

Should you get a puppy or an adult dog?



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Is an adult dog or a puppy a better match for your lifestyle?

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Is a puppy or adult dog right for your family?

A puppy! Who can resist a puppy? Those little furballs of energy, all oversized paws and ears and wiggles make almost everyone smile.

But if you're considering adding a four-legged furry friend to your family, a puppy might not be the best choice. Before you head out to adopt that little pup, take a few minutes to read this article.

It just might help you decide whether a puppy or an adult dog is the best choice for you, your family and your lifestyle.

Time

One of the biggest factors in the puppy versus adult dog decision is the time you have available for training and socializing.

While some adult dogs need more extensive housebreaking and socialization training, most are either already familiar with the idea of going outside or on a [pee-pee pad](#), or can quickly master the concept. Puppies, on the other hand, need to be housebroken and trained in all kinds of things. And it could be months until they get it all right.

Do you have the time it takes to housebreak and [train a puppy](#)? A family where everyone is at work or school much of the day is probably a better place for an older dog.

If your schedule is more flexible, or if you have the freedom to take a pup to work, a younger dog might work well for you.

Children

The family with children needs to consider the age and behavior of the kids before choosing a dog or pup.

Very young children might be dangerous to small puppies, not because they misbehave but because they cannot understand what might hurt a puppy.

On the other hand, small hands that might tug on a tail or ear might be at risk of a bite from an older dog who

isn't used to children.

Older children (school aged) might enjoy getting and training a puppy from scratch. But many are also touched by the plight of unwanted or abandoned dogs in a shelter, and might feel good about bringing one of those homeless animals into the family.

Involving your children in the decision is also a great way to get everyone involved in the process, and committed to helping to care for their new pet.

The known and the unknown

While breed is a fairly reliable way to gauge a dog's temperament, the fact is you can't predict an adult dog's behavior until they're, well, an adult dog.

Adopting an older dog allows you to see how the dog interacts with family members, other pets and common situations. That can be a big advantage if you have concerns about aggression, destructive behavior or everyday things like [car trips](#) or walks.

Size is also a factor here. Small puppies can grow into big dogs -- sometimes larger than expected! If your space is limited, or some other factor limits the size dog you would want, adopting an adult lets you choose the right size pet for your lifestyle.

But if specific skills or behaviors are important to you (for instance, agility course work or tracking), a puppy might be a better choice, since they can be trained to learn those skills more easily than an adult dog.

The social justice of it all

If you're considering getting your dog from a shelter or rescue group, [choosing an adult dog](#) might mean you get to be the one and only who will give that dog a forever home. Puppies, even in shelters, will always find homes. Older dogs may not be so lucky.

If making a difference in a dog's life is a factor in your decision, an adult dog might be a better choice.

But either way....

No matter what decision you make, bringing a new dog into your life and family is a wonderful way to make your life richer, sweeter, and a whole lot more fun. Take your time, consider all the options and keep an open mind.

If you do all of that, the perfect dog or puppy might just choose you.

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