



## **25 Tips for Successfully Living With, and Caring for, Your New Pet**

1. It takes time for a new pet to adjust to your lifestyle, family members and existing pets. It is very important to be patient and understanding. The reward will be a loving, and lovable, companion.
2. Pets thrive on structure. Help ease your new pet's transition into your life and set the pet up for success. Closely supervise the pet for the first few days by keeping it on leash or otherwise confined to the room you are in and, for a dog, crated when unsupervised. Gradually increase privileges, like full run of the house. Maintain a routine for the first few weeks. Avoid intense play, which may confuse your pet, until you and the pet are comfortable with each other. Postpone visits from family/friends who want to meet the pet until it is interacting confidently with core family members.
3. A crate is an important housebreaking and training tool, never to be used as punishment. Instead, keep the experience positive by giving a treat or favorite toy every time the pet enters its crate.
4. When you are away from home, leave on a radio, CD, or TV for your pet for companionship and to help drown out potentially disturbing noises (thunder, mail or newspaper delivery, trash pickup).
5. Give your pet stimulation. Toys can provide entertainment and keep a pet occupied when you are away. Inquire at a pet supply store, pet training facility or your veterinarian's office regarding the safest and best toys for your particular pet.
6. Use only metal or ceramic food and water bowls for your pet--plastic can harbor harmful bacteria.
7. Feed your pet a good brand of dry pet food to maintain healthy teeth/gums. Minimize treats--only give as training rewards. Don't feed your pet people food. Maintain your pet at a healthy weight. Feed dogs twice daily to reduce the risk of bloat (a potentially fatal condition) and establish a schedule by offering food for only 10 minutes and then removing it until the next feeding time. Unless a veterinarian directs otherwise, cats can generally have access to dry food at all times.
8. Don't leave food down all the time for your dog (called "free feeding"). Free feeding can make housebreaking difficult since it might make elimination more frequent and/or erratic.
9. Always let your pet have access to fresh water. However, if your dog wakes up at night to go out, try removing its source of water at 8 p.m., walking it right before bedtime and providing fresh water again first thing each morning.
10. Be aware of, and keep your pet away from, items that are potentially hazardous, possibly even fatal (antifreeze, rodenticides, chocolate, onions, certain indoor and outdoor plants). If something is hazardous to a child, it is most likely hazardous to a pet.



# Companion Animal Placement Program

*"Rescued" is our favorite breed*

11. A pet is not a toy--always supervise any interaction between a pet and young children. Children should never be allowed to bother a pet while it is sleeping, eating or drinking. Chewy, food-type products, such as rawhide, should not be available to a pet when children are present. Like people, a pet sometimes needs a quiet, safe space and children should understand that a pet is not to be disturbed when it is in its safe place (crate, pet bed or wherever it regularly rests).
12. Consistency is the key to successfully training your pet. Everyone in the household must apply the same rules, otherwise the pet will not understand what is expected of it.
13. Obedience training for dogs is important for socialization, to avoid behavioral problems and to strengthen the owner/pet bond.
14. Don't wait until a problem with your pet becomes serious before seeking advice from your veterinarian, the animal rescue group, a pet trainer or an animal behaviorist. The sooner a problem is addressed, the easier it is to resolve.
15. Provide adequate exercise for your pet, but always in a safe environment. Pets that are allowed to roam can get lost, contract a serious or even fatal disease, be hit by a car or otherwise be seriously injured or meet an untimely death. For example, the average lifespan of an outside cat is 3-5 years but the average lifespan increases to 12-15 years for an inside cat. Also, many localities have leash laws which can result in a fine if your pet is roaming.
16. Never leave a choke or other training collar on your dog when it is unsupervised. The dog could be traumatized, seriously injured or even die if the collar gets caught on something.
17. Always have an identification tag on a sturdy, well fitting collar on your pet. If you walk your pet at night near roads, a reflective leash or collar or a bright flashing leash or collar attachment will increase both the pet's and your safety.
18. Microchip your pet for more permanent identification and register it. Each year hundreds of microchipped pets are found but can't be reunited with their owners because the microchip was not registered. If your pet is lost or stolen, a microchip is proof that the pet is yours.
19. Be vigilant during stressful or other situations in which your pet could be lost. Busy holidays, with people in and out of your house, provide many ways for your pet to go missing. Halloween can be especially scary for a pet. To reduce the risk of a pet bolting out a door, teach it to "wait" at the door until you give an "okay" command and then it should calmly walk out the door after you. Train pets to stay away from outside doors by using a shake can (taped shut with a few pebbles or pennies in it) or a water-filled spray bottle. Be careful when you move to a new home, since pets who are stressed by change may bolt. When transporting pets, have ID on them and keep them on leash or in a carrier/crate. For a long trip, exercise your cat by bringing along a pre-fitted cat harness and leash.



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20. If you lose your pet, notify the animal rescue group, police, animal control and area animal shelters immediately. Walk through animal shelters every few days--don't just call and rely on staff to identify your pet. Post fliers (with a current picture of your pet) where the pet was last seen, in nearby public places, at pet-related businesses and animal shelters. Advertise in local newspapers. Always offer a reward. Eliminate scam calls by withholding an obvious feature in fliers and ads (such as an unusual marking, scar, eye color) and ask the caller to describe it. Leave your pet's favorite food, blanket and/or the owner's worn clothing where the pet was last seen to help attract it. Monitor the site regularly during the day and at night, when a scared pet may come out to forage. Try a humane live trap--often available from animal control/shelter. Most important, don't give up!
21. You can help litter box train and reduce the possibility of accidents by: Making sure your pet knows where the litter box is and has access to it at all times and cleaning the litter box regularly since your pet may use an alternate area if it is dirty. Clean up any accidents with an enzyme solution, available at pet supply stores.
22. You can help housebreak and reduce the possibility of accidents by walking your dog at least five times a day: When you get up, after it eats in the morning and at night, when you return home and right before bed. Clean up any accidents with an enzyme solution, available at pet supply stores.
23. Don't bring your dog inside as soon as it eliminates. A dog that enjoys the outdoors may learn to "hold it" to stay outside longer. This may not be fun for you in the winter time! Instead, walk your dog for at least 5 minutes after it eliminates so it doesn't associate that act with coming back inside.
24. For your pet's well being, get it regular medical checkups and inoculations as prescribed by your veterinarian. When petting or grooming your pet, check for lumps, skin irritations and external parasites. Be alert to diarrhea, increased frequency or amount of urination or sudden changes in weight or eating habits. Use only medications approved by your veterinarian and then only as directed. Ask your veterinarian about ways to protect your pet from fleas and ticks (which can carry tapeworm and several tick-borne dog illnesses, including lyme disease). Don't bombard your pet with chemicals--for example for dogs administer either flea/tick treatment or heartworm preventive on the first of the month and the other mid-month.
25. Let your pet be a part of your life. If you do, statistics show that both you and your pet will live longer, happier lives!