

Best Pup Ever

Take the time to find out about the needs of a breed or mix of breeds before you bring a puppy home.

Susan Ewing

Training Is a Must All dogs, no matter what their size or breed, benefit from socialization and training. Socialization means exposing your dog to new sights and sounds, to new situations, and to other people and animals. Will you have the time to take your dog places? Will you have the time to introduce it to all kinds of people, or will it be stuck at home all day, every day?

A dog is a pack animal and it needs a leader. Dogs need someone who will teach them the rules and enforce those rules. Both you and your dog will be happier if you train it. Twelve years is a long time to have a dog begging at the table, and a 100-pound dog that greets people by jumping on them can be more than annoying-someone could get hurt.

Will you have the time to attend an obedience class, and are all the family members willing to enforce the rules and help with the training? Many times, people underestimate what it will take to train, exercise and otherwise care for a dog.

All breeds can be trained but some are easier than others, Arden says. Some are definitely not for the novice dog owner. People can get in over their heads.

Anderson agrees. Rottweilers, for instance, don't do well without a lot of supervision and interaction. They can also be rather single minded and focused. They stay on track. Its up to the owner to make sure it is the right track, Anderson says. Get Informed Consider your lifestyle carefully, and most importantly, find out all the information you can about dogs in general and about types of dogs that might fit into your family. Don't just pick a dog with your eyes, Anderson advises. Read books and magazines. Talk to veterinarians. Contact breed clubs and talk to people who live with the breed.

If you take the time to match your lifestyle with a dogs energy level, temperament and grooming needs, when you finally choose your puppy, it really will be the best puppy ever.