

Harnessed to Hope



Northern Breed Rescue

www.nbrescue.com

So You Think You Want a Dog?

Before you begin your search, there are a few things to keep in mind. Owning a dog is a life-time commitment and should not be entered into lightly. You must make sure that you are ready for a dog. If so, here are some tips to help you find the right dog for your home.

Research the Breeds

Make sure to choose a breed that will be a good match for you and your family. Does it fit your lifestyle? Will your home fit the needs of the dog? What are you looking for in your dog in terms of energy level, grooming needs, training needs, personality, instincts, etc? Are you prepared to provide the proper veterinary care and training for a dog? Once you decide on the breed try to meet some dogs of that breed in person. Dog shows and other dog events are a good place to start.

What Age of Dog is Best for You?

Do you want a puppy or an adult dog? If you want a puppy, are you prepared to deal with house training, crate training, teething and chewing? Are you prepared to supervise the puppy as you would a small child? Are you prepared for a baby animal that can't go for more than a few hours without going outside to go potty?

Finding Your Dog

Consider either fostering or adopting a rescued dog. There are many wonderful rescue groups for different breeds. Despite what many think, rescued dogs are not problem dogs. They are dogs that belonged to someone who didn't understand the breed beforehand. Or, they are signed over to rescue groups due to finances, moving, or other changes in situations. They are often times trained and spayed or neutered, which more than compensates for adoption fees.

Bringing Your Dog Home

Before you bring your dog home, make sure you dog proof your home. Look around. It is a good idea to get down to the same eye level as the dog to see things from the dog's point of view. Keep electrical cords, medications, household cleansers and other hazardous items out of reach and secure. If you have a fence, make sure that it is secure and escape proof. If you don't have a fence, make sure everyone in the household understands that the dog must be leashed at all times when outside.

Make sure you have or make arrangements for proper ID – a collar with tags and a microchip will help to ensure that your dog will be returned to you if it should happen to

slip away.

Providing Food and Shelter

You dog should be part of your family, which means it should spend most of its time with you. Dogs are pack animals. When they are not with a pack of dogs, their human family becomes their pack. Dogs are not happy living outside while you are inside.

When your dog is outside, make sure it has shade in the summer and shelter from the elements, such as rain and snow. Fresh water should be available at all times. Talk to a reputable pet supply representative to make sure that you are feeding the right diet to your dog. If you have adopted your dog from a rescue, they can make recommendations as well. Use healthy treats.

Veterinary Care

Take your dog to a veterinarian as soon as is practical after you bring it home. This begins to build the relationship with a vet and helps to ensure that your pet is healthy. Keep vaccinations up to date and use flea and tick prevention during the spring, summer and fall. Heartworm prevention is also important.

Grooming

Whether you take your dog to a professional groomer or groom the dog at home, all dogs need proper grooming to keep them healthy. Trim their nails, brush their teeth and make sure their ears are clean. For double-coated breeds, weekly brushing is a good idea.

Training

Obedience classes are one of the best investments you can make for you and your dog. Obedience classes help you learn to train your dog correctly, help socialize the dog with other people and other dogs, and is also great for developing a relationship with your dog. Talk to other dog owners to find obedience instructors. Ask to watch a class to see if you feel comfortable with the style of training. Talk to the trainer about their technique and their experience with your particular breed. Training your dog with at least basic obedience commands will make your life easier and is responsible dog ownership. Respect your neighborhood and others by cleaning up after your pet. Set a good example for other dog owners.

Supervise

Never leave your pet unattended with children no matter how calm the temperament may be. This is for the protection of you and your dog. Not all children know how to treat animals with respect. Even the calmest and most tolerant dog can be provoked by children who poke its eyes or pull its ears, tail or fur.

Teach children the proper way to meet and greet your dog by reminding them to always ask before petting your dog and how to properly pet your dog. Do not let children pester your dog while it is eating or sleeping.

Spay and neuter

There are so many pets in shelters - do your part to control pet overpopulation by having your pet spayed or neutered. Leave breeding to the experts.

Enjoy Your Dog

There are many ways to enjoy the company of your dog. Something as simple as daily walks or playing fetch to more involved events like agility will keep your dog healthy, happy and help prevent destructive behavior.

Your dog will be a lifetime friend. They will be faithful to the end. It is your responsibility to provide the love, care and commitment.

*Maxine Vandermark
Harnessed to Hope Northern Breed Rescue Behavior Team*