

# GET PET READY

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## What Does It Mean to Be Pet-Ready?

Making the decision to bring a new furry friend into your life and your home via adoption is a truly wonderful thing. The decision should be a well-informed one though, as the commitment is lifelong, and something that you'll want to be ready to take on. So, how do you know if you're pet-ready?

As a first step to determining if you're pet-ready, simply use the three S's – **Schedule, Space and Self**.

### Schedule

You probably have a daily routine that you follow – work, childcare, keeping up your home, exercise, etc. Before you bring a pet into that routine, consider how it may need to shift or change completely with the addition of your new four-legged companion. It's also worth considering that in this regard, not all pets are the same, and some will require more life alterations than others. For instance, a dog is likely to have a bigger impact to your daily schedule than a cat might.

### Space

Look around your home; can you picture a new cat or dog in that space? It seems like an obvious consideration, but it's a critically important one too. Take the time to evaluate if your current living situation would accommodate a new pet and, if so, what kind of pet would really thrive in that particular home? 4-story walk up apartment? Maybe consider a younger dog that isn't going to struggle with stairs. Living in less than 1,200 square feet? Maybe that Saint Bernard puppy isn't your ideal pairing.

### Self

Now is the time to be really honest with yourself – are you ready to take on the commitment of caring for a new cat or dog? Being an adoptive pet parent is a marvelous gift, but it's not a totally selfless act. You're committing to loving and caring for this furry companion for the rest of his/her life, so be sure that you're ready when the time comes.



**If you are indeed feeling pet-ready, read on for some additional tips and advice for the start of your adoption journey!**

## 5 Signs You Might Be Ready to Adopt a New Pet

1

**You stop and pet every dog you pass on the street (after asking permission first, of course) and then make small talk with the human just so you can hang a bit longer.**

2

**You've been stocking up on adorable cat/dog toys... even though you don't actually have a cat or dog.**

3

**You have at least two items of clothing that feature adorable furry friends on them.**

4

**You offer to dog or cat sit for friends and family often... even when they don't ask you.**

5

**You follow @animalleague's puppy cam or kitten cam**

When it's time to select the right furry friend to love, make sure that you're thinking about your schedule, your home environment and your family. There's a pet out there for everyone - just be sure to assess the fit before you make your final decision. Check out [animalleague.org](http://animalleague.org) for animal shelters across the country where you can identify the best fit for you with your local adoption team.

Long-Haired Cats

**Good Fit For:** People who love a fluffy feline and are dedicated to regularly brushing and detangling fur

Short-Haired Cats

**Good Fit For:** People who don't want to deal with grooming and are looking for a low maintenance pet - great for first-time pet owners

Hypoallergenic Cats

**Good Fit For:** People who love cats and want a low maintenance pet but are allergic to cat fur

Small Dogs

**Good Fit For:** People who live in apartments or spend a lot of time relaxing at home (small dogs generally need less exercise than bigger dogs)

Mid-Size Dogs

**Good Fit For:** People who like a "big dog" but don't have the space or strength required to handle a large or giant breed

Large Dogs

**Good Fit For:** People who have ample outdoor space or time to take your dog for daily long walks to stretch their legs. Also consider the strength needed to handle a big dog

Hypoallergenic Dogs

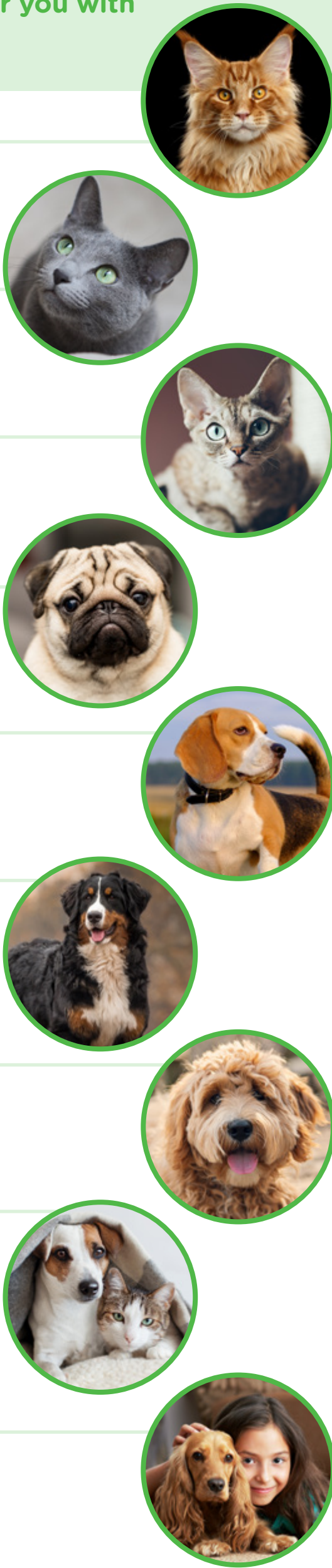
**Good Fit For:** People who have always wanted a dog but are allergic to pet dander and/or fur

Pet-Friendly

**Good Fit For:** People who already have other pets - before adopting a new pet, consider its history with the same type of animal that you have at home, as well as your current pet's attitude toward other animals; if you can, try to arrange a meet and greet for the animals

Child-Friendly

**Good Fit For:** Families with small children or people who are looking to start a family in the near future - be sure to ask your shelter guide about an animal's personality and behavior around children



Ensure your pet has all the necessary health care.

As a new pet owner, the health of your four-legged companion is now in your hands. But not to worry, there are a few simple steps to ensure your pet lives a long and healthy life. Visit [animalleague.org](http://animalleague.org) for North Shore Animal League America's resources for additional tips.



Find a local veterinarian that you can trust



Spay and neuter your pet, which can lower the risk of health problems



Schedule a visit with your veterinarian each year for a complete nose-to-tail wellness check-up



Keep up-to-date on your pet's vaccinations, dental cleanings and preventative medication

Speak with your veterinarian about parasite protection to ensure you are protecting your pets and family from parasites



Make sure your pet has a well-balanced diet, plenty of exercise and regular groomings



Pet proof your home and keep harmful or poisonous items out of reach



Properly protect your new family member (and your bank account) from unexpected illnesses and injuries with comprehensive pet insurance



Bringing home a furry friend is an adjustment for you and the animal.

So you’re finally able to bring your new furry friend home – now what?

The start to your journey as a pet parent is all about patience. Like any new relationship, it requires time and understanding to flourish. And before you know it, you’ll be best friends. There are just a few things to keep in mind along the way:

All shelter animals are waiting to be adopted into loving responsible homes. Lucky for them, there are people like you who come to their rescue. Leaving their shelter environment is exciting but also scary – “home” to you is just another new place to them.

The key is to go slow and let your pet take their time adjusting to their new home. Some animals may feel confused or scared at first. Some will even feel overwhelmed and want to hide or escape. If they do, reduce the amount of space you offer them to one room. Provide your pet with their own area, a safe haven where they can go and be left alone. How quickly the animal adjusts to your home is dependent on their individual personality and your patience – go at their pace, not yours!

You may notice some unusual behavior, which is completely normal at this stage. The transition into a new home may affect the animal’s appetite, for instance. After spending much of their time in a cage at a shelter and then quickly transitioning to a new environment, the animal may also become easily over-stimulated and exhibit unruly and excessively active behaviors. “Less is more” in the first few weeks – limit the amount of company you have and refrain from taking your pet to other new places.

At the end of the day, the best way to get “pet-ready” is to temper your expectations ahead of time. Nothing in life worth having comes easy, and the special bond you’ll form with your new pet is worth the wait. They’ll return the favor a hundred times over.



Make sure your new pet has all the essentials for their new home. Find a checklist that you can use below, and don’t forget to add a little bit of TLC!



Kitten/Cat

- Food
- Litter Box
- Litter/Scooper
- Litter Box Liners
- Water & Food Bowls
- Scratching Post
- Grooming Supplies
- Pet-Grade Cleaning Supplies • the Swiffer Pet line can be a good place to start
- Toys
- Carrier
- Treats
- Bed



Puppy/Dog

- Food
- Crate
- Water & Food Bowls
- Safe Chew Toys
- Training Treats
- Housebreaking Aids
- Grooming Supplies
- Pet-Grade Cleaning Supplies • the Swiffer Pet line can be a good place to start
- Stain & Odor Remover
- Pooper-scooper
- Leash & Collar
- Bed

Prepare proper supplies.

SHED HAPPENS.





## Set a routine.

Once you bring your new pet home, you should slowly begin implementing a routine in order for your new furry friend to comfortably acclimate. The initial transition into a new home can be confusing and overwhelming for a pet but, by using the steps below, you and your pet should be living harmoniously in no time.

### Set a schedule for feeding, housetraining, playing, exercising and sleeping

Figure out a routine that works for both you and your pet to ensure all of your pet's basic needs are met

### Determine fixed places for feeding, housetraining, playing, exercising and sleeping

With time, your pet will learn to associate areas with certain activities, which will eliminate accidents or unwanted behavior

### Set aside a specific time to train your pet

Training a pet can be exhausting for everyone involved, so only practice cues and behaviors for a fixed amount of time each day

## 3 Ways to Help You Train Your Pet

1

**Be consistent and follow through with your cues.**

Inconsistencies in training can be very confusing to an animal, so make sure that you are always using the same cues and following through with them. This practice will help your pet to better associate cues with positive reinforcement.

2

**Use positive reinforcement and time outs as training tools.**

By using positive reinforcement, your pet will learn what is considered acceptable behavior. Use treats, toys, and praise to positively reinforce, which will encourage repeated behaviors. Time outs are a great technique to show your dog that there are consequences for undesirable behaviors, without necessarily breaking your dog's trust in you.

3

**Be patient.**

Teaching your pet new skills and tricks takes time, however, every time that you use a training tool, your pet is closer to understanding acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. It will be worth the wait once they learn!

# ENJOY HAVING A FURRY FRIEND TO LOVE!

Share your adoption story and updates of how your rescue pet is doing in your home to social media!

Don't forget to tag [@animalleague](#) and show your appreciation by donating to your local shelter.

CAN YOU TELL  
ME THE STORY



ABOUT HOW  
YOU RESCUED  
ME AGAIN?