



How to Choose a Dog That's Right for You.

Presented by,

Good Dog University®

949/ 631-2720

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So you're thinking about getting a dog. We understand—we love them, too!

But when you go to the shelter or breeder to pick out a new family member, you need to make sure that you will be happy with the dog you get—and that the dog will be healthy and happy being part of your life.

We know how hard it is to be objective when you're face to face with a new puppy or dog. It's hard to think of the right questions to ask when this adorable pup is licking your face as if to say, "P-l-e-a-s-e, take me home!"

Why is getting the right breed important? Consider these facts:

- Approximately **50% of all dogs born in the United States will not live to see their second birthday.**
- Of the dogs that end up in shelters, **85 to 90%** of them are there because their owners couldn't tolerate their behavior.
- Approximately **80%** of training for owner/dog compatibility problems is needed because the dog's breed doesn't match the owner's lifestyle.

Our experience comes from making over 95,000 pet care and training visits to clients' homes, along with our charity/shelter work with animals. **The number one lesson that we have learned is how important it is to choose the right dog for your lifestyle.**

This is not to say that many compatibility issues can't be resolved with the right training, because we do this on a daily basis. However, we know that choosing the right dog for your lifestyle from the beginning will minimize compatibility behavior problems—if not eliminate them completely.

All breeds have their pros and cons, so it's very important to ask the right questions.

We've created this four-section guide to aid you in your quest to find the right pooch for your home. It will help to determine the best fit for you, your family, and your potential new dog. Use this guide when you visit a shelter or reputable breeder.

Section 1 helps you to determine whether you are really ready to adopt a new family member by helping you to see the "big picture" of your personal profile.

Section 2 helps you to narrow down what type of dog would match your lifestyle.

Section 3 helps you ask the right questions of the shelter or breeder.

Section 4 is a quick summary of different breed groups, which can be helpful while you're at the shelter or breeder.

1. Are You Ready for a New Family Member?

These questions will help you determine if you and your household are *really* ready to add a dog.

1. As an adult, have you ever owned a dog before?

Yes No

Suggestion: If your answer was “no,” you’ll want a dog that is easy to train and easier to manage for someone without previous experience. Be sure to tell the shelter or breeder that you have NOT owned a dog before.

a) If you answered “Yes” to #1, are you comfortable handling a dominating dog?

Yes No Not sure

2. What kind of home do you live in?

Condo/apartment Townhouse Single family home Farm/ranch

3. Do you own or rent your residence?

Own Rent

Re: Owning (skip this section if you rent)

a) If you own a condo or townhouse, does your association allow dogs?

Yes No Not sure

b) If you answered “Yes” to #3a, do they have any size restrictions?

Yes No Not sure

c) Is there any disagreement within your family about getting a new dog?

Yes No

d) How big is your yard?

None Small Medium Large I have _____ acres

Re: Renting (skip this section if you own)

e) Does your landlord allow dogs?

Yes No Not sure

f) If you answered “Yes” to #3e, does your landlord have any special requirements or restrictions?

Yes No Not sure

g) Do you have a roommate?

Yes No

h) If you have a roommate, is he/she agreeable to you bringing a dog home?

Yes No

i) How big is your yard?

None Small Medium Large I have _____ acres

j) Will there be any changes in your living arrangements over the next six months, such as moving or getting a new roommate?

Yes No

k) If you answered “Yes” to #3j, do you foresee any problems these changes might make for your new dog?

Yes No

2. Narrowing Down Your Search

The questions in this section will help you determine the kind of dog you should be looking for.

4. Do you have any pets now?

Yes No

a) If you answered "Yes" to #4, what are they?

Dog(s) How many? _____

Cat(s) How many? _____

Other Type? _____

A Word About Existing Pets

When you bring a new pet home into an established pet family, there can be a period of adjustment for all the pets involved.

If you already have pets at home, you will want to make sure that your new pet will be able to adapt and get along with the rest of their new pet family.

Dominance. If you already have one or more dogs, it's best not to bring home a new dog that you know in advance is primarily dominant.

Cats. If you have cats, you'll want to make sure that the new dog can get along with cats and doesn't have a natural instinct to look at cats as their prey. Either the shelter or breeder should be able to help you to determine this.

5. Do you have children?

Yes No

a) If yes, how old is your youngest child?

Under 2 years old

6 to 9 years old

2 to 5 years old

10 years old or older

Again, the shelter or breeder can help you determine if a specific dog is good with children in specific age groups.

6. What size of dog are you looking for?

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| No preference | Medium (25 to 60 lbs.) |
| Toy (1 to 12 lbs.) | Large (60 to 90 lbs.) |
| Small (12 to 25 lbs.) | Extra large (100 lbs. or more) |

7. Does anyone in your family have allergies?

- Yes No

FYI: The Bichon Frise and the Coten De Tulear are often recommended for people that suffer from allergies. Poodles also can be an option. However, always check with your allergist before selecting a dog.

8. Would you prefer a dog that doesn't shed?

- Yes No

9. How often will you be able to groom your new dog?

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Daily | Monthly |
| 2 to 3 times a week | Less than once a month |
| Once a week | |

10. How often do you plan to exercise your new dog?

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Walk 2 times a day | A walk 3 times a week |
| Daily walk | A walk once a week |
| Daily romps in my backyard | Not at all |

11. How often will you be able to train your new dog?

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| Daily | Once a week |
| 3 times a week | Not at all |

12. What type of energy level are you looking for in your new dog?

- | | |
|--------|----------------|
| Low | Medium to high |
| Medium | High |

13. Will your dog be spending all day alone while you are at work?

- Yes No

a) If you answered "Yes" to #13, will your dog have access to the outside?

- Yes No

b) If you answered “No” to #13a, do you have someone or know of a dog walking service in your area that could come to let your dog out for a potty break and a walk?

Yes No

If you don't know of a service and you live in Orange County we do have a list of professional and reliable services that could help you. You can reach us at (949) 631-2720 for this information. If you live in Los Angeles County you can call Pet Sitters International at (800) 268-7487.

A Word About Puppies

If you are starting out with a puppy and the puppy will be alone all day while you are at work, it is advisable to engage some form of daily assistance for the first few months to help with potty training.

Important note: At **8-12 weeks old** your puppy will **start** to develop bladder control. **However, bladder control for more than 2-3 hours is physically impossible for puppies until they are 16-20 weeks of age.** Therefore, your puppy doesn't know that your floor isn't the proper place to relieve itself.

14. Are you looking to share special interests or activities with your new dog?

a) If you answered “yes,” what interests or activities?

Jogging *

Water sports *

Agility trials

Therapy

Other _____

A Word About Sports

Jogging. Most dogs (depending on the breed) shouldn't jog with their human until approximately 18 months old. This gives their joints enough time to grow and to stabilize for such activities. ***Always check with your veterinarian before beginning a jogging or other strenuous exercise routine with your dog.***

Water sports. Please be aware that **not all dogs know how to swim.** Some dogs actually dislike the water. **CAUTION:** The number one reason dogs drown is that they tire out and can't get out of the pool, lake or ocean. Just as with children, always watch your dog in water situations to avoid a terrible accident.

15. What kind of personal and home protection ability do you want your new dog to have?

None

Nothing more than a warning bark

I want a dog that could defend my family and property if needed

16. Is barking an issue for you or your family?

Yes No Depends

a) If you answered “No” or “Depends” to #16, how much barking is okay?

Minimal barking is okay

Medium barking is okay

Medium to high barking is okay

17. Would barking be an issue with your neighbors?

Yes No Not sure

18. Have you mentioned to your neighbors that you are thinking about adding a new family member to your home?

Yes No I don't think it's any of their business

A Word About Barking

The number one complaint to the local police or animal control about dogs is barking. These departments have found that the best way to prevent this problem from happening to you is to use the neighborly approach.

Let your neighbors know that you're getting—or have gotten—a new puppy. Let them know that you'll be working with your new puppy and ask them if they can be patient with you during this time.

Supply them with telephone numbers that they can easily reach you and, ask them to notify you if your dog starts to bark uncontrollably. Getting your neighbors involved from the start will cut down on problems, and may prevent them completely.

Additionally, if you are going to be gone a considerable amount of time during the day you may want to consider a dogwalker or pet sitter, a housesitter, or a kennel.

A Word About Barking (cont'd)

If barking is an issue for either your family or your neighbors, there are certain breeds that you should be wary of--such as the American Eskimo, some of the dogs from the Hound group (Beagles, Bassets, Coon Hounds, etc.), the Miniature Pinscher, the Miniature Schnauzer and the Doberman. These breeds are especially prone to barking.

19. In the past, were there any circumstances that forced you personally to give up a pet to a shelter or to another person?

Yes No

a) If you answered "Yes" to #19, how long ago? _____

b) What was the reason? _____

3. Asking the Right Questions

Questions to Ask at a Shelter or Rescue:

Before you adopt a dog from a shelter it's important to ask several questions to help create the best match for you and the dog. **FYI:** Sometimes a shelter may not know a dog's history, especially if the dog was brought in as a stray.

1. Is this dog a purebred or a mix?
2. If the dog is a mix, do they know what the mix is?
3. Was the dog a stray or owner release?
4. If it was owner released, why did the previous owner bring him/her in?
5. When the dog was brought in did he/she look like it was well cared for?
6. Do they know how old this dog is?
7. How long has this dog been at the shelter?
8. Do they know if this dog gets along with children?
9. Do they know if this dog gets along with other animals?
10. Do you know how this dog gets along with strangers?
11. Have they noticed if the dog doesn't like men, women or children?
12. Was this dog housetrained?

Note: The dog may have been housetrained, but because of living in a cage may have gotten in the habit of going potty wherever it likes. Therefore, all it takes sometimes when you bring your dog home is to teach them where you want them to go potty through positive reinforcement & praise.

13. Has the dog had a vet check?
14. If not, when will one be provided?
15. Was there a temperament test done on this dog?
16. Does the dog exhibit prior training?
17. Does the dog show an aptitude for training?
18. How much is this going to cost? (Don't forget to include the cost of vet care, food, training and supplies!)

Finding A Reputable Breeder

To find a reputable breeder you can visit the AKC's website at www.akc.org to see if there's a breeder listed in your area. You can also call veterinarian offices in your town and ask who they recommend as reputable breeder for the breed that you are looking for.

Reputable breeders are always dedicated to breeding healthy dogs and placing their pups in the right homes.

These are the things to look for when you visit a breeder:

1. **Cleanliness:** Both the facilities and the dogs should be clean. Regular dog odors are unavoidable, but they should not be overpowering. Ask the breeder about their sanitation procedures.
2. **Appearance:** Are the dogs clean and well-groomed? Little puppies can be quite messy, but they should never be filthy.
3. **Attitude:** Well-cared-for puppies should be energetic, bright-eyed and curious about strangers and new things. If the puppies you see are fuzzy-eyed, lethargic, and not paying attention to you, it could be a sign of ill health.
4. **Behavior:** An injured or unhealthy puppy will behave differently from the rest of its littermates. If the rest of the littermates are vocalizing, romping around and wrestling, don't assume that the one puppy that is staying quiet on its own is simply the sweet and quiet one. This could actually mean there is something wrong with the pup. A reputable breeder would know in advance if there is anything wrong with any of their pups and will be willing to share this information.
5. **Information:** A reputable breeder will be more than happy to provide all information relating to the puppy's pedigree. The pedigree should reflect at least three or more generations. **Note:** A reputable breeder would never overbreed the pup's mother. Make sure to ask how old the pup's mother is and how many litters that she's had. If the breeder appears to be hesitant to answer, it may be a warning sign.
6. **References:** A reputable breeder will be more than happy to supply names of past clients. Make sure that you CALL ALL the references given. Don't be afraid to ask for more if you feel the need.
7. **Written Contract:** An ethical breeder will sell a pup with a written contract. Be sure to ask what the terms of this contract are. The contract should include a health guarantee.

The Reputable Breeder Checklist

- ✓ Did they interview you and your family carefully?
- ✓ Are they happy to answer any and all of your questions?
- ✓ Do they have specific requirements that must be met by you such as spaying or neutering, backyard requirements, etc.?
- ✓ Do they sell their pups with a written contract?
- ✓ Do their pups come with a written health guarantee?
- ✓ Do they test their breeding stock for hereditary diseases specific to the breed?
- ✓ Is it their objective to try to decrease the rate of occurrence of such diseases from their stock?
- ✓ Will they show you the health certificates and test results on both the dame and the sire (i.e., the mother and the father) of the puppies?
- ✓ Are they extremely concerned with producing puppies with excellent temperaments and healthy?
- ✓ Are they committed to keeping their pups well socialized and well cared for?
- ✓ Can they identify each puppy and do they chart their growth and development from birth?
- ✓ Does the Breeder state in the contract that if you are unable to care for or keep the dog in the future that you must return the dog to them?

4. A Summary of Breed Groups

To go into detail about every breed would be a book within itself. But the different breeds are broken into groups, and the breeds within each group share similar traits. The AKC (American Kennel Club) is the organization that classifies the individual breeds, and the following information is based on their standards.

FYI: If you're adopting a mixed-breed—also known as a crossbreed—ask the shelter if they can tell what the actual mix is. The best way to determine the temperament of the dog is to consider both of the breeds responsible for making up your potential new family member.

The Sporting Group

Dogs in this category were bred to hunt birds both on land and in the water. Breeds in this group include the Pointers, Retrievers, Setters and Spaniels. Generally, they are medium sized dogs with great energy levels. Some of the dogs in this category are true water dogs that will retrieve birds from water in the coldest of temperatures.

Dogs within this group are generally active and alert and make can make wonderful companions as long as you train them well. If you are looking to have a well-mannered, happy, family pet from this category make sure they receive plenty of exercise and family attention. Otherwise, they could be extremely active around your home and will find things to entertain themselves that you may not like—such as excessive barking, digging, chewing, etc.

Know that some sporting breeds can be constant barkers, while others don't have as much to talk about. Be sure to ask the shelter or breeder what the vocal potential is prior to bringing them home. Note: Golden Retrievers and especially Labrador Retrievers love the water. This means that if you have a pool you'll probably find them in there half of the time.

Sporting dogs are not usually thought of as great guard dogs. However, they will definitely give you warning barks. These breeds do not fair well simply being stuck out in the backyard. This is because they develop very strong emotional ties to their human family. Forcing this kind of dog to be an "outside" dog will cause great problems for both you and your dog.

These 25 breeds form the Sporting group:

- Brittany
- Pointer
- German Shorthaired Pointer
- German Wirehaired Pointer
- Chesapeake Bay Retriever
- Curly-Coated Retriever
- Flat-Coated Retriever
- Golden Retriever
- Labrador Retriever
- English Setter
- Gordon Setter
- Irish Setter
- American Water Spaniel
- Clumber Spaniel
- Cocker Spaniel
- English Cocker Spaniel
- English Springer Spaniel
- Field Spaniel
- Irish Water Spaniel
- Spinone Italiano
- Sussex Spaniel
- Welsh Springer Spaniel
- Vizsla
- Weimaraner
- Wirehaired Pointing Griffon

The Hound Group

The dogs in this group are bred to run and hunt down game. This is an extremely diverse group of breeds. It includes the Irish Wolfhound, the tallest dog of all the breeds, and the Dachshund, which is one of the shortest. Some of the hounds in this group make a distinct sound called baying, and one of the loudest of these is the Coonhound. On the other hand, the Basenji doesn't bark at all.

There are two groups of hounds: **sighthounds** (or *gazehounds*) such as the Greyhound, Afghan Hound and Irish Wolfhound; and **scenthounds**, such as the Bloodhound and Basset Hound.

These 22 breeds make up the Hound group:

- Afghan Hound
- Basenji
- Basset Hound
- Beagle
- Black and Tan Coonhound
- Bloodhound
- Borzoi
- Dachshund
- American Foxhound
- English Foxhound
- Greyhound
- Harrier
- Ibizan Hound
- Irish Wolfhound
- Norwegian Elkhound
- Otterhound
- Petit Basset Griffon Vendeén
- Pharaoh Hound
- Rhodesian Ridgeback
- Saluki
- Scottish Deerhound
- Whippet

The Working Group

The dogs in this group were bred for specific jobs such as pulling sleds or carts, guarding properties, and even rescuing people from the water. This group also includes the flock protectors, such as the Great Pyrennes and the Kuvasz.

Many in this category tend to be larger in size and, because of this size they also tend to live shorter lives. It's also extremely important to note that their size makes proper training paramount.

They are extremely loyal to their families and will accept strangers as long as they get the "okay" from their owner(s).

Again, due to their size and bursts of playful galloping through the house they are not recommended for apartment or condo living. They are usually very easy to train, since pleasing their human is quite important to them. Know that they eat more than most dogs and their potty pick-up has a tendency to be quite LARGE!

Additionally, as puppies their teeth can do more damage to your furniture than a small dog.

These 20 breeds make up the Working group:

- Akita
- Alaskan Malamute
- Anatolian Shephard
- Bernese Mountain Dog
- Boxer
- Bullmastiff
- Doberman Pinscher
- Giant Schnauzers
- Great Dane
- Great Pyrenees
- Komondor
- Kuvasz
- Mastiff
- Newfoundland
- Portuguese Water Dogs
- Rottweiler
- St. Bernard
- Samoyed
- Siberian Husky
- Standard Schnauzer

The Terrier Group

This group holds the largest number of breeds. Their ancestors were bred to hunt and kill small to medium-sized vermin such as rats and even badgers.

They're a lively bunch with feisty personalities. They definitely need training to ensure things don't get out of control at your home! Their sizes range from somewhat small, like the Norfolk, to the much larger Airedale. However, the smaller dogs in this group can be a large dog wrapped in a small package. Unless raised with other dogs, Terriers generally have little patience for other animals.

These 26 breeds make up the Terrier group:

- Airedale Terrier
- American Staffordshire Terrier
- Australian Terrier
- Bedlington Terrier
- Border Terrier
- Bull Terrier
- Cairn Terrier
- Dandie Dinmont Terrier
- Fox Terrier (Smooth)
- Fox Terrier (Wire)
- Irish Terrier
- Jack Russell Terrier
- Kerry Blue Terrier
- Lakeland Terrier
- Manchester Terrier (Standard)
- Miniature Bull Terrier
- Miniature Schnauzer
- Norfolk Terrier
- Norwich Terrier
- Scottish Terrier
- Sealyham Terrier
- Skye Terrier
- Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier
- Staffordshire Bull Terrier
- Welsh Terrier
- West Highland White Terrier

The Toy Group

The dogs within this group range in weight from 1 pound to 12 pounds with the average being around 8 pounds. They were bred to be companions and many got their start as companions of royalty because of their small size. However, don't be fooled by their tiny stature: many of these "toys" can and will hold their own.

Because of their size, the breeds in this category make good dogs for people without much living space.

A Word About Toys

The smaller the Toy, the more sensitive they can be to extreme temperatures.

The number one training problem with the Toy group is – us! Again, because of their small stature we tend to let a smaller dog get away with more things. However, usually by the time the dog reaches 1-2 years old the things we let them get away with are now annoying bad habits, one of which is going potty in the house.

In the beginning, many are not as diligent with houstraining their Toy as they should be—possibly because they think the potty output of a Toy is so small they don't really need to worry about it. However, after a time these small stains will add up. Don't forget you'll be living with your little Toy for 15 years or more. That's a long time to have annoying habits in your home.

These 20 breeds make up the Toy group:

- Affenpinscher
- Brussels Griffon
- Cavalier King Charles Spaniel
- Chihuahua
- Chinese Crested
- English Toy Spaniel
- Havanese
- Italian Greyhound
- Japanese Chin
- Maltese
- Manchester Terrier
- Miniature Pinscher
- Papillon
- Pekingese
- Pomeranian
- Poodle
- Pug
- Shih Tzu
- Silky Terrier
- Yorkshire Terrier

The Non-Sporting Group

This is the most varied group of breeds that don't fit into the other AKC dog groups. Due to their diverse personalities, it's best to look up these breeds individually.

These 17 breeds make up the Non-Sporting group:

- American Eskimo Dog
- Bichon Frise
- Boston Terrier
- Bulldog
- Chinese Shar-pei
- Chow Chow
- Dalmatian
- Finnish Spitz
- French Bulldog
- Keeshond
- Lhasa Apso
- Löwchen
- Poodle
- Schipperke
- Shiba Inu
- Tibetan Spaniel
- Tibetan Terrier

The Herding Group

The dogs in this group were bred to help shepherds and ranchers herd or "drive" their livestock. Many of the following breeds were formerly in the Working Group before the AKC created the Herding Group in 1983.

All of the breeds within this group have the innate ability to control the movement of other animals. An amazing example of this is the little Corgi, which is probably 10-12 inches tall at the shoulders. To drive the herd a Corgi will use their little bodies by leaping into the side of a cow or nipping at its heels. It's quite a sight.

Today, most Herding dogs will never encounter a farm animal. However, their herding instincts are still there. Many will try to herd their human families, especially children or other household pets. The call we receive most often is how to stop a dog from this group from nipping at the heels of children.

Additionally, dogs within this group are extremely intelligent. Due to this intelligence, it is very important that they receive proper training.

Many within this group need plenty of room to romp around and need plenty of exercise. Given the right training and exercise these intelligent dogs can make wonderful companions.

These 18 breeds make up the Herding group:

- Australian Cattle Dog
- Australian Shepherd
- Bearded Collie
- Belgian Malinois
- Belgian Sheepdog
- Belgian Tervuren
- Border Collie
- Bouvier des Flandres
- Briard
- Canaan Dog
- Collie
- German Shepherd Dog
- Old English Sheepdog
- Polish Lowland Sheepdog
- Puli
- Shetland Sheepdog
- Welsh Corgi (Cardigan)
- Welsh Corgi (Pembroke)

The Miscellaneous Class

There are several hundred purebred dogs throughout the world that are not yet recognized by the AKC.

According to the AKC, "When the Board of Directors is satisfied that a breed is continuing a healthy, dynamic growth in the Miscellaneous Class, it may be admitted to registration in the Stud Book and the opportunity to compete in regular classes."

There are currently nine breeds in the AKC's Miscellaneous class:

- Beauceron
- Black Russian Terrier
- German Pinscher
- Glen of Imaal Terrier
- Neapolitan Mastiff
- Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever
- Plott Hound
- Redbone Coonhound
- Toy Fox Terrier

By Angela R. Grier

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