

# Ten Steps for Successful Dog Ownership

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“Dogs are our link to paradise.  
They don't know evil or jealousy or discontent.  
To sit with a dog on a hillside  
on a glorious afternoon  
is to be back in Eden,  
where doing nothing was not boring,  
it was peace.”

- Milan Kundera

# Introduction

Dogs have been bred by people for thousands of years to do work and be friends for humans. Because dogs are smart and friendly, they are called "man's best friend."

Owning a dog can be a positive, joyful experience for the entire family. The decision to own a dog is an important one that should not be taken lightly, because a dog is not a fun diversion, a small person with fur, or an entertaining gift. Owning a dog requires a commitment from you that will last the lifetime of the dog.

A dog is an important member of the family. The time and effort you spend caring for your dog will be returned to you in the form of the lifelong loyalty and friendship that you will receive from your dog. He will provide you with a friend to talk to, be an entertaining companion, provide a sense of security and protection for your family, and bring joy to your household.

Being a "parent" to a companion animal can be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life. There are many things to consider when choosing the right dog for you. Also, there is a lot of responsibility and caring to ensure a successful, loving, and productive relationship with your dog.

Owning a dog is similar to raising a child. You must be a responsible parent to your dog just as you would to a child. Being a responsible, loving dog owner will bring you many benefits, the most important of which is the trust and friendship of a pet who will love you unconditionally for its entire life. Owning a dog is a big responsibility and can even be costly when you factor in trips to the vet, having the dog groomed, and taking care of unexpected medical expenses. The hardships involved in dog ownership are well worth your time and

money. You will never find a more loyal, devoted friend than a dog who loves you unconditionally. Owning a dog is one of life's great joys.

## Chapter 1. Commitment and Desire

Dog ownership is a long-term commitment because most healthy dogs live about 10 years or more. The following is a checklist that addresses some of the things you'll need to consider prior to getting a dog.

Think about:

- Proper food and shelter
- Annual inoculations/tests/checkups
- Neutering/spaying
- Adequate attention and safe exercise
- Care while you vacation/travel
- Known allergies of family members
- Initial and ongoing training
- Licensing
- Medical emergency costs
- Preventing your dog from wandering or becoming a nuisance to others
- A ten year commitment (or more!)
- Bathing and grooming requirements
- The dog's temperament
- Whether you really have the time, patience and money needed to train it (and yourself)
- If you can train the particular breed (some breeds are easier to train than others)
- Whether you can handle dog hair all over the place
- If you are allowed to own dogs where you live
- If you have suitable living conditions

- If you can afford veterinary care and food

Remember a Dog is for Life! When you get your dog, keep in mind that you are responsible for him for his entire lifetime. That could be for up to 16 or 17 years. Your dog needs care even when he is old and not so healthy.

## Chapter 2. Has his own space

Your companion will need a spot just for him. An indoor living space he can go where he will not be pestered by children, other pets, and visitors. Somewhere he can just hang out that's quiet and warm, with no one bothering him. This can be a crate, a blanket in a corner, a basket, or a doggy bed. He'll need protection from the heat, cold air, drafty conditions, and dangerous objects. Dogs are creatures of habit and thrive on a routine, so give your pet his own space where he is comfortable sleeping and spending time alone, a place he can use as his "den". If he's a puppy he'll sleep as much as 20 hours a day!

You don't want to overwhelm your pet with his new surrounding, so introduce the household gradually. Begin with the areas in which your dog will spend the most time. Usually the outdoor area where you want your dog to eliminate is a good place to start. After he has used it, praise him and then go indoors and introduce the rest of the family. Next, with your dog on a leash, show him the eating and sleeping areas that you have already set aside for him. The first few hours and days need to be quiet without too much handling, excitement, and interaction. Let your dog adjust at his own pace. Different animals will take different amounts of time to get used to their new home. Some adjust in a matter of hours or days while others need weeks or perhaps a month or more. Just be patient during this stage.

## Chapter 3. Nutrition

There are many types of dog foods sold in pet shops and supermarket. Putting your dog on a proper diet is very important. Ask your veterinarian to recommend a proper diet for your dog, and what kind of treats he recommends. Just like humans, it is very unhealthy for a dog to be overweight. As your dog ages, his dietary needs will change - so at each checkup discuss this with your vet. Always have a clean bowl of fresh water available.

## Chapter 4. Vaccinations and Regular Veterinary Checkups

Vaccinations prevent the spread of infectious disease among animals. More importantly, they protect your pet from acquiring viral diseases and bacterial infections from an unvaccinated or sick animal. There are quite a number of different vaccines available in veterinary medicine, but there are three "core" vaccines that all dogs should have.

- Rabies is the most important vaccination all dogs should have. Rabies is a fatal disease. In all states, rabies vaccinations are required by law. The first rabies vaccination is good for one year. In many states subsequent vaccinations are good for three years. In other states, they are only valid for one year by law. Please check with your vet to determine the legal requirements in your state. Vaccinating your pet for rabies may literally save its life for two reasons. Rabies is a threat in many areas and it is a horrible disease. In addition, an unvaccinated pet that bites a human being, even by accident, is subject to long quarantine periods or even death for the purpose of

testing for rabies infection. Don't risk your pet's life. Get its rabies vaccination.

- DA2PPC (Also called DHPPC- sometimes DHLPPC) is the Distemper/Parvo booster. It also provides protection against Parainfluenza, Coronavirus, and Adenovirus.
- Bordatella (also known as "Kennel cough") is strongly recommended as one of the "core" vaccines because dogs can easily be infected with it even if they are never in a kennel situation.
- Other vaccines are available such as Giardia, Lyme's Disease, Leptospirosis, and even Ringworm based on your dog's need and exposure rate to these diseases.

Regular veterinary check-ups are an important part of keeping your pet healthy. Physical examinations can help veterinarians detect and treat problems early before they become potentially life threatening.

Examinations include listening to the heart and lungs as well as checking for obvious abnormalities in you pet's: Eyes, Ears, Nose, Mouth, Body, Coat, Skin, Legs, and Paws.

Discuss flea and tick control, worm detection, and dental care with your vet.

Ideally, dogs should be seen by their veterinarian at least once a year or more frequently if they are elderly or have special medical needs. Dogs are similar to humans and senior dogs may suffer from various organ system problems, osteoarthritis, loss of vision or hearing, and even memory loss or dementia. Fortunately, many of these problems can be successfully controlled with medication or by a simple lifestyle change.

## Chapter 5. Controlling your dog – the basics of Training

Proper training of your dog should begin when he is a puppy. The first four months of a dog's life are very important in the training of your dog. This is when they learn behaviors that they will practice in the future. You'll want to train your dog basic commands such as sit, stay, down, off, come, and no bark.

Obedience training is one of the best things you can do for your dog or puppy and yourself. Obedience training doesn't solve all behavior problems, but it is the foundation for solving just about any problem. Also, training opens up a line of communication between you and your dog and effective communication is necessary to instruct your dog about what you want him to do.

Dogs are social animals but without proper training, they will behave like animals. They will soil your house, destroy your belongings, bark excessively, dig holes in your yard, fight other dogs, and might even bite you. Nearly all behavior problems are perfectly normal canine activities that occur at the wrong time or place or are directed at the wrong thing.

For example, the dog will eliminate on the carpet instead of outside; the dog will bark all night long instead of just when a stranger is prowling around outside; or the dog will chew furniture instead of his own toys. The key to preventing or treating behavior problems is learning to teach the dog to redirect his natural behavior to outlets that are acceptable in the domestic setting.

Obedience training is also an easy way to establish the social hierarchy. When your dog obeys a simple request of 'come here, sit,' he is showing compliance and respect for you. You can teach your dog his subordinate role by teaching him to show submission to you in a paw raise (shake hands), roll over or hand lick (give a kiss). Most dogs love performing these tricks (obedience commands) for you which also acknowledge that you are in charge.

Obedience training should be fun and rewarding for you and your dog. A well-trained dog is more confident and can more safely be allowed a greater amount of freedom than an untrained one. A trained dog will come when called.

Many people wonder if it is possible to train puppies or possible to teach an old dog new tricks. Whatever the age of your dog, the right time to begin training is right now!

You might want to enroll in a local dog obedience training class to learn the basics. Then most teaching and training can and should be done in your home. It is best to begin training in an area that is familiar to your dog and with the least amount of distractions as possible.

When you feel both you and your dog are skilled at several obedience commands, then take these commands to different areas. If you want your dog to be obedient in your car, you'll want to train him in your car. Practice while the car is parked or while someone else is driving.

Keep the obedience training sessions short and sweet. It is dull and boring to schedule tedious and lengthy training sessions. Instead, integrate training into your daily routine. Make obedience training interesting and meaningful to your dog. Be sure that obedience

training infiltrates your dog's favorite activities and that your dog's favorite activities infiltrates training. Your dog's favorite activities should become training, so that training becomes the dog's favorite activity.

The single most important aspect of training is rewarding your dog for good behavior. The more times the dog is rewarded, the quicker he will learn. Therefore, it's essential that you set up situations repeatedly in order for your dog to get plenty of practice at doing the right thing. It's equally as important that you always praise your dog for good behavior instead of taking it for granted. It's easy to forget to praise good behavior because it goes unnoticed. But the very nature of misbehavior gets our attention. We don't notice when our dog is lying quietly, but excessive barking gets our attention. Take notice and praise him when he is chewing his own toys.

Praise and reward are the most important part of maintaining good behavior and preventing problems from arising.

Some dogs feel they are constantly yelled at with, "No, Stop that, Get off, Bad dog!" They tend to get used to it and so the reprimands become meaningless and are ignored. If most of our interaction with the dog is praise for good behavior, then reprimands will take on much more meaning. Whenever you find the need to reprimand your dog, immediately show him what you want him to do, and then reward him for getting it right.

If you catch him chewing the furniture, tell him, "Off!" Then immediately direct him to his own toys, enthusiastically entice him to chew on them and praise him for doing so.

If done correctly, your voice alone is sufficient for reprimand. A correct reprimand is short, sharp and immediate. Don't continue to

nag the dog and most important - never reprimand him unless you catch him in the act.

Also, you'll never hit, kick, slap, or spank your dog. This type of inappropriate punishment always creates more problems and usually makes existing problems worse. Not only will you have a barking, chewing dog, but one that is leery, hand-shy, fearful or aggressive. Include your dog in family outings, games, and general family life. Reward good behavior and yet do not spoil your dog. If you practice lots of patience, love and respect for your dog, you will receive the same from him.

### **Tips on Training**

- Don't train when you are in a bad mood.
- Keep training sessions short. (10 - 15 minutes, 1 or 2 times a day, 4 or 5 days a week).
- Always end on a positive note.
- Make the sessions fun! You want the time spent training to be the most fun your dog has with you, not the time he dreads.
- Lots of praise vs. corrections...at least 2 to 1. Make sure you are correcting behavior, not punishment. After all, this is learning time and it is totally unfair to punish a dog for something he doesn't know.
- If the dog is confused, go back to something he does well so that you can praise him. Put him away and try again later.
- Keep at it! Humans take 18 years before we think they are adults. Thank heavens most dogs start to mature at 18 months!

Enjoy your dog and remember to keep a sense of humor!

### **Housetraining**

Dogs are instinctively clean animals and will learn quickly with the proper tools and instructions.

- Establish a routine. Feed your pup at regular scheduled times, preferably 3 times daily. Most puppies will want to relieve themselves right after eating. Do not allow access to food all day long.
  
- Go outside with your pup so you can praise him for going potty. Take him out first thing in the morning, after each meal, after napping, after play, and right before bedtime.
  
- Choose 1 or 2 potty areas that your dog can associate with going potty. When he eliminates, lavishly praise his success so he associates outside potty time with praise.
  
- Keep your eyes on your pup while he's inside the house. If you catch him in the act, shout "NO!" to startle him. Then immediately take him out and if he finishes outside, then praise him again while you are outside.
  
- When you are unable to watch your puppy, he should be confined, preferably in his crate. This helps build bladder and bowel control - although you still need to let him out every couple hours to eliminate.
  
- Expect accidents. It will take some time for your dog or pup to learn – remember puppies cannot be expected to control their bladder for more than a couple hours.
  
- Do not punish accidents. Punishing only makes matters worse because your dog won't understand what he did wrong.

## Chapter 6. Essential pet supplies

When you visit the pet section of your favorite store or start perusing pet catalogs, you'll quickly see that you could spend a small fortune on your furry friend if you wanted to. However, there are some basic pet supplies that every dog will need.

- 1. A collar and ID tags.** A collar with identification is the most important thing you can buy for your dog.
- 2. Dog bowls.** You need at least one bowl for water and one for food.
- 3. Food.** Consult with your veterinarian on recommended food for your pet. Puppies, older dogs and dogs with various health issues may require special foods. Treats expand.
- 4. A bed, crate, or both.** A place he can call his own – his den.
- 5. A collar and a leash.**
- 6. Toys, toys, and more toys.** Your dog's age and chewing prowess determine the safest toys for him. You'll be amazed at how many different types of toys are available for your dog. You'll find a huge selection of stuffed animals (stuffedies), chewy bones, many varieties of balls, electronic toys, sisal ropes, and more to keep your dog entertained and help him work off doggy tensions.
- 7. Grooming supplies.** Most dogs need at least minimal grooming and a brush and comb are a good start. If you're planning on giving your dog baths instead of periodically taking him to a groomer, you'll want to buy doggy shampoo. Consult with your veterinarian as to what he recommends for your dog.

If you are buying a new puppy or adopting a dog try to get your shopping done before getting him home. Be prepared. Be sure to get the collar and ID tags on him ASAP.

## Chapter 7. Your dog's psychology - understand how your dog thinks

Take the time to understand and know how your dog thinks. Dogs do not think they are people, they think people are dogs. As the owner, you need to relate to the dog as a dog, rather than a furry person! Most important – you'll need to establish the fact that you are the top dog in their pack – you are the alpha dog.

One of the reasons why dogs make such good pets is the wonderful way they communicate with people. Your dog sees people, especially you, as an extension of its own canine family and is quick to interpret your mood and intentions.

In fact understanding how your dog communicates can make living with one a lot easier, especially when it comes to training. Dogs communicate through a series of signals including a variety of facial expressions, body postures, noises and scents. By understanding these body signals you should be able to work out who is 'top dog' in any confrontation or situation.

Just as people convey body language so does your dog!

### **His body:**

A dog that is feeling confident or aggressive will try to convey the impression of being a larger, more powerful animal by standing tall with its ears and tail erect. He might thrust his chest forward and may

raise the hairs around the neck and along his back (its hackles). It may also wave its tail slowly and growl.

A submissive dog will try to appear small and puppy-like because adult dogs will only chastise puppies - not attack them. The approach to a more dominant individual is likely to be from the side, crouching low with the tail held low and wagging enthusiastically. Some dogs try to lick the feet and face of the dominant dog or even roll on to its back.

### **Tail wagging:**

Loose, free tail wagging is a sign of pleasure and general friendliness. Exaggerated tail wagging, which extends to the entire rump, may be seen in subordinate dogs as well as those dogs with very short tails. However, the tail is also an indicator for other emotions. A tail waved slowly and stiffly, in line with the back expresses anger; a tail clamped low over the hindquarters is a sign the dog is afraid or anxious; and nervous dogs may stiffly wag their drooping tails as a sign of appeasement.

### **The look:**

The facial expressions of your dog will also tell you a lot about his mood - whether he is playful, excited, frightened, or anxious.

The ears are pricked when he is alert or listening intently, but are held back or flattened onto the head when expressing pleasure, submission, or fear.

To read his mood correctly, watch the eyes. Your dog's eyes will be wide open if it is angry but will appear narrow or half closed eyes when showing pleasure or submission.

Eye signals are an important part of communicating with your dog and allow you to assert your authority. In the wild, the pack leader can maintain control simply by staring at a subordinate dog. In most

cases, the two animals will stare at each other until one challenges the other or until one lowers its head and turns away.

Stern eye contact can be a good way of disciplining your dog and reminding him that you are the boss. Try to avoid a showdown. Remember - regular, gentle eye contact between you and your dear companion is reassuring for your dog and will go a long way towards reinforcing your relationship.

Talk to your dog. Tell your dog you love him every day. Even if you don't say "I love you" to your four-legged friend, look him square in the eyes and say something - anything. We all like to be acknowledged as members of the family. Dogs understand human language more than we give them credit for. Get your dog's attention just as you would a person: Use his name and look right at him. Many times the owner calls out the dog's name to scold him. Instead, it's far better for your dog to learn that pleasant words - no matter what they may be - follow his name. Most important, your relationship will be better as a result of these intimate daily dog talks. We all like to be confided in and told we're loved. Dogs are no exception.

## **Chapter 8. Challenge your dog's mind - teach him new tricks**

Dogs are very intelligent animals and they do very well in environments where they have plenty to do. City dogs are often required to spend substantial periods of time inactive.

But most dogs if given a choice want to be active. In fact, some dogs don't enjoy the city life at all and will drive their owners crazy - racing

around the house, tearing the pillows, chewing on shoes or worse.

Dog's have a lot of energy!

Not too long ago, most dogs lived in the country and spent their days exploring the grounds, following the tractor, rounding up the livestock, playing with the kids, and napping under the shade of an oak tree.

However, the average city dog experiences a very different reality - after a night's sleep, they get a brief morning walk around the block to eliminate, followed by breakfast served in a bowl. The dog then snoozes while the owner prepares for his day, takes a long nap on the bed until the dog walker comes at mid-day for a 30 minute leashed walk in the park, followed by an afternoon nap until the owner comes home. The lucky dog will spend another 30 minutes walking with the owner about the neighborhood, maybe share a quick game of fetch in the hallway, have dinner in a bowl, a cuddle on the sofa watching television with the owner before bed. Then the same boring routine starts again the next morning.

Most breeds of dogs were developed to perform specific jobs for people, such as guarding, herding, or hunting; work that demands physical stamina and mental concentration. When we choose to open our home to a dog, it becomes our responsibility to meet the behavioral needs of the dog by providing appropriate outlets for his physical and mental energy.

They say that if people don't use their brains, cells begin to deteriorate. Dogs love to solve problems, especially ones that involve food. Food toys are a great way to enrich your dog's world. All animals enjoy spending time and effort obtaining food. It has been shown that if given a choice between free food and food that requires work, such as searching or manipulating an object, animals prefer to work for their food.

So rather than give your dog his food in a bowl, for free, give him a puzzle to solve. Offer the dog his dinner in a Kong, a Goodie Ship, or a Buster Cube. Hide small containers of food around the house and release him to go find them. Take his bowl of food and toss the kibble into the backyard so he has to sniff around in the grass to find the small pieces of kibble.

Training is another excellent way to stimulate a dog's brain. In general dogs love to learn and even old dogs can learn new tricks. You can practice basic obedience manners, teach tricks, or set up a few obstacles in your backyard so your dog can demonstrate his agility. Short sessions of 5-10 minutes once or twice a day is best. Keep it light and fun for the dog (and for you!) by using food, play, and plenty of praise and enthusiasm.

If you want more formalized stimulation, try agility or flyball training. The sport of agility involves teaching the dog to jump, climb, and weave through various obstacles. Most dogs love to use their bodies and they love to "play" with their owners, so agility is especially popular among dogs. A well-trained agility dog responds to various commands, including turning right, left, going ahead, flipping behind, sit, down and stay.

In addition to obedience, agility, and flyball, there are unlimited activities for owners and their dogs, such as tracking, search and rescue, pet therapy, clicker training, freestyle, and so on.

Keep in mind even dogs with orthopedic problems need managed exercise to keep the muscles strong so they can support weak bones and joints. Swimming is great exercise for any dog but is especially beneficial for those with hip dysplasia. A tired dog is a good dog! Dogs need physical exercise that challenges their minds.

## Chapter 9. Grooming and bonding

Grooming your dog accomplishes much more than just making his coat look nice and shiny. Get your dog used to being brushed and bathed at an early age, and it will provide you with the opportunity to spend some quality time with him and check closely for any problems. Move the hair aside and examine the skin closely for signs of fleas, ticks or skin irritations. Look for any unusual problems with the coat such as mats, tangles, or dandruff. Mats and tangles can be carefully removed while grooming.

All dogs have sensitive areas that need to be groomed a little more gently and carefully than others. You'll also learn where your dog likes to be combed and brushed – this is helpful if you need to calm him during stressful times such as veterinary visits. Let your dog sniff the brush and comb before you begin grooming, and then talk to your pet in a reassuring tone while grooming. If the grooming procedure is made comfortable for your dog, he will begin to look forward to regular grooming sessions.

Regular grooming is essential to your dog's health and well-being. Regular combing and brushing will keep the coat clean and healthy. It will stimulate the skin, and allow the natural oils to circulate to the coat. It will also allow you to carefully check for potentially serious problems. Check areas for hair loss, inflammation, unusual tenderness, or lumps under the skin. Constant scratching in a particular area may also be an indication of a problem. Check with your veterinarian about any unusual problems found.

Comb in the direction of hair growth, combing small sections at a time, until the coat is tangle free. If the coat has a particularly stubborn knot or tangle, you may have to trim it off with scissors. If you are using combination comb, begin with the widely spaced teeth, and follow up with the finer teeth.

Begin brushing at the head, working toward the tail and down the legs. Regular brushing will help distribute the natural oils from the skin, producing a healthy, shiny coat. Brushing several times a week is recommended for most dogs.

Because puppies have short attention spans, select a time when he is less energetic. Begin with short grooming sessions – about five minutes. Constantly talk to your puppy in a gentle, reassuring tone while grooming to make him feel comfortable. Be sure to check his ears, paws, teeth, and underside during the grooming procedure. Soon he will become more comfortable to being handled and look forward to these sessions with you.

It is important to establish and adhere to a regular schedule of grooming sessions. Schedule these at a convenient time for both you and your dog. A good time to do this is after the dog has been walked, while he is relieved and calm. Select a time when you will not be interrupted and have ample time. You will soon see what frequency your dog requires.

Regular nail trimming is important to your dog's health. Use trimmers that are specially designed for dogs. Begin by holding your dog's paw firmly, and cut off the tip of the nail with a single stroke. Be careful to stop short of the blood vessel inside the nail. Follow up by filing your dog's nails with a nail file. Some dogs prefer having their nails ground down with a grinding tool instead of clipped.

Bath Time! Many dog owners prefer to bathe their dog at home rather than have a groomer do it. How big your dog is will make a big difference in where you choose to give him his bath. Small dogs can be easily be bathed in the sink or bathtub, but bigger dogs present a different situation.

- Have towels (and everything else you need) handy before you begin.
- Have the dog stand on a rubber mat in the tub or sink so he'll feel secure.
- Be careful and try not to get water in the ears.
- Remember to brush out all mats from the coat before bathing.
- Most dogs don't need a bath more than once a month. Bathing too frequently can dry out the skin and coat.
- The water temperature should be warm – not hot.
- Talk to him and praise him for being so good, reassuring him that a bath is a good thing!

A short-haired dog is fairly easy to bathe, especially if he's small. A hose attachment or a hose type shower massage can be a big help when using the sink or bathtub.

It's best to bathe a large dog in the bathtub (be prepared for a bath yourself) or in the yard when the weather permits.

Buy a good dog shampoo – you might ask your veterinarian what he recommends.

Before the dog even gets near the bath water, brush him well. All of the dead, shedding fur has to be removed from the coat and undercoat. If the dog has knots, tangles, or mats, they must all be removed before you bathe him. Brushing is necessary before and after the bath.

Wet the dog well from the neck to the tail, saving the head, face, and ears for later. Begin by shampooing the hind legs. Then do the tail and the rear end. Next, shampoo the body, chest, and front legs. Now, carefully wet the head, face, and ears. Lather those areas, being careful not to get suds in the dog's eyes. Now it's time to rinse, and rinse, and rinse, and rinse. First rinse the shampoo from the head, face, and ears, and then the body and legs. Don't forget the underside of the dog. To reach that area, have him stand on his hind legs by lifting his front paws. Keep rinsing until you no longer feel shampoo anywhere on the dog and the water runs clear. Any residue of shampoo remaining on the dog can cause itching, flaking, and skin problems.

When finished, wrap the dog in a towel to absorb excess water and to prevent him from shaking it everywhere. Then towel dry each part of the dog starting with his face, head, ears, body, legs, and then tail. A good towel drying can save lots of time. Finish up by drying him with a hair blower - make sure the dryer is set at a comfortable temperature, and don't hold it too close to the dog's skin.

Now pet your dog and give him a treat!

## **Chapter 10. Enjoy your dog**

Regardless of what kind of dog you have - big, little, smooth haired, shaggy, fast, slow, playful or dignified - dogs make wonderful companions. Enjoy him and remember he needs plenty of love, attention, and petting to be happy!

Scratch your dog's belly often!

Set aside time each day for play sessions. Apart from the obvious benefit of having fun together, play also provides an outlet for your dog's energy.

Take your dog on frequent walks. He will enjoy exploring the neighborhood and will benefit from the exercise. Make sure that you have a good strong leash and that you maintain control of him at all times.

Talk to your dog - he might understand all of your words, but he will enjoy the sound of your voice. Talking to your dog will make him feel involved.

Your dog will always appreciate a treat, and treats can be used as a supplement to his regular diet, as well as an excellent training aid.

Your dog will love you no matter what. Return the favor.

Keep your dog entertained by rotating his toys. Put old toys out of sight for a month or two and then bring them out again - your dog will enjoy them just as much as when they were new.

Always remember you are the center of your dog's world. Pet him, talk to him, play with him, and laugh with him. Let your dog know you value his company even when you're tired after a long day at work. He's spent the day anxiously awaiting your return. Reward that loyalty with your time. Let your dog know you value his company.

Try leaving the radio or television on when you leave your dog alone. The noise will keep him company.

Include your dog in family activities. Take him to the park or on outings to the beach, or to special activities. Your dog will love being out and about with you. A socialized dog is a happy dog!

Dogs love to be petted, and gives you time to be close and bond with him. It will also relax you.

Your dog's tail is a barometer of his emotions. Do what you can to keep it happily wagging.

Dogs can add another element of fun to a family vacation. Check ahead for lodging that accepts dogs. If flying, ask about travel accommodations for your dog when you make your reservations.

Your dog will want to be with you at all times, however for most people that isn't possible. Help your dog get used to being alone. Leave him each day with a minimum of fuss. When you come home just greet him calmly. This will teach him that your leaving is not something to be concerned about.

Give your dog a kiss, and see how many you get in return. Smile at your dog!

Dogs are pack animals by nature and generally enjoy the company of other dogs. Your dog may benefit greatly from having a companion to play with. Be as conscientious about getting a second or third dog as you were about getting the first - multiple dog ownership isn't for everyone, and some dogs do better as an only dog.

You aren't a dog owner just at Christmas, on the weekends, in the afternoon, or when you have spare time. You aren't a dog owner just when the dog is behaving, when he's a cute furry puppy, or when he's

winning awards. When you bring a dog into your family, that dog is yours for life. Your dog's life depends on you.

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## Ten Commandments For Dog Owners - Responsible Dog Ownership

1. My life is likely to last 10-15 years. Any separation from you will be very painful.
2. Give me time to understand what you want of me.
3. Place your trust in me. It is crucial for my well being.
4. Don't be angry with me for long, and don't lock me up as punishment. You have your work, your friends, your entertainment. I have only you!
5. Talk to me. Even if I don't understand your words, I understand your voice and when it's speaking to me.
6. Be aware that however you treat me, I'll never forget it.
7. Before you hit me, remember that I have teeth that could crush the bones in your hand, but I choose not to bite you.
8. Before you scold me for being lazy or uncooperative, ask yourself if something might be bothering me. Perhaps I'm not getting the right food, I've been in the sun too long, or my heart may be getting old and weak.
9. Take care of me when I get old. You, too, will grow old.
10. Go with me on difficult journeys. Never say, "I can't bear to watch it" or "Let it happen in my absence". Everything is easier for me if you are there. Remember, I love you.

The End

