfortable performing a trick or seems uninterested after repeated tries, there's usually a reason for it. Forcing the issue can potentially result in bigger issues and discomfort for all parties, so it's best to move on to another trick.

## 2. Be Loving — Positive Reinforcement Works Better Than Discipline

People are quick to discipline their dog when it doesn't perform as expected. This can be bad in the long run. Instead, try being more affectionate when your dog does do the right thing. They'll get the message.

## 3. Get the Right Treats!

While most dogs love to chow down in general, not all of them love the same things. Take time to find a treat your pooch really loves for an effective reward. Soft, chewy treats are usually better than hard and crunchy. Also, dogs usually go extra crazy with anticipation over treats that are strongly scented.

## 4. Don't Just Say "No" — Say What You Want

There's nothing wrong with telling your pup "no," but it will leave him with a lack of instruction. Focus on telling him or her what you want done instead. If your dog is having trouble understanding what action you want to cease after hearing "no," it's probably because he or she is naturally not good at generalizing. Your pup will comprehend more if you emphasize what you do want instead of what you don't.

## 5. Consistency is Key

When teaching your dog new commands, it helps to get as many family members and friends involved as possible so everyone is on the same page. Imagine how confusing it might be if your roommate lets your dog lay on the couch for hours after you've been working for weeks to teach him or her this behavior is inappropriate.

# CHAPTER 3: TRAINING TIPS FOR DOGS

## 6. Unrealistic Expectations Don't Help Anyone...

Teaching takes time, but how much time depends on your dog's breed and behaviors you're looking to alter. Beagles and dachshunds, for example, are more stubborn than retrievers, and instinctual behaviors like barking and jumping are going to be harder habits to break than others. Age will also play a role, as the longer the behavior has been rehearsed, the longer it will take to unlearn. But, it's never too late to teach! You just have to be prepared to put in the time and have the patience to do so.

## 7. A Bit of Bribery Doesn't Hurt

Is giving your dog treats in return for performing commands bribery? Well, maybe. But your dog probably won't mind. If the method works and you're getting results, why not continue? Just remember the treat is the reward and the behavior is the qualifier; not the other way around.

## 8. Stop Bad Behaviors Before They Start

A common mistake for first-time and veteran dog owners is giving your pup too much freedom too soon. It is better to have your dog earn certain freedoms. Too much freedom at once can lead to accidents - chewing on everything in sight, taking liberties with potty locations, and so on. Closing off a few doors and using baby gates to clarify your dog's boundaries is a good way to keep unwanted habits from ever starting. A nicely-sized crate or sealed-off space is another great way to ensure your house goes incident free while you're away.



# CHAPTER 4: TRAINING TIPS FOR CATS

While cats aren't as famous for their trick learning capabilities as dogs are, that doesn't mean they can't be trained! You might not have them fetching newspapers or catching frisbees any time soon, but with time and commitment, most can be effectively trained in a number of ways, assuming you follow the right steps.

## 1. Use Treats — The Right Kind

For many cats, who generally tend to be more selective about what they eat than their canine counterparts, it takes something more special than regular kibble to get them motivated. Diced turkey, shredded pieces of chicken, or premium cat treats will prove more effective. It's just a matter of finding out what your cat likes best.

## 2. Condition Your Kitten

Cats are naturally smart animals. Try starting slowly with a simple trick just to show your cat what sort of good things (i.e. treats) can occur during these initially confusing training sessions. Remember to always hold the treat up to your cat's nose so he or she can get a good sniff and know a reward is at stake. Continue holding the treat in your cat's line of vision until whatever command you've issued has been performed. Once it has, immediately reward your cat. With serious repetition, this will establish a relationship between behavior and reward in your kitty's mind.

## 3. Practice Makes Perfect

Repeat training processes until your cat makes a connection, but take care not to overwork your feline friend, as they get worn out quite easily. Start by teaching just one command at a time, and limit training sessions to 10 to

15 minutes maximum. Repeat the routine daily, however, as your cat might forget all it has learned otherwise.

## 4. Try Using a “Clicker” to Teach Your Cat

Animal trainers have long used distinctive sounds such as whistles and clicks as reinforcers of good behavior. Today, plastic “clicker” kits are a popular way of conditioning animals. Initiating a click right after a successfully executed behavior, then immediately giving your cat a treat will eventually lead your pet to automatically associate the click with an imminent reward, meaning as soon as the click is heard, he or she will know they've done the right thing. Eventually, you won't even need a treat every single time.

## 5. Never Discipline

Cats respond extremely poorly to punishment; instead of making any constructive association between a bad behavior and the resulting scolding, a cat will typically just run away in confusion and fear. Additionally, punishment creates stress, which is one of the most common catalysts for problematic behavior in cats. Even more so than with dogs, it's imperative you reward your cats for their positive behavior rather than condemning them for their negative behavior.



# CHAPTER 5: MUST-HAVE PET PRODUCTS

Having a new pet is an exciting feeling, and we know you want to do whatever you can to make sure your home is safe and welcoming. To help you, we've included the following list of must-have items that will have your pet feeling at home in no time.

## 1. Collar, Harness & Leash

The essentials to any pet's wardrobe! These can help your pet's personality and style shine, but it is even more important to make sure they're secure and fit properly.

## 2. Identification Tags

An ID tag serves as an introduction to your pet for everyone it encounters, but it will also help ensure its safe return should it ever become lost. Be sure to include your pet's name and yours on the tag, plus a phone number you can be reached at when your pet is found.

## 3. Poop Bags/Litter Box

Nature is going to call. One of the more unpleasant tasks of pet ownership, but a necessary one nonetheless. Dog owners will need to have poop bags handy at all times, so always have a few rolls ready when taking your buddy out for a walk. They even make dispensers to attach to your pet's leash or collar for added convenience. Cat owners will need a litter box in a safe area that can be reached easily and quickly. You can put a thin layer of baking soda on the bottom of the box to help absorb odors without repelling your cat.

## 4. Bed

A comfortable bed is just as important to your pet as it is to you, so make sure you find one yours will love.

## 5. Food & Water Bowls

Cats are easier to accommodate since most are less than a foot in height. With dogs varying in size, it can be more challenging. Food and water bowls need to be close to your dog's snout without excessive bending, which can cause problems with digestion. So, taller dogs will usually require a stand to hold the bowl at a proper height, while a puppy may need a bowl with an anti-slip grip as it laps up its meal.

## 6. Grooming Supplies

Pets need grooming, too! Teeth-cleaning supplies are essential for your dog or cat's prolonged dental health, while a brush, nail clippers, and various deshedding tools will help keep up appearances. Don't forget to pick up some cleaning pads for your pet's ears. They can get grimy in no time, but a quick swab with a cleaning pad will do the trick.

# CHAPTER 5: MUST-HAVE PET PRODUCTS



## 7. Crate

If you want a lively dog to rest in one spot while you're away from home, a crate might be a good idea. Many people get wonderful results with crate training. Just make sure the one you choose is spacious enough for your pup to feel not only safe but comfortable.

## 8. Cleaning Supplies

From litter scoopers to odor eliminators to cage wipes, make sure you have everything you might need!

- Lint remover
- Litter scooper
- Pooper scooper for larger dogs
- Paper towels or wet wipes
- Enzymatic cleaner
- Disinfectant spray/wipes
- Pet stain removers
- Odor neutralizer

## 9. Toys

One of the most enjoyable aspects of owning a dog or cat is figuring out which toys it loves the most! Try bringing home a variety of potential favorites to see which one your pet best responds to. There's nothing a pet loves more than a good toy... well, maybe a good treat.

## 10. Treats!

Not only do dogs and cats go crazy for treats, they're also a great way to teach tricks and to encourage appropriate behavior. Keep some in the house so you can give rewards when they're deserved, or when you feel like giving your pet something special.

## 11. Baby Gate

Baby gates can be helpful in keeping more inquisitive pets out of areas they don't belong. Like children, dogs and cats like to explore areas where they know they're not allowed. A baby gate will hinder any of these unwanted adventure attempts. The gates will help your pet learn its boundaries, and eventually they won't even be necessary.

# CHAPTER 6: TIPS & ADVICE

We asked our employees to share their favorite stories of their best (and worst) pet experiences. Below, you can read about some of these experiences to enlighten you on what to do - and what not to do - as a new pet owner.

## 1. What do you wish someone would have told you before you brought home your dog/cat?

- Research all the breeds before making a decision. People often make an instant decision when they see a cute animal and want to adopt immediately.
- The adamancy of dogs to eat/chew on items other than dog toys.
- It's just like having a child. You have to teach it, love it and grow old with it.
- Cats like to hide in places you wouldn't expect. Usually just to make you panic.
- The time you need to spend training in the first few months. The more time you spend early on with your pet, the better trained they'll be for the rest of their lives.
- Kittens are not the same as cats, and puppies are not the same as dogs in that they are very energetic and into everything. There's no such thing as a lazy kitten.
- How to socialize dogs properly with other dogs.
- Cats will scratch like crazy, and you need to give them something to scratch on. Otherwise, it's the carpet and furniture.
- How to understand basic signals and commands cats and dogs respond to and how to communicate with your pet better.
- How hard house-breaking your pet will be!

## 2. What advice do you have for pet parents regarding house-training your pet?

- Consistency is the key. Do the same thing over and over, and always reward good behavior.
- Don't give up! The best thing to do is give them time and don't force them, because they will do it when they are ready.
- Schedule, schedule, schedule! It's important to get into a routine. Knowing when they are drinking water and eating food will help you predict when they need to use the restroom.
- Cats are very easy to potty train. Just put them in the room where the litter box will be kept for a couple of days!

# CHAPTER 6: TIPS & ADVICE

- Be patient and reward the good behavior when it happens. You expect them to be completely house trained by the time they're a few months old, but it's like having a child; accidents happen.
- Crate dogs overnight from the start, so they learn not to pee where they stay. Then slowly give them access to one room at a time (overnight). Eventually, they will graduate to the entire house.
- Consider keeping a "Dog Log" of all the trips outside to the bathroom, so everyone in the house knows when your dog last went out and what happened. It really helps, especially when your dog is young and hard to predict.
- Be patient. Watch for cues that signal it's time to go out. Praise and reward for a job well done — go easy on disciplining for accidents.
- Take them out every hour or so once you bring them home. Draw this out to develop a more consistent schedule.

## 3. What is one item you couldn't live without once welcoming your pet home?

- Kong toys and peanut butter.
- Puppy pads.
- Chew toys. Puppies love to chew! If you don't give them something to

chew on, they will chew on everything else.

- Cat cube beds for each cat.
- For my dog, it would be his frisbees and his kennel. For my cat it would be her hidey-hole; she loves the little cave-like compartment and you can tell she feels safe.
- Our dog crate really helped us potty train and keep him out of trouble if we weren't in the house.
- For our dogs, a leash. They were always so excited to go for walks and it gave us great bonding time. For our cats, treats to get them to do what we needed them to!
- Treats! They helped me potty train my dog through positive reinforcement. Also, my dog couldn't live without her crate. She loves it and is crated while I'm at work unless I take her to work with me.

## 4. What items/advice were most helpful when bringing your pet home?

- Training, reward treats and a clicker. Be big on positive reinforcement training.
- A harness for walking.
- Develop a schedule with them while they're young.

# CHAPTER 6: TIPS & ADVICE

- If you bring a cat home from somewhere other than a shelter, be sure to keep that cat separate from all your other cats until you can get the cat tested for FIV and Leukemia.
- Buy chew toys and training treats. Training with treats is the best method to getting the pups to respect and love you early on.
- Use a harness! Regular leashes and collars are very traditional but a dog that isn't leash trained might choke themselves.
- Don't feed them human food.
- A crate could be best investment when bringing your dog home. Not only can it help potty train him or her but it can be their safe, den-like, place.

## 5. What type of trouble did your pet get into during the first few months at home?

- Eating things that weren't dog food — scratching doors and windows.
- Chewing problems. He loved to chew on the furniture legs of tables and chairs.
- My dog chewed up our baseboards, walls, dressers, shoes, books,
- Pulled down the curtains trying to climb them, and ripped out the covering on the bottom of the box springs so they could hide there.

- Dogs naturally like to chew, so providing them with chew toys is essential if you don't want them chewing up things in your home.
- Peeing and getting on furniture they are not supposed to get on.
- Shredding a shower curtain and pulling potted plants out of their pots.



# CHAPTER 7: FIRST AID CHECKLIST

Always remember that any first aid administered to your pet should be immediately followed by a trip to your veterinarian, and a first aid kit is never a substitute for proper veterinarian care. Here are some of the things you should keep handy in case of a pet crisis. Some are more obvious than others, but all can be beneficial in an emergency situation.

## First Aid List Items:

- Muzzle
- Blanket
- Towels
- Flashlight
- Pillowcase (for cats)
- Gauze
- Adhesive Tape (DO NOT USE HUMAN BAND AIDS ON PETS!)
- Self-Cling Bandage (wrapping that clings to itself, used to hold gauze against the skin)
- Cotton Balls
- Cotton Swabs
- Scissors
- Tweezers/Tick Removal Instrument
- Rectal thermometer
- Petroleum Jelly
- Collapsible Water Bowl/Water Bottle
- Benadryl (1mg per pound dosing, 25lb pet gets 25mgs)
- Baby Aspirin (81mg per 15lbs)
- Famotidine (Generic for Pepcid, Anti-Heartburn, upset stomach. Available in 10 mg, 20 mg, and 40 mg tablets as well as oral powder. The recommended dose of Famotidine to be administered to pets is 0.25 to 0.5 mg per pound (0.5 to 1.0 mg/kg) every 12 to 24 hours.)
- Hydrogen Peroxide (to induce vomiting — only if directed by Animal Poison Control)
- Ice Pack
- Neosporin Spray/Antibiotic Ointment
- Hydrocortisone Cream (anti-itch)
- Corn Syrup (low blood sugar/diabetic pets)
- Styptic powder — for those nail trims that go awry!
- Saline Eye Flush
- Non-latex disposable gloves
- ASPCA Animal Poison Control # — 1-800-426-4435
- Phone number/directions for nearest emergency veterinarian
- Primary Care Veterinarian phone number/address information
- Copies of your pet's medical information/records — along with vaccination history

# CHAPTER 7: FIRST AID CHECKLIST

## VETERINARY CARE WARNING

Always remember that any first aid administered to your pet should be followed by immediate veterinary care. First aid care is not a substitute for veterinary care, but it may save your pet's life until it receives veterinary treatment.

## Restraining & Transporting Injured Dogs

The best way to restrain an injured dog while maximizing its comfort and ensuring your safety is to gently hug it around the neck and chest. This position keeps your face and hands away from its mouth. When it comes time to lift the dog for transport, slide the hand closest to its head down and between the front legs or in front of the chest, then slide the other arm under the pelvis or, depending on your dog's size or the type of injury, behind the back legs.

## Restraining & Transporting Injured Cats

Try using the scruff of the neck to restrain your cat, but be aware that some adult cats may feel threatened by this approach and react badly. A more subtle approach is to hold the back of the cat's neck to control its head while supporting its body by cradling the back end under your arm. When transporting an injured cat, scruffing typically works, but do not dangle the animal — always support its body weight with your other arm. A pillowcase is an easy way to transport an injured animal since it is dark and the cat will feel safe.

