

## Advice for the Single Dog Owner

**Author Betsy Rosenfeld offers a guide to living and dating with a dog.**

*By Katy French*

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Betsy Rosenfeld knows a thing or two about being a single dog owner. Her Labrador Retriever mix Bella lived with her in four cities, through five boyfriends and plenty of adventures. So when it came time for Rosenfeld to give advice to all the single ladies – and men – in her new book, “The Complete Single’s Guide to Being a Dog Owner,” she had plenty of inspiration.

“I wanted to write something to help others learn from my mistakes,” Rosenfeld says.

Rosenfeld found Bella as a stray and knew that though living with a dog can be challenging, taking care of a dog alone is especially difficult. Rushing home after work and forking over cash for vaccinations instead of a new pair of shoes is a major lifestyle change. Rosenfeld says singles seeking the companionship of a dog often underestimate the commitment required.

“If I can prevent one dog from ending up in a shelter, it’s all worth it,” she says.

In the book, Rosenfeld draws from her experiences both as a single owner and an active member of the animal-rescue community to create a comprehensive guide to getting, caring for, living and even dating with a dog. A longtime animal lover, Rosenfeld has rescued more than 200 dogs and seen many dogs given up because of the owner’s poor decisions.

“I don’t want to discourage people from getting a dog,” Rosenfeld says. “But I want people to be realistic about what that entails.”

Singles have a particularly unique challenge as the sole caretakers of their pets. Therefore, she encourages potential owners to seriously think about what they will be getting themselves into by thoroughly researching a breed and considering the financial obligations and the emotional energy they are willing to extend. The book covers everything from finding a dog, training and vet visits to diet and exercise, building a bond and traveling.

But while much of that may seem overwhelming, Rosenfeld feels that having a dog can greatly benefit a single’s life. “We live in a tough world: The economy is tough, work is tough, but dogs are a source of unending, unconditional love in a world that isn’t always so nice.”

A dog can also complement a single’s lifestyle, and even help their personal life. “It’s a great booster for your self-esteem, a great way to get out in the world, walk, exercise, and be social,” she says.

Even when it comes to the inevitable issue of dating with a dog, a difficulty singles may face, Rosenfeld says they can actually help. The way a date treats your dog – or your dog reacts to them – can be an excellent indication of their character. And when it comes to the more technical details, Rosenfeld’s book offers useful tips like purchasing a pattern of sheets that will help you disguise your best friend’s hair from your new bedmate.

But most of all, Rosenfeld believes that being a single dog owner encourages personal growth. Her own dog taught her a lot about being responsible.

“I learned how to take care of myself by taking care of her,” she says.

Raising Bella also gave her confidence in her ability to have a meaningful relationship. “There’s nothing better than being your dog’s only owner,” Rosenfeld says. “I think the bond that develops between one person and one dog is so strong.”

Though Bella has since passed, Rosenfeld now enjoys spending time with her rescued Labrador Retriever Ranger. You can read more about her rescue efforts at her blog, [LoveThyDog.com](http://LoveThyDog.com)

“The Complete Single’s Guide to Being a Dog Owner” is on sale now.



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