

## BEFORE YOU THINK OF GETTING A DOG.....



Please ask yourself the following 10 questions?

1. Are you, and all those who live with you, committed to spend 15+ years providing health care, food, grooming, training and attention to a dog? Do the people who live with you also want a dog?
2. Do you have the time and/or resources available to take your dog for walks and to the vet? To bath, brush, clip, and, otherwise, groom your dog as often as necessary? To hover the floors daily and to wash the dogs bedding at least once a week? Will you want to play and work on training your dog on a daily? Are you willing to take your dog to puppy socialisation and obedience classes? Where will you walk your dog? Does your local park allow dogs off the lead or will you have to travel further a field to allow your dog to run and play with the ball?
3. Are there lifestyle-altering events that could occur in your foreseeable future? - A baby, caring for an elderly family member, a house move, job uncertainty or promotion, etc. How would you deal with these changes as they impacted your ability and time available to care for a dog?
4. Is your personality conducive to dog ownership? Do you often feel 'stressed out'? Do you like to have total control over your environment or 'space'? Are you a 'neat freak' enjoying a clean house and car? Are you flexible and patient? Answer honestly - nobody but you will know AND, more importantly, nobody but you will have to live with the results of your trying to 'fit' your personality to a dog.
5. Are you physically able to care for a dog? Will you be able to exercise the dog adequately and are you physically able to bend to pick up the dog's poo? Do you have any medical conditions that would make it difficult now or in the near future that will make it difficult to care for the dog? Are you economically able to provide care for a dog? Have you estimated the minimum cost of dog ownership covering food, vet bills and boarding costs?
6. Is your environment prepared for a dog and/or are you willing to make the investment of time and money necessary to insure that it does? Is your garden or a portion of it, fenced to a height of at least 5 ft? If your dog will be outside in the garden for any period of time, will you provide a secure and comfortable shelter for your dog? Have you thought about where the dog will be going to the toilet and how often you will have to collect the poo? If the dog is male, where will it cock its leg to wee?
7. Do you travel frequently? Will it be difficult for you to find quality care for your dog when you are away? How much does boarding cost on a daily basis and how much notice do they need to take your dog?
8. Will your dog be alone for long periods of time, daily or at weekends or evenings? Can you arrange for the dog to be let out in the garden for a romp, given fresh water, medication, and playtime, as necessary, during the day? Will you be prepared to spend time with your dog immediately upon arrival home or will you be committed to cooking dinner for the family, etc.? Or, will you become angered and frustrated by behavioural issues that may arise due to the fact that your dog is alone for long periods of time or is ignored due to other commitments? i.e., relieves him or herself indoors; chews up a blanket, your shoes, your favourite chair cushion; barks incessantly, causing your neighbours to become angry or, perhaps, even call the dog warden on you; etc. If digging, chewing, etc. are likely to result in your packing your dog off to a shelter, please reconsider your decision to get a dog.
9. If this is in your plans, we suggest you revisit the question "Why do I/We want a dog?"
10. Do you really LOVE dogs? If you are truly motivated by your love of dogs, or a particular dog, you most likely don't need this page. You've done your homework and are ready for a lifelong commitment. You will train and play with your dog, provide appropriate veterinary care and nutrition, you will bath and groom him or her, happily, and the occasional behavioural problem won't throw you for a loop.