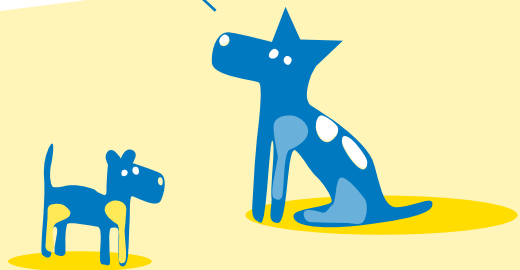


ALL ABOUT
ADOPTING
A DOG OR A PUPPY

PICK ME!



ABOUT DOG AND PUPPY ADOPTION

Adopting a dog or a puppy is a big commitment. A pet is a luxury that requires time, work and money. Wellington SPCA is committed to finding 'forever homes' for our animals. Before you decide on adopting, there are a number of things you should consider.

WHICH DOG OR PUPPY IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

What type of dog do you really want? Do you want a mellow, tranquil dog, or an active one? If you are thinking about getting an active dog, are you the type of person that enjoys exercise, and will you be happy to take the dog out for a long walk or run, every single day, rain or shine, so that your dog gets all the exercise needed? If you are looking for a jogging companion, then you should consider an adult dog as growing puppies shouldn't be taken on long runs until they are about 18 months old and their joints have strengthened.

Our animal care staff can help match you with a dog that suits your lifestyle.

IS YOUR PROPERTY SUITABLE FOR A DOG?

Dogs need adequate space to exercise around their home and good strong secure fencing to keep them contained. A Wellington SPCA inspector will come to your home to check your property before your dog or puppy adoption is finalised. They will be looking for these things:

- **A fenced area**, adequately sized for the dog you have selected, which is connected to the house. You do not have to have your whole property fenced, but the area needs to be large enough for your dog to potter around in when left home alone.
- **Fences high enough** and strong enough to contain the dog you have chosen. Fences must be made out of permanent materials. Temporary fencing like metal stakes and netting are not suitable.
- **Secure gates** with latches to keep them shut.
- **A warm, water-tight kennel** or dog door giving your dog access to the house. These can be purchased from Wellington SPCA's pet shop.

Wellington SPCA does not recommend, or adopt out to, properties where the dog will be:

- **kept in a kennel and run** – this does not allow the dog adequate exercise space if left for more than a couple of hours
- **tied to a fixed object or a running wire**, or contained using invisible or electric fencing. These containment methods do not protect your dog from other dogs coming on to your property and attacking your dog. Electric or sonic fences do cause your dog pain, and are not recommended.

ARE YOU PREPARED TO SHARE YOUR HOME WITH A DOG?

Sharing your home with a dog is hugely rewarding; however, it will require some adjustments to your own habits and how you live your life.

“Dog-proofing” your home

You will need to accept that living with a dog means taking the time and effort to set consistent rules for the dog around the home. Before getting a dog, you will need to “dog-proof” your home. You will need to decide where the dog can and cannot go. Are you happy for the dog to be on the sofa or bed? Are you prepared to be extra vigilant to ensure your personal items such as shoes, remote controls, electrical cords (that seem like good chew toys for your dog) are kept well away from them? This is a good time to teach children of all ages to pick up after themselves.

Toilet mistakes

Even previously house-trained adult dogs will make toileting mistakes inside when they move to a new home with new rules and timetables. Puppies will make lots and lots of mistakes while they are learning and developing bladder control. Puppies can only “hold on” for a few hours at a time, and this will mean getting up in the night to let your puppy out to toilet. Are you prepared to clean up after your dog for many months, over and over again, when it makes (inevitable) toilet mistakes inside?

House agreement

All of the people who will be living with the dog should be happy with both the decision to adopt a dog and the dog that has been chosen. Every member of your household needs to be prepared to care for and train the dog. It is essential that consistent rules are agreed on for the dog. If just one person lets the dog on the sofa, your dog will think it is always OK to be on the sofa, even if you do not want it there. You should also consider the impact a new dog or puppy may have on existing pets in the household.

The backyard dog

Dogs are pack animals and would never choose to live alone. They are companion animals that need to be a valued member of your family. Dogs that live outside all the time get lonely and are likely to develop problem behaviours, such as excessive barking, destructive chewing and digging, or escaping from the property.

A couple of walks a day with you to break the monotony of being alone **will not** provide adequate companionship for a dog. A dog should spend at least 5 hours a day inside with you. Consider an hour in the morning while you are getting ready to go out and another 4 hours in the evening, for example.

DOES YOUR LIFESTYLE OR FAMILY SUIT A DOG?

Are you renting?

Many dogs are surrendered to SPCAs or animal controls because the owner is moving and can't find a home where dogs are allowed at the property. If you live in rental accommodation, you will need your landlord's written consent before you can adopt a dog.

If you move, you also need to consider the difficulty you may face in finding a new adequately fenced home that allows dogs. Are you prepared to pay more for a home or move to a different suburb if you can't find a dog-friendly landlord in your area?

Consider dogs and children

It is not fair on either dogs or children to get a dog for the children to look after. Caring for a dog is a huge commitment, and it is too much responsibility for a child to be the primary caregiver.

Children and dogs or puppies should never be left unsupervised. Even the most placid, elderly or loving dog can accidentally knock over a small child and may snap if provoked with eye-poking, ear-pulling and other innocent, and not so innocent, childish behaviour. If there is no adult available to watch what is happening between the dog and the children, then the dog should be contained away from the children.

Children also need to be involved in training the dog and need to assert themselves as higher in the pack order than the dog. Learning to teach someone to do what you want with firm commands and praise can be very rewarding for even the youngest child and puppy.

Time away from your dog

How much time will your dog spend alone while you are at work? If you often work extended hours or regularly are away overnight for work or leisure, you need to consider how you can accommodate your dog's need for companionship into your lifestyle. Doggy daycare and dog walking services can be used to provide your dog with exercise and companionship when your work commitments take you away from the home for extended hours.

What about holidays?

Unlike a cat, dogs cannot just be left at home with a neighbour or pet feeding service popping in to feed and walk them while you are away for a weekend or longer holiday. Dogs will miss your companionship and get anxious if you do not come home.

When booking a holiday, you need to consider who will care for your dog and the costs associated with this care. A trusted dog-sitter who can live in your home with your dog can be a great solution. Friends or family members may enjoy providing this service, but may not always be available. Kennels are a popular choice to care for your dog, but book up fast, especially around Christmas and school holidays, so you will need to plan well in advance.

CAN YOU AFFORD A DOG?

To purchase a kennel, bedding, bowls, food, toys, crate and registration for a new dog will cost in the region of \$750. After that, there's the costs of looking after your dog. Here's a run down of an average annual cost of dog ownership:

Registration	\$100+
Food	\$1,200
Vaccinations and vet checks	\$100
Toys and treats	\$500
Worm and flea treatment	\$150
Holiday kennelling	\$120 per week
Training classes	\$100+
AVERAGE TOTAL:	\$2,270.00



REMEMBER! These costs don't include unexpected vet bills, doggy daycare or dog walking services if you're out a lot and your dog needs company and exercise. All these things can quickly mount up and can approach the cost of childcare!

TRAINING

All dogs and puppies require training. Training is an ongoing, lifelong activity. Wellington SPCA believes in positive reward-based training, which encourages your dog to repeat good behaviour. Positive reinforcement (rewarding the good and managing the bad) is a proven training method, which works much, much faster than other methods to achieve the behaviour you want. Outdated training methods using choke chains or punishment (often called 'correction') is not recommended. We do not suggest the use of electronic punishment aids such as electric shock or citronella collars, which cause pain or discomfort and can create more problems in a dog than they cure.

Obedience training

While at Wellington SPCA's animal centre, dogs are trained using a clicker to mark good behaviour and food treats to reward good behaviour. It is easy, fast and fun for you and your dog to learn this method of training. To get the best out of your dog, we strongly recommend joining a puppy pre-school, dog training club or attending dog training classes where you can train and enjoy spending time with your dog.

House training

You need to be prepared that your new dog or puppy will have accidents in the house while you are toilet training them. Punishing a dog for a toileting accident can make your dog more likely to soil inside, they may develop sneaky toileting behaviour (like going behind furniture), and it can significantly slow down the time it takes your dog to become fully house trained.

In most cases, an accident in the house is caused by the dog's owner not taking the dog outside often enough to go to the toilet or not reading the dog's signs that it needs to go outside. Puppies, in particular, need to be taken outside every hour, at first, while they are developing bladder control.

There are two main ways of house training your dog. Crate training uses the principle that dogs won't soil their beds. Paper training teaches a dog or puppy that there is an acceptable place to soil, and this area is gradually moved outdoors. Wellington SPCA's animal care staff can give you further information on these methods of house training.

Consistency

The key to all dog training is consistency. If you want your dog to travel in the back seat of the car, then don't occasionally allow the dog to ride in the passenger seat. If you don't want your dog begging at the table when you are eating, then don't occasionally treat your dog when eating at the table. Dogs are like children. They will constantly test the boundaries you have set for them.

DOES A DOG SUIT YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

Moving overseas?

Dogs live for 12–16 years on average. If you are planning on moving overseas permanently, you should consider if you're prepared to take your pet with you. Check with a specialist animal freight company for pet export requirements and approximate cost of freight.

Planning on having kids?

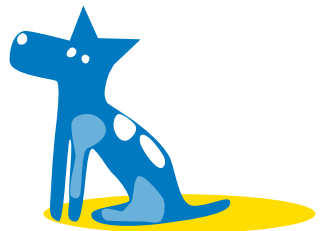
Having children changes your priorities. In most cases, this means more time spent on caring for your new baby and less time for your pet. You need to consider if you will have enough time to spend with your dog once a new baby arrives.

CONSIDER A TEST DRIVE

If you have thought everything through and still can't wait to get a dog or puppy, just consider one more thing. If you have never owned a dog before, or have not been the primary caregiver of a dog, try and talk to dog owners you know. What are the highs and lows of dog ownership? What would they change if they could go back in time? Would they have spent more time training in the early days? Would they have set new rules for the dog? Find out all you can.

Now you have more information, it is a really good idea to borrow a dog from a friend or family member for a week, or at least a couple of days. This will give you a good idea if you are ready for the full-time responsibility of a dog. You will have to walk the dog, feed it, keep it company, find a place for it to sleep and test out the practicalities of a dog taking up your sofa, bed, living room. Good luck!

GOOD LUCK!





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