

Buying or Rescuing a Puppy

Find out the best way to get a new puppy.

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Think you're ready to adopt a puppy? Consider this: Most people spend more time shopping for the right Ranger than the right Rover. A good car can give you five, maybe eight years of dependable performance. A puppy is for life-their life, which can be up to 15 years (or longer!) of devoted puppy companionship.

People should give as much, even more time, to selecting a puppy that will fit best in their households as they do to choosing a car, says Rolan Tripp, D.V.M., a veterinarian and animal behavior expert from La Mirada, California. Spending time on the front end-before you adopt a puppy-can pay off in the long run. You will find a dog that, ideally, fits into your lifestyle.

Puppies are in plentiful supply. The true challenge comes in shifting through the too-many choices from the too-many sources: newspaper classified ads, the internet, breeders, pet-supply stores, humane shelters, neighbors, and literally, the streets.

Before you buy, do your homework. Assess your familys wants, needs and lifestyle. Lets look at some options.

Buying Through a BreederWith more than 400 breeds available worldwide, selecting a perfect puppy can be daunting. A good breeder shows genuine interest in the breed, and a good buyer is also someone keenly interested in the breed and not just price shopping for a puppy, says Gwen Platt, corresponding secretary for the Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of Southern California. This Escondido resident has been breeding Champion-caliber Corgis since 1963.

Platt recommends potential buyers visit a few breeders a few times each to see how they care for puppies and what the home environment is like. Learn all you can before you buy, urges Platt.

A good breeder:

- Ensures that the nursing mother and her puppies are kept in a clean whelping box.
- Raises the litter in his or her home, not a kennel.
- Invites you to visit the litter several times before the puppies are ready for adoption.