
Be a Responsible Dog Owner

So what does being a "responsible dog owner" really mean? It simply means "be good to your dog", or "be good to your neighbors."

Let's start with the basics - food and water, shelter, exercise, training, and veterinary care. The food and water part is easy - all you have to remember is that, like you, dogs need a good diet to stay healthy. Ask your Veterinarian for advice on feeding your pet a regular, nutritionally balanced diet.

The basics of dog care

Providing shelter for your pet is easy, too. Dogs belong inside the house! It is nice to have a fenced yard, complete with dog house, but a dog should never be left outside for long periods of time as they crave your companionship. They should stay inside with the family!

Exercising your dog

Playing with your dog, and walking him at least twice daily will provide quality exercise for your pet and keep him in top shape. Also, you will get just as many rewards from this play time activity as your pet will.

Training your dog

Enrolling your new dog in an obedience class is also a good idea. Training teaches your dog both discipline and kindness, increases the human-animal bond and will help prevent behavioral problems that can come up down the road.

Keep your dog healthy

Regular veterinary check-ups are a must. Keep your pet up-to-date on shots and have any illnesses or injuries treated promptly. If you do not have a Veterinarian for your new pet, inquire with your local Humane Society or simply ask a friend who owns a pet for a referral.

Spaying and Neutering

The single most important step you can take to be a responsible pet owner is to have your new pet spayed or neutered. Spaying your female dog means having her uterus and ovaries surgically removed. To neuter your male dog is to have his testicles removed.

The result of having this surgery performed is that your pet will no longer be able to bring more homeless animals into the world. This fact alone is so

important because over 4 million dogs and cats must be humanely destroyed each year due to a lack of homes for them all.

Spaying and neutering also has many health benefits for your pet. Spaying eliminates the possibility of uterine or ovarian cancer and greatly reduces the incidence of breast cancer.

Neutering reduces the incidence of prostate cancer and neutered animals are also less likely to bite, run away, or get into fights. To top it all off, dogs who are spayed or neutered live longer, healthier lives, and make better, more affectionate companions.

Simply put, if you cannot afford to spay or neuter your pet, you can't afford to own a dog.

License Your Pet

License your pet and put an ID tag on him and avoid a major problem that a lot of pet owners make. If your pet becomes lost and does not have a ID tag, you may be plain out of luck.

An up-to-date license and rabies tag are required by the law in most cities and counties. A collar and tag are a lost dog's "ticket" home. Be sure to have the license number, address, and phone number on the tag.

Be a Responsible Neighbor

A dog who roams the neighborhood, chases cars, bicycles and joggers, potties in the neighbor's yard, knocks over garbage cans, or barks incessantly is a dog with an irresponsible owner.

When not confined on your property, your dog must be under control! You are responsible for any damage, accidents, and bites caused by your pet.

Dogs who are tied outside all day, crated all day while their owners are at work, or exercised only at their owner's convenience are dogs who are being neglected and who are more likely to develop serious behavioral problems.

A dog is yours to love and care for his entire life. It's up to you to provide that love and care. If you follow the "rules" of responsible pet ownership, you'll be rewarded with the many joys of having a dog by your side.