

## AM I READY?

Congratulations on choosing to rescue a dog! There are so many reasons **adopting is better than shopping** when deciding to become a pet owner. Not only will you be offering a precious pup another chance at life, but since most rescued dogs have experienced some level of hardship, they appreciate the love and care you'll give them so much more! Before bringing home a furry friend, please take some time to consider whether you are completely ready for this responsibility. Remember, dogs are both wonderful companions, and have needs of their own.

- Do I have time to feed and walk a dog multiple times a day?

*Just like people, dogs need to eat on a regular basis and must get enough movement to be healthy and happy. If you're too busy to add these tasks to your schedule, you might want to reconsider bringing home a pet right now.*

- Do I know what type of dog will best fit my lifestyle? (See *WHAT TYPE OF DOG IS RIGHT FOR ME?*)

*Do you live in an apartment with no outdoor space or a home with a fenced-in yard? Do you like going for hikes and walks or do you prefer to stay at home and chill out on the couch in your spare time? Do you have small children and other pets? Asking a lot of questions before you decide on a specific dog is a really good idea. Even if not much is known about one of our rescues before we find him/her, our foster families can likely give you a lot of insight into a pup's temperament, energy level, tolerance of other pets, behavior around children etc. One of the biggest mistakes someone can make is to expect just any dog to fit into their life. Please give careful consideration to the unique qualities of each pup and if they mesh with your own.*

- Do I have a veterinarian? (See *WHAT DOES IT COST TO CARE FOR A DOG? And WHICH VACCINATIONS DO DOGS NEED?*)

*Please don't wait until after the adoption to find a veterinarian! Vets can be very helpful in providing you with useful information to make an informed adoption choice. Also consider the office's proximity to your home. Will you be able to get there during their hours of operation? Do you have a vehicle to transport your dog to appointments? If not, is there another form of transportation available to you?*

- Is my home pet-friendly?

*It's important to go through your living space and assess any potential hazards **before** bringing a new pet home. Get down on the floor (at your potential pup's level) and look for things he/she might get in to- household cleaners, small toys, electrical cords, house plants, even sugar-free gum can be toxic if consumed by your dog. It will make things safer for your pup, and easier on you, if you pet-proof before bringing him/her home.*

- Do I know what I'll feed my pup? (See *WHAT DOES IT COST TO CARE FOR A DOG?*)

*Doing some research into what type of food(s) might be best for your pup before you bring him/her home will help you to be best prepared to keep your dog healthy and happy. Choose a dog food that is appropriate for your potential pup's age and size, making sure that it is **balanced and complete**. Also consider the cost and be realistic about what you can afford long-term. Most pups don't do well digestively when their food is constantly changed, according to what is on sale etc. If you're unsure which food might be best for your dog, consulting with your vet is a great idea.*

- Am I prepared for an adjustment period? (See *WHAT IS THE 3-3-3 RULE?* And *WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF TRAINING?*)

*When you bring a new pet home, he/she needs some time to get used to the new environment and you'll likely need to acclimate to both a new family member and routine. Be patient as your pup learns and stay clear and consistent with rules. For example, dogs can't understand why they might sometimes be able to do something (cuddle in bed in the morning but at night they're not allowed on the bed) but get in trouble for doing the same thing at another time. Making sure everyone in your home is on the same page will ensure that things are much less confusing for your pup and less frustrating for you!*

If you've answered **YES** to all these questions, then you're ready to move on to the next section, **WHAT TYPE OF DOG IS RIGHT FOR ME?**