

Choosing a Pet

When you have decided upon choosing a family pet, you may want to ask yourself these following questions:

****Do I have time for a pet?***

ALL pets take time. They need housebreaking, obedience training, daily exercise (this is IMPORTANT!), affection, grooming, playtime, etc. A pet that is not both physically and mentally exercised can lead to many behavior problems for that animal. Make sure there is room in your life for a pet BEFORE you adopt or purchase one.

****Can I afford to own a pet?***

Owning a pet is not only a personal responsibility, but a financial one as well. There is the cost of food, veterinary care, training; everyday supplies (cages, beds, dishes, toys, etc.). Other things to consider are: the cost of spaying/neutering, emergency care (if needed), and any other unforeseen costs associated with pet ownership.

****What type of pet is best for my lifestyle?***

There are so many pets to choose from!! Do you have the time needed to care for and exercise a dog? For families that are constantly on the run, a cat may be a better fit for you. Cats are wonderful companions, and they do not need to be walked daily, taken outside to use the bathroom every few hours, etc. These amazing animals are wonderful for busy families that can't put forth the dedication a dog requires. Other animals such as hamsters, guinea pigs, and rabbits are great choices. Be sure to read up on care and habitat before you purchase one of these 'pocket pets', as they each have specific needs.

****Where should I get my pet?***

There are so many places to acquire a pet, it might become overwhelming trying to decide where to shop. Some special rules to follow: Research the breed and its breeders. Just because a person claims to be a 'breeder', be sure to check out their records, references, and kennel facility. Is this a breeder for the love of the breed, or are they a puppy mill? Are the puppies in good health? Have they been to a veterinarian? If the breeder claims to have given them their first vaccines, do they have records from the veterinarian that gave them?

There are so many rescue groups out there as well. If you are set on a certain breed, there are many local breed rescues available at your fingertips. Search the Internet for breed rescue groups and you will be surprised how many there are.

Rescuing from the pound/animal control is a wonderful thing! It is a good idea to have the dog temperament tested by a trainer before you adopt, and this can be done right at the shelter. I will attach some links to local rescue groups at the conclusion of this article.

****Do I want a young, middle aged or elderly animal?***

There are benefits of all ages! If you decide on a puppy you will obviously be responsible for all of its training, where as if you adopt a middle aged or older dog a lot of this training is probably already done for you. But remember, not all training done before means it was 'good' training. Sometimes it takes longer to re-train than it does to train right the first time.

After you have considered all of the options, it is time to decide on a pet that is right for you. Remember that there should be no 'impulse' decisions. Just because an animal is adorable-so cute-cuddly-and happy, does NOT mean it is the right pet for you. Carefully make a list of pro's and con's of each animal. Take a few weeks to think about the responsibility of pet ownership. When you have decided-find trained professionals that are willing to help you search out the right pet for you.

Remember this is going to be an addition to your family, and the more you give this pet, the more they will give back to you!

Happy pet hunting!

Katie, LVT & Janie, Border Collie

The following are some rescue groups in the tri-city area that are worth looking at:

www.petfinder.com A wonderful search tool gives this site an A++!!

www.hsomc.com Humane Society of Midland County

www.humanesocietybaycounty.org Bay County Humane Society

www.midwestpetfinder.org Rescue group for the tri-city area

www.akc.org Great info on breeders, and how to get ready for a puppy. Click on futures owners for all kinds of great info!