



RSPCA School for Dogs Information Sheet

Thinking about getting a pet?

Pets are great companions, they add humour and activity to our lives, but they are also a big responsibility. Beyond the everyday health and nutritional requirements they also require our time and companionship, they need training and entertaining, there are requirements like fences and enclosures, shelter and comfort.



Think about life changes

It is not advisable to seek a new pet if your life is undergoing any sort of change in the foreseeable future. Things like relationship changes, accommodation changes, household changes (new flat mates, new baby) work place requirements, travel, death of family member or other pet can be very stressful to our pets as well as us. Our pets do not have the ability to verbalise their emotions and so they display them behaviourally. Every pet is an individual and will have a different personality to any previous pet.

Won't a new pet help my existing pet?

We don't recommend getting a new pet with the aim of "helping" with your existing pet's behaviour. Often people think that getting their pet another pet to keep them company will stop or reduce problems behaviours such as excessive barking, escaping or general destructiveness around the house and yard. Mostly, this is not the case. Quite often, you will end up with two dogs excessively barking, two dogs escaping and two dogs destroying the yard! It is much more advisable to work on your existing pet's behaviour first, before adding another pet to the household. Refer to our info sheets: Introducing a new pet to the household and Managing Multi dog households.

For a new pet, things to consider are:

- The amount of time you will spend at home.
- Do you have adequate fencing/enclosure in place to stop your pet roaming onto other properties
- The ongoing financial costs of health care, food, grooming, training and boarding. (Up to \$3000 each dog per year and \$2000 each cat per year).
- Don't forget that first year expenses such as desexing (if not from a shelter), fencing, and basic supplies will be greater.



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- Commitment to teach your pet what is expected - this can be a life long commitment. Ability to get to training classes each week.
- Ability to provide exercise, physically and mentally (a lot can be achieved by playing with your pet on a daily basis).
- Do you have someone who can help care for your pets if you are away?
- Is your home pet proof?
- Are there children who visit or live in your home?
- What will be the effect on other pets in your home?
- Are there council limits or body corporate restrictions you need to comply with?

If you can satisfy all these requirements easily then the next step is to lots of research about your choice of animal.

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