

How to Tell if You're Ready to Adopt a Puppy

Before you adopt a puppy, think about this story: once, a child got a small Pekingese puppy who never damaged property, learned to be housebroken quickly, and loved just sitting around all day. But then this child got another puppy: an American Eskimo. This puppy had a sharp little set of teeth and an insatiable curiosity that drove this seemingly angelic puppy to get into everything. He clawed up furniture, used the bathroom whenever and wherever he felt like it, and even dug up plants. Even though this puppy's family watched him almost constantly, as soon as they looked away, he would manage to wreak havoc almost instantly. So before you get a puppy, make sure you're ready to deal with:

1. Destruction. Most puppies like to chew... and chew... and chew... and they may even get into some of your most important possessions. This is just a fact of puppy life. They're chewers.
2. Using a kennel. Kennels are a great way to protect your house from your puppy when you're out. They are also a good way to teach your puppy to be housebroken. Puppies need to relieve their bladders frequently, so make sure to take your puppy directly from the kennel to the place outside that he should use. Most importantly, effective training will show your pet not to fear the kennel.
3. Learning to say "no!" To raise a well-behaved puppy, you must be consistent. Never strike or hit your dog, but do use a forceful voice and say NO if you see him doing something wrong. Conversely, when he is well-behaved, be sure to praise him.
4. Set and enforce rules. Start this process when your puppy is young! Genetically speaking, dogs were pack animals, and you need to establish your alpha dominance - without ever hitting your puppy! A good way to start this process, and to build a relationship with your new pet, is to enroll in socialization classes or obedience training.
5. Cleaning up. Your puppy will have accidents, no matter what you do. Make sure you're prepared for stains and odors. Many commercial cleaners specifically for cleaning up pet messes are available.
6. Falling in love with your puppy. If this sounds like a lot of work, you're right; it's not easy to raise a puppy. If you don't think you can make this commitment right now, you might want to consider adopting an adult. They are just as companionable as puppies. But no matter what choice you make, please remember to visit your local shelter. These wonderful organizations have many loving pets just waiting to love you - and even better, when you adopt, you'll save a life.

About the Author

Ian Spellfield, an occasionally frustrated pet owner, tests and reviews cat urine removal products at his blog [Urine Off Reviews](http://www.urineoffreviews.com). You can follow his reviews and occasional heartache at <http://www.urineoffreviews.com>

Source: <http://americanahost.com>