



4 Essential Strategies for First-Time Pet Owners

Owning a pet is a privilege that comes with joy and companionship. It also comes with several [health benefits](#), including reduced stress and anxiety, enhanced mood, lower cholesterol, and relief from chronic pain. However, owning a pet also requires responsibility. If you're a first-time pet owner, here are four tips to help you and your pet have the best overall experience.

How to Choose a Type

The first part of owning a pet is knowing [what kind to get](#). Any kind of pet will require you to change your routine in one way or another, but you want to choose a pet that most fits your lifestyle. It helps to ask questions like:

- How much time do you have for giving the pet attention?
- Do you have someone else who could watch the pet if you travel?
- How large are your home and yard?
- Are there allergies in the household?
- How active are you?

Generally speaking, dogs require more attention to be happy than other kinds of animals (cats, birds, guinea pigs, etc.). Also, larger pets will need more room in the home to be comfortable, and pets who require a lot of physical activity would be better served by a large backyard. Just remember that if your pup spends a lot of time outdoors, you may need to put a flea collar on him to prevent him from attracting fleas. A flea collar doesn't take much maintenance, and there are even pesticide-free collars [available](#).

How to Prepare Your Home

After you choose what kind of pet is best for your lifestyle, it's time to prepare your home. If you live with family, delegate different responsibilities to each family member (morning feeding, afternoon walks, etc.). Also, [pet-proof your home](#) by hiding any electrical cords, removing any choking hazards from the floor, and storing cleaning chemicals and medicines out of reach. Furthermore, take a trip to the store and get some new toys for your pet's arrival.

You should also plan to do a significantly higher amount of cleaning. Not only can you expect potty incidents, but [pet dander](#) gets everywhere! Designate a living space that will be comfortable for the pet as well as easy to clean (rooms with hard floors are typically best). Also, using a quality vacuum cleaner that can handle the dander and hair will make your job a lot easier. Check out online reviews, [compare some features](#), and shop around to pick the best one for your household and your budget.

How to Help Them Acclimate

Depending on your pet's personality and history, it could take them a few days or a few weeks to settle into their new home. During this process, the key is to focus on making their acclimation smoother. Here are a few things you can do:

- Bring your pet home when you have a few days to give them extra attention, such as the beginning of the weekend.
- Bring some of your pet's [previous belongings](#) (crate, toys, blankets).
- Make sure your pet's living space is roomy enough for comfort but not isolated from everyone else in the household.
- Be cautious with your [affection](#), especially with rescue pets with a history of abuse.
- Allow your pet to go through the home, sniffing out their new surroundings.
- If you have to be out of town during this acclimation period, hire a [local pet sitter](#) to watch your pup and give him attention.

How to Form a Bond

[Forming a bond](#) with your new pet is much like developing a relationship with a person. You need to spend time with them doing something you both enjoy, and you need to communicate clearly. Pets are more visually oriented, so focus on how you signal to them more than what you

say. And make sure to train them! Training not only helps keep your pet safe, but it ultimately allows them more freedom and builds trust in your relationship. Furthermore, always stay calm, collected, and consistent in your reactions.

Although owning a pet takes responsibility, the benefits are well worth it. Consider your lifestyle when choosing what kind of pet to get, and take time to prepare your home for the arrival. Take steps to help your pet acclimate to their new surroundings, and be intentional in developing the bond that makes owning a pet so special. A little planning and preparation can do wonders in making your new adventure enjoyable for you and your pet.

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