



Choosing the Perfect Puppy

Once you and your family have agreed you are ready to make a commitment to care for a puppy, you will need to decide what kind of dog is right for you.

Where Do You Begin Your Search?

Your local animal shelter is a good place to start. Spaying or neutering is usually included in the adoption fee and can be performed when the animal reaches the appropriate age. Most shelters have excellent support services such as free behavioral counseling.

You may also wish to talk to local obedience training facilities, a groomer or two, reputable breeders and obtain advice from a practicing veterinarian in your search for that perfect puppy.

It is important to consider how big the puppy will be in a year or two. A Golden Retriever puppy weighing 5 pounds at about 8 weeks, can become an 80 pound adult dog in a matter of a year.

Be Sure To Consider Your Lifestyle

Breeds such as hunting or working dogs require more exercise than some smaller breeds and may crowd an apartment or small home. Do you have a fence to contain your new companion? What about grooming? Do keep in mind that all dogs shed their hair coat at least twice a year (Spring and Fall). Some kinds of dogs shed constantly and some breeds have to be professionally groomed. Consider your lifestyle and make sure you will have the proper amount of time to spend with a dog or puppy. You'll need to seriously think about these and other factors when considering if a dog, or, which dog is right for you.

Purebred vs. Mixed Breed

One of the most commonly asked questions is "Which dog makes a better pet, the mixed breed or the purebred?" Any puppy or dog can make a great pet if the prospective owners take the time to properly socialize and train it.

The Purebred Puppy

Each breed of puppy was bred with a specific purpose in mind. Knowing as much as you can about that breed will help you in making the right selection. Your local library or the book

department of your favorite pet specialty store has books on breeds of puppies. Investigate the breeds of puppies you are the most interested in to find out if this is the breed that will fit best into your family's lifestyle.

The Mixed Breed

If you are looking for a loving companion, you need look no further than your local humane shelter to begin enjoying one of America's most popular breeds of dog—the mixed breed. These canines come in all shapes, sizes, coat lengths and colors.

Feeding Your New Companion

Good nutrition is crucial in helping a puppy grow and develop into a healthy dog. During a puppy's growth period, it requires up to twice the nutrition of an adult dog. A diet of food formulated just for puppies, plenty of fresh water and regular visits to your veterinarian will help ensure your new puppy gets off to a healthy start.