



Get Ready to Welcome a Loving Pet into Your Life

By Jessica Brody

Whether they bark or meow, pets are wonderful additions to any home thanks to the love, affection and comfort they provide when the world is getting you down. That's most likely why you're getting one (unless you're looking for a four-legged security guard or pest exterminator!).

In any case, it's no small responsibility taking care of an animal. Just consider [the millions of pets](#) who are left at shelters or abandoned on the streets each year after their owners got more than they bargained for.

Don't be like them. Pick your companion wisely, create a loving environment, and prepare for the long haul.

Find One You Can Care For

Look for a breed of cat or dog that fits in your living space. That's not difficult when it comes to the former, as felines can generally find happiness even in cramped apartments. As for canines, it's more complicated. Some breeds, like huskies, need [room to roam](#), meaning a large yard. Don't forget to get tested for pet allergies. Dogs, cats or both could be off limits.

Consider Your Own Lifestyle

Are you looking forward to taking your dog [out for a run](#) in the morning? Then an Australian cattle dog, with a touch of dingo in its blood, could be just right, but a lazy English bulldog? Probably not. You must consider a cat's characteristics as well. Russian blues tend to be more aloof, so they're not the best choice if you want a warm ball of fur snuggling in your lap.

Get the Right Equipment

Cats love to use their claws, so a [scratching post](#) might save your cushions and pillows from getting torn to shreds. As for dogs, an automatic feeder would make doling out food that much easier and ensure they get the right amount while you're at work. With an electronic dog door, the woofer can get outside more easily for some relief.

Prepare Your Home Properly

You'll need to pet-proof your home. Dogs and cats are very curious and will [get their paws on](#) toxic chemicals like cleaning products and medications if they aren't kept behind closed doors, according to American Humane. Pet-proofing also includes tucking away dangling wires or cords. You'll also need to make sure you have the right tools and products to clean up after your animal. For instance, a quality vacuum can be very helpful in removing pet hair and dander; make sure to read reviews and guides to find the [best models](#) for ridding your home of pet hair.

Contact a Qualified Vet

Choose a vet before you bring your furry friend home, as you never know when their health will take a turn for worse. It's important to understand your pet's needs based on their breed, age and prior living conditions, which is information the person or organization you're adopting your pet from can provide you. Once you've got a grasp on that, get the names of some qualified candidates, and visit their facilities to ensure they're a good fit.

Learn About Their Needs

Remember, you're responsible for the creature's welfare once you've taken them out of the shop or shelter, so be ready. For starters, [consider their diet](#). Did you know Labrador retrievers and beagles tend to devour their food and overeat? That requires close monitoring.

Help Them Adapt

That first day at home is going to be stressful, especially if you're adopting a rescue dog, who might be anxious and fearful in new places. You want them to be comfortable, but establish some rules as well. Remain calm, take a long walk around the neighborhood, and then have them sit or lie down as you open the door and enter first. That last part is [crucial](#). Also, the pooch would appreciate having their own quiet space to relax.

Build that Special Bond

This will be a fun adventure for both of you! When it comes to dogs, a game of fetch will bring you closer together, as would almost any other outdoor activity. You may even want to take [a family camping trip](#) with your four-pawed friend in tow. Cats are notoriously more independent than dogs, but usually, playing with an enticing toy with a rambunctious kitten or cuddling on the couch with an older cat will help establish a loving, trusting bond.

Take these steps, and you're in for a wonderful experience, as is your pet. They'll have a loving place to call home, and you'll have a loving new member of the family.

Image via [Unsplash](#).