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About the Author

Wilma Sutton believes that owning a dog is a wonderful experience.

But, many people have problems with their dogs and too many dogs are ending up in shelters and alleys.

Wilma wrote her ebook to help people make better choices about getting a dog and improving the whole experience for them and their pet.

"It's an important decision to get a dog and I want to share what I've learned so that you and your dog have a wonderful time together."

"I think a dog is one of the best friends almost anyone can have, whatever their age and circumstances. But, with the pace of our lives and the pressures we face every day, that can be hard to manage."

Wilma said, "I explain the important factors which every dog owner needs to be aware of and share lots of ways, mostly free, which can make a big difference for them and their pet."

A dog can be one of the best friends a child can have. They can share many adventures while they learn about responsibility and caring for the pet."

"But, there are precautions which the parents must be aware of for the well-being of their children and the dog."

"Some people genuinely want to do their best for their pet but find problems occur which they'd never expected."

"My book will give them the information they need and the confidence to make the right decisions."

"A dog is for life and my goal is to make your experience together the best it can be."

Introduction

The ancient man or woman that first invited a wild dog to share his family cave was taking a big chance, for which we should all be very grateful.

Today, I think humans usually get the best of the deal.

Many dogs end up in shelters or dark alleys because more dogs are bred than can find good, responsible owners.

Also, many people find the responsibility of owning a dog too much for them because of their lifestyle, finances or for other reasons which they may not have thought about before they got their pet.

My goal with this book is to help you make the best possible decisions at every point in your dog-owning future.

I don't claim to be an expert but I've learned by experience and researched many aspects of dog ownership. I've asked experts, vets and friends about their experiences.

The book contains the best tips and answers to problems we had encountered to ensure my book will help as many dog owners as possible, whatever their experience and special circumstances.

It is important that all members of your family who will be with the dog either read this ebook at at least are coached in the most important points which relate to your home and family situation.

Where to Find Your New Dog

There are many places to get your new dog from. That’s because there are many more puppies being bred than there are good homes available.

Advertisements: These may be in your local newspaper, stuck to poles in your neighborhood, on notice-boards in your children’s school or your workplace or on Internet social media.

They are often the least reliable source because it can be hard to be sure about the background of the advertiser and the accuracy of the information they give you.

Puppy farms which breed puppies only for their profit potential use advertisements as their main source of new customers.

But, other people also advertise. There will be advertisements from responsible, registered breeders.

Some advertisements are placed by people that unexpectedly have to find a new home for their dog or a litter of puppies.

They may be renting and had been keeping the dog without the landlord’s knowledge. We can understand them wanting to have a dog but whatever penalty they might face, the dog is likely to suffer more than they do through no fault of its own.

You can help them out and ensure their dog is not abandoned or euthanized unnecessarily.

Dog Suppliers

Puppy Farms: Puppy farms are rogue breeders who make puppy factories of their female dogs. They are only interested in the profit.

Be careful that you are not giving your money to someone that is producing puppies with no thought about their welfare or finding good, loving homes for them. It’s all about the money and the rest of us have to deal with the abandoned and sick dogs which result from their activities.

Breeders: Responsible breeders are usually members of the organization which relates to the particular breed they focus on.

They are a great source of advice for their customers.

Most are as careful about who they sell their puppies to as you should be about who you get your dog from.

Their pups will be more expensive because the breeder is operating as a business and has significant expenses to give the best level of care for his dogs and their puppies.

Sometimes, a breeder may have pups which do not meet all the particular breed’s requirements to be registered for showing. They may offer them at a lower price because the new owner will not be able to put them in dog shows.

Pet Shops: Pet shops are still a common source of puppies but many communities are actively discouraging the sale of pets of any kind through them.

Many people believe they are driven more by the need to make a profit rather than the welfare and future of the animals.

But, I know many which are operated by good people who care for the animals in their care as carefully as any pet owner. They are also a good resource for finding out about the type of food and other things you might want to give your dog.

Friends: They may be people you work or socialize with or just people in your neighborhood who let you know they have puppies which are often free “to good homes”.

Unless you know the people well, you may have little information to judge how well the puppies have been looked after.

One clue is that the owners did not make sure they were fixed before they reached breeding age. So, would they have been more careful about the essential health-care for the pups and the parent dogs? Probably not.

Shelters: Good shelters provide a service which is unfortunately essential; caring for abandoned and lost animals.

But, they vary in quality and focus. Some are dedicated to finding new homes for all their “guests” who have no major health or behavioral problems. These shelters try to provide long-term care to ensure that most are re-homed.

Some are run more like regular businesses and give their dogs a set period in which they must be adopted or risk being euthanized so that the shelter can take in more dogs.

They may even euthanize older dogs sooner because they are less likely to be adopted.

Please check the background and reputation of any shelter before you support it by adopting a dog, volunteering or making a donation. Check with friends, dog clubs and your vet. Don’t just watch the glossy advertisements and public relations pieces which turn up in the media.

A dog from a well-run shelter will probably cost more than most offered by a pet shop or private owner. It will have had a health check, treatment for any problems, vaccinations and been micro-shipped and fixed.

You will also be assessed as to your suitability to own that type of dog. They want their dogs to have permanent homes with caring people and not ever to be abandoned again.

How to Choose Your New Dog

Many of the dogs which are put in shelters had no bad habits, just bad luck. They were not a good fit for their owner's lifestyle or family situation.

A lot of dogs are selected because someone wants a dog just like the one their neighbor or some celebrity has.

But, that sort of dog might not be a good fit for their home because of its size or disposition.

As well as your home, consider the area where you live and the neighbors. If you live next to a major highway, you will have to keep your dog restrained by fences or close supervision or it could be injured.

Many large dogs will be comfortable in a relatively small yard if they have a couple of energetic runs each day.

But, don't expect them to exercise themselves or keep themselves amused all the time. You will have to exercise with your dog every day if that is what it needs.

There are advantages for you in this. You'll improve the bond between you and the dog. It will also help keep your fitness at a good level.

A dog that is not exercised will be more likely to become troublesome and start chewing furniture or other items, barking and being less easy to control.

That lack of discipline might be the reason its owner surrenders it to a shelter, But, the real fault is with the owner that lost interest in giving their dog the attention and time it deserved.

It's important to have time available for training the dog. If you have had other dogs, you won't need as much time as someone that has not.

You will need to be able to give the dog some concentrated attention during the first days or weeks when you first get it.

If you don't have much time but really want a dog, you might get an older dog from a shelter which shows it has been trained by a previous owner.

That will be doing both of you a favor!

Or, you could pay for some sessions with a good dog trainer. If you get a good trainer, this will reduce the time required to get the dog off to a good start.

You won't need nearly as much and you will both enjoy it more.

Another important consideration is the comfort and safety of any other pets you already have.

Small animals may be looked at as prey by some dogs.

Those I've seen most comfortable together usually had the dog come into the family as a small puppy after the other animal was already an established member of the family. But, you should always supervise these combinations of pets.

These are some of the most important considerations which need careful thought to give your new relationship the best chance of lasting through the whole period of your lives together.

Your Dog’s Body Language

Dogs, like people, have a sort of body language – signs in their posture, actions and reactions which are small and controlled by their internal systems more than conscious thought.

You can learn to read some of your dog’s signals as an aid to increasing your understanding of its needs, moods and even fears.

But, no body language system is perfect even between humans.

When you try to read your dog’s signals, you are dealing with a different species as well as the effects of your vastly different life experiences.

The suggestions in this chapter are some that I’ve found useful.

But, I cannot guarantee that all of them will work for you with a particular dog.

The best tip to, keep in mind is that you will build the best relationship with your dog when it knows that it can trust you to be clear, calm and consistent.

One thing which causes confusion and disappointment with new dog owners is when they follow someone’s advice and try to mimic a dog’s actions.

The dog won’t understand what you are trying to tell it because it does not expect you to act like a dog.

Don’t try to make friends by shaking their paw. That’s not a natural action for any dog. When they lift a paw, they may be feeling a bit defensive or they may want to investigate you or something you are holding.

They are not indicating that they want to be friends. That’s a meaning which some humans assign to that sort of gesture!

It can help to kneel when you talk to a puppy. You get nearer to their level and they can see more clearly what you are doing.

You will find most dogs will become defensive if you keep looking into their eyes. That’s accepted by humans as showing genuine interest but dogs regard it as being aggressive.

Basic Training`

Teaching your puppy or new older dog some basic commands is essential for it to be able to fit in and avoid problems with your family.

Don't worry if you and your dog take more time or sessions to learn some or even all of the lessons. Remember that you are learning to teach at the same time the dog is trying to learn what it must do.

Always do your training sessions in a secure area which the dog knows well.

Keep distractions to a minimum.

Don't make the sessions too long. It's better to have two shorter sessions at different times on the same day instead of a long session.

Try to have your sessions a short time before the dog's meal time. This will mean the dog is alert and the meal will seem like an added reward for its exertion.

Don't worry if your dog does not learn something as quickly as you hoped. It may be that your own technique, body language or tone is putting it off.

Never get angry if your dog does not learn something easily. That would just make it harder for you to keep the dog interested in learning to do what you want.

Don't give it a reward every time it obeys or you will set up a mental link in its mind and risk ending up with an overweight, unhealthy dog

Give the dog an area where it can rest and put its favorite toys.

The main thing is to ensure that nobody keeps calling it out of that area when it is resting and obviously tired.

Dogs of all ages need regular undisturbed sleep, like we do.

Always take them to their toilet area just before their bed time.

And putting a loudly ticking clock near a new puppy's bed is still a good idea if you can find a suitable clock.

Keep calm. If you become upset, your dog will too and the whole training process could become much harder to complete.

You need to be supportive of your dog’s efforts.

It will learn more quickly if you act like a professional.

Teach Your Dog to Sit



This is a good choice to start with because the action is easy for the dog to do.

Also, you can use it to control your dog and as a basis for later lessons when you teach it other commands.

Start this lesson shortly before you give your dog a regular meal.

That ensures it will be very interested in doing what it is told to get the small treats and you will know that the treats won't be enough to spoil its appetite for the following meal.

Stand in front of your dog.

Hold the treat in one hand which you put just above and in front of the dog's eyes.

Slowly move that hand toward the back of the dog's head as you say, "Sit" Keep your voice at about your normal level.

The dog should raise its eyes so it can follow the hand holding the treat.

This along with the slow movement of your hand toward its tail will usually cause the dog to sit.

If it does that, immediately say, "Good dog." and give it the treat.

If it doesn't sit, go back to your starting position and do the same routine again.

But, when you say, "Sit", use your other hand to push on its back near the tail very gently.

This will encourage the dog to sit, be praised and get the reward.

When it has eaten the first treat after successfully sitting, go through the routine a couple more times to add some positive reinforcement.

Then, pat the dog and give it the meal.

Never push with any power on the dog’s spine or its rear. You might cause damage with even what you think is gentle pressure.

Teach Your Dog to Lay Down

This is probably one of the easiest commands for your dog to learn after they have learned to sit. But, don't worry if your dog takes a little more time to get it right.

Be patient and supportive for best results.

Get your dog to sit.

Then, hold a treat in one hand a few inches in front of its nose and say, "Down" or whatever word you intend to use for this command.

Move the hand with the treat down and slightly towards your body.

The dog will usually drop to the floor or ground after a couple of tries.

Praise the dog and give it the treat.

Then, do the same drill again but just praise it without giving it another treat.

After a few sessions, when you are confident the dog knows what to do, combine this command with "stay" and you will have a safer dog.

Teach Your Dog to Stay

This is a natural follow-up to "Sit".

It is very important that your dog learns to stay while you go some distance from it.

Walk your dog a few steps forward and then stop.

Stand in front of the dog, hold your hand upright between you and the dog.

Say, "Stay".

Then, tell it to sit.

When it sits, walk a few steps further away from the dog.

Wait about ten seconds.

If it has not moved away from the spot you made it stop at, praise and reward it.

If it has moved from that point, start this process again.

This time, just wait about five seconds after giving the "Stay" command.

Repeat the lesson about four times each session.

As your dog starts to learn what it has to do, make the period it has to stay in place a little longer.

Also, move a bit farther away from the dog each time.

Stay in its view and close enough that you can get to the dog if it starts to move away from where it stopped.

When your dog has learned to stay, still repeat the training sessions for about four more days in a row with the dog waiting for slightly longer periods each time to reinforce the pattern.

This is a very important command which will help to keep your dog safe.

Always tell the dog when it can start moving again.

When it knows the basic Stay, start another series of sessions where someone walks past the dog, make a noise or even drops a favorite toy near it.

The dog must learn that it has to stay still until you release it from the Stay position.

Teach Your Dog to Come to You

This is an essential lesson for every dog and dog owner.

When your dog has learned this command, you will start to have better control of it.

Don't use treats to attract the dog. You need to condition the dog to come to you almost automatically and not because of some reward.

Wait until your dog is interested in something and not focused on you.

Say its name and the word come.

Emphasize "come" but don't yell.

When you believe the dog is responding to the command and not just coming to you because it has seen you, praise it.

Then, tell it to sit, move some distance away and say its name and the word "come" again.

Do this routine in different areas of your home.

Always check that there is no risk to the dog if it goes in a different direction when you are just starting to teach this command.

Never use this command and then punish or growl at the dog.

You should use it to come for its bath, give it medicine or other necessary tasks which the dog may not enjoy. But, give it some reward after that experience or even just have a play session so it finishes in a positive frame of mind.

Teach Your Dog to "Get Off".

Teaching your dog to get off something is usually fairly easy to do.

Use a single word as the command; something like "Off" or "Back" is suitable.

When the dog is on or near something or someone you don't want them to touch, say "Off" in a firm voice.

You may have to gently wave your arm at the same time when you start to teach this, but stop the waving as soon as possible, so the dog learns to respond just to the command.

If the dog does not obey, repeat the command.

Do not offer it a reward to entice it away. That will set a pattern where it gets a reward for bad behavior.

If it doesn't respond, lift it gently but firmly and say the command again as you move it to another area of the room or yard.

Repeat the routine a few times.

This is an important one for the dog to understand and obey for its own safety.

Prepare Your Home

Almost Dog Proof.

You need to check throughout your home before you collect your new dog as carefully as you would before you brought home a new baby.

That's to minimize any risks for your dog and also prevent, as far as possible, damage to your home or distress to any current occupant, whether human or another pet.

If this is your first puppy, you might want to crouch in each room to try to get a puppy's view of the area. This sounds strange but you will probably notice potential problems which you might not have considered without this simple exercise!

Anything of value should be moved out of reach or, if that is not possible, be wrapped or padded with something which the new dog cannot chew or pull.

Rubbish bins of any kind will be attractive. Get some with lockable lids if possible, for the protection of your home and the dog.

Pups will eat almost anything.

Curtains may be torn or the dog might catch a claw in them.

All cords for blinds, drapes and electrical equipment must be out of their reach, Some pups are injured or worse every year in furniture cords.

They may also pull electrical items onto the floor or themselves when they are exploring. Chewing those cords can damage the equipment and the dogs.

Many plants are dangerous or even deadly to dogs.

I have a list of banned foods and drinks later in the book. It is not nearly complete.

Keep all cosmetics, medicines, cleaning products (including tissues, wipes etc) where the dog can never get at them.

Don't spray anything in a room where the dog will be within half an hour. Sprays and powders may poison the dog, interfere with its breathing or possibly cause skin irritations etc.

Plastic, foil and rubber can be very dangerous.

Balloons or parts of balloons are extremely dangerous to all dogs (and babies). They like bursting balloons but the rubber strips can blind them or get in their mouths and they choke. They cannot be saved.

All tools and accessories like screws, nails, etc etc should be removed from any area where your dog will be.

Coins and small batteries are deadly if the dog swallows one.

If they pick up food which you drop, don't smack them but try to get the food from them gently but firmly. Otherwise they will think it's okay to pick up anything they find on the floor or the ground.

Dealing with Urine etc

Whatever the age of your new dog, you should be prepared and patient if it messes during the first few days in your place.

Many puppies won't know any better (some mother dogs will start to train their pups to follow the rules they learned).

Older dogs which have been in shelters or recently lost their previous owner could be stressed. If you give them some patience, the transition will be quicker and that will help them to settle and bond better with you.

Timing

You should bring your dog home at a weekend or some other time when you can be there for at least a couple of days almost full-time.

This helps the dog to settle in and understand that it is in a new home, not just a temporary location.

You will also be able to see how the dog reacts to things like loud noises, people and vehicles. This can alert you to things which trouble the dog so you are better able to help it adjust to its new environment.

Supplies

A new puppy will need some things to be in place when it arrives in your home.

A **crate or folding metal pen** is useful for confining your pup when it or you need some quiet time. Don't use one with plastic-covered wire as the pup could chew off and even swallow some of the plastic. Make sure the metal does not have any unsafe coating or solder which contains substances that your dog could lick or chew.

Many people use this for their potty training as well. I prefer to take the pup outside to the area I want it to use right from the start.

A **leash or harness** will help you control the pup while you are training it. It is also essential to keep it safe when you walk it in public areas.

My preference is for a harness because it seems to put less pressure on the dog's neck. With the harness, the pressure is spread over its upper body.

A **dog coat** is a good idea if you have cold or wet weather around the time you bring your dog home.

A **reflective tag** for their collar. You can usually write your phone number on the back of these which gives you a little more peace of mind if they stray.

Poop scoop and **bags** for collecting its droppings when walking in public areas.

Quality food and treats. Get advice from dog-owning friends, your vet or the breeder. Start the way you intend to go on and keep low-value treats to a minimum.

Dog shampoo. Don't use any shampoo which is intended for human use.

A **muzzle** is a good idea for any new dog, large or small, because you won't know if it likes to snap at other dogs or even people. Puppies bite other members of their litter when playing. It's part learning to interact and part showing how dominant they are.

Having the muzzle will prevent any misunderstandings in your home and also when you start taking the dog to the park.

Comb and brush. My puppy loved being brushed which was good because it shed a lot of fur. Regular brushing gives you an opportunity to improve your bond with the dog and also check its body for any potential problems.

Chew toys. All puppies will chew. You need to protect your carpets, rugs, furniture etc., from its teeth, so safe alternatives are important.

Bowls for food and water. These need to be non-porous, stable and easy to clean.

Nail trimmer. Do not use this yourself unless you have experience or until you get your vet to show you the proper way to do it.

The main risk is cutting into the quick inside the nail. This is very easy to do if the color of the nail makes the quick hard to see.

Kennel. You will probably keep your new puppy inside for the first week or so, even if it will be outside in a kennel later on. You might want to have the kennel in your yard before the pup arrives and put it in there for short periods each day while you are with it.

Setting Limits

You will have to discuss with all family members what each will do to help the new dog settle in.

Children will have to learn how to treat the dog so they don't get hurt or hurt it.

Babies and small children will have to be supervised all the time they are near the dog, so that everyone remains safe and happy.

Many puppies are seriously injured by small children who are excited to have their new pet and have no idea how very fragile puppies are.

You may have to make some areas and rooms off-limits to the dog.

The garden, laundry, bathroom, sheds and garages are all places that have interesting smells and objects which may be harmful to your dog.

Stop them from getting into those areas until you have them trained and you are there to supervise them.

Easing Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety is common with dogs which are usually around their owners for long periods and then have to be apart from them for several hours.

This is partly because of the strong dependence which develops but there are a couple of other major factors which can make this difficult to deal with.

Dogs which have had experiences of being bred in a puppy farm with little or no companionship or quality care or have been in a shelter after a period with their own home etc, are particularly likely to have this condition to some degree.

Remember, it is NOT the dog's fault. Give them love and support and you will have a wonderful pet.

The first other factor is that separation is a disturbance of the dog's familiar routine.

Like people, it can easily start to stress when it does not understand what is going on.

My suggestion to help with this is to start going out for short periods and returning soon.

As the dog gets used to these periods, make them a little longer each time.

Try giving your dog a short, ten minute or so, exercise or play time about half an hour before you go out.

Then, sit with them for a short while to get them relaxed.

Do something a short distance away from the dog until it is time to take them to their toilet area.

Then, pat them and leave. Don't give them a lot of time to become tense about you going.

You may want to tell your neighbors that you are going to do this. So they know you are a responsible dog owner that is trying to avoid problems which

might upset them. Check if any are shift-workers or have family members that might be upset.

Always leave the dog in an area where is safe and cannot cause any damage. It should have a favorite toy and blanket or towel.

Always take them to their toilet area before you go out and be as understanding as possible if they do occasionally make a mess. That may have been caused by loud noises etc while you were away.

If the dog barks a lot, you should ask about getting a session with a trainer if you have particularly touchy neighbors.

One person I know used to give their dog a hard smack when it made a mess inside. Then, he had to go out a couple of days a week.

All was okay until the dog made a mess while he was out.

When he got home the dog was a shivering, whimpering wreck stretched out on the floor. It was worried about being punished and had become very stressed because of the time before the owner returned.

He did his best to re-assure the dog and never hit the dog again. But, it was probably a month before the dog really started to settle when he went out after that.

A little patience is more powerful than the biggest stick.

Put Your Pet in Your Will

This subject is one which many people avoid even thinking about until it is sometimes too late.

I am not qualified to give advice about your arrangements for who should get or control your assets when you die or become incapacitated. I can only suggest that you should do it as soon as possible so that your wishes are known before the event.

My interest in this area is to help you do your best to provide certainty of proper care and support for your pet(s).

If we don't make arrangements, pets are often given little consideration when we are no longer around.

Simply asking a close relative to take care of them is easy, but it can put an unwelcome responsibility on their shoulders which they take on through a sense of obligation. If they have no interest in doing it and lack the qualities to make a good substitute owner, neither they nor the dog will have a happy future and your pet will suffer the most.

This could mean that the pet is given care but not love or consideration.

Your first task is to find someone that is willing and capable to look after your pet.

When you find someone, and if they agree to do it, you need to put them together with your dog for a few sessions to ensure they can bond well.

If you get them to visit you and your dog a few times and then leave the dog with them for at least a couple of days, they will know the dog will not cause problems for them or their family.

It also gives the dog time to become familiar with them.

Finances

Discuss this up front to ensure that you are not placing a burden on them. If they feel pressure because of the costs of keeping the dog and the time required for its care, your pet might start to be treated as a liability instead of a member of the household.

You need to work out a fair figure for the dog's expenses each year. Include all regular costs such as food, Vet expenses, and an amount for emergencies. If you have pet insurance, you should check if the account can be transferred to the new owner.

Offer an amount to the carer for themselves.

You will need to build into the financial deal, an annual adjustment because of the increasing cost of everything.

This arrangement can be a simple contract or a trust or other arrangement attached to your will.

Since it is likely to involve a significant amount, ask your lawyer to check the details when they are preparing your Will.

Store a copy of all documents with your Will. One copy should be held by your lawyer or in a safe deposit in case your own files are damaged by fire or other disaster.

For your own peace of mind, try to arrange another care-giver in case the first is not able or willing to fulfill the deal when the time comes.

If you can't find a suitable person who is willing to agree to doing it, you may find a shelter which will give your pet a home for the remainder of its life if you make a contribution of an agreed amount in your will.

Before you sign such an agreement, check that the shelter is a reliable and safe home for your pet's final years.

Travelling with Your Dog

Any trip with your dog will require some planning and more time than if you don't take the dog with you.

I'll give you some basic information so you'll have a better idea of what is involved.

Check Carefully before using any Transport Service

The main factor in long distance travel is your confidence in the handling your dog will receive when it is out of your site.

There are reports of dogs and other pets dying because of poor or no proper care and supervision even when their owners have paid large sums for their safe care. Do as much checking as you can.

Pack Your Pet's Supplies too

Your pet will need water and containers to drink it from. I use disposable containers and carry several if we expect to make several stops because they may become dirty or damaged.

Check ahead for veterinarians on the route.

Always double-check the policies and charges where you intend to stay close to your trip. These do change and you need to be aware.

A large towel (or two) can be a pet bed as well.

Cars etc.

Your first experience with your dog in the car will probably be when you bring it home the first time.

Don't ever leave your dog in your car even with a window partly lowered.

Cars are notorious for becoming ovens very quickly. Don't take chances with this.

Never let the dog travel unrestrained in your car or in a separate compartment, the tray of a pickup or on someone's lap.

Don't just put a collar and lead on them. In a crash, the dog would become a projectile and suffer injury or death.

A padded crate is probably the best way to transport your dog at that time. Unless you already have a seat-belt harness for dogs of that size.

Don't put the dog anywhere that is protected by an airbag. They will be injured when it expands.

Your dog will need some experience to become comfortable travelling that way. A few short trips and some patience will usually make them comfortable, especially if they get a small reward after the trip.

Don't feed your dog before travelling. Even dogs which are experienced travelers can throw up if they have food shortly before a journey.

A little water is okay but too much will cause discomfort as well as require more toilet stops.

A crate should provide just enough room for the dog to be comfortable but not enough for it to be thrown around. Secure the crate so the dog is facing the front of the vehicle. Put the lead somewhere else or it might tangle with and damage the dog's legs or head.

Plan your route with several stops in safe, dog-friendly areas so the dog and you can get some exercise and fresh air. Always put a harness and muzzle on your dog in strange areas.

Windows are dangerous: Don't let your dog close to a window which is even just slightly open. Dogs can get out very quickly through very small openings.

Another hazard which most are not aware of is that the wind rushing past the vehicle can drive small grit and other items into your dog's eyes, skin and fur.

These small items can cause serious problems because of the speed at which they hit the dog.

Planes

Check well in advance for the particular requirements of your chosen airline.

Some will only accept a certain number of animals on any flight so make your arrangements well in advance.

Most dogs, apart from some specified types of assistance dogs have to travel in cargo areas. This is not as comfortable or as safe as the passenger section. You may have to deliver your dog to a separate section of the airport some time before the deadline for passengers to check in.

Make sure you have ID tags and copies of the pet's vet records where you can show them to the officials. Make sure the health certificate is very recent.

Most airlines require you to use pet carry packs or crates which they have approved for safety and reliability.

Give your dog some sessions in the carrier before you need to travel.

Because the cargo areas aren't temperature controlled like the passenger section, the temperature in those areas will reflect the outside temperature at each end of the trip but can be higher.

The airline may refuse to transport your dog if the temperature at the other airport might be unsafe for it.

To minimize this possibility, you could travel on a flight which will reach your destination when that place is cool.

Overseas Travel

When you want to take your pet overseas, it involves more costs and risks. Some countries require extended quarantine periods for dogs or other animals brought into that country.

You may have to pay fees to cover its care for the period.

Check with your vet if your dog should be immunized for diseases which are in that country but not covered by your dog's regular vaccinations. Be sure to allow for the period of time between inoculation and when the dog will actually have some protection from the injection.

Travelling within another country with any pet means you need to check local regulations about control and housing of your pet.

Protect Your Pet in an Emergency

There is a growing awareness of the need to be prepared for unexpected urgent situations.

These may be natural disasters, accidents or aggression against you, your family or your area.

When bushfires and floods happened here within weeks of each other, I read about many people who would not leave their homes because they could not take their pets.

Others left their pets behind because they knew they or their children would not have survived if they stayed. The despair that caused them was almost like they'd abandoned their children.

I share some suggestions which may help you provide some help for your pets and more peace of mind for yourself if ever you are faced with emergency situations where your pet(s) are at risk.

Major Emergencies

You should have supplies of the dog's preferred foods and treats. Include a hand-operated can opener.

All of their medicines should be duplicated in the emergency pack with instructions for use in case you are busy elsewhere and somebody else has to give them.

Microchip your pet. This is very wise, even if there is no major disaster.

Put a photo of your pet with your emergency gear so you can show people who may help you look for it.

First aid supplies for the pet.

A sturdy carrier with secure fastenings. Newspaper or other materials to collect droppings etc.

Information sheet that can help identify your pet if they are lost.

List of vets, shelters and pet-friendly accommodation in case your pet needs to be housed somewhere else for the duration.

Carry cash to pay for their expenses.

If you decide to take your pets with you when you need to leave the area or even go to get supplies, give yourself as much time as possible.

Put a sticker on the corner of a window with details of pets inside your home. Someone may see it and make the effort to rescue them. But, you are the best person to do that.

Personal Situations

You may have to go to hospital or on a business trip with little or no prior warning.

Your dog needs to be fed, exercised and, most of all, kept safe, for that period.

You may have a relative or friend that will step in. The best idea is to set up such an arrangement in advance. You might make a deal where you would do the same sort of thing for their pet as they do for yours.

You need to give them a key and have them spend some time at your home to learn the layout and get friendly with the dog.

Prepare a list of important phone numbers and information about the pet's needs and restrictions.

Make sure you list things which the pet is not allowed to eat or drink or do. For instance, many people that don't have dogs don't realize how dangerous chocolate, coffee and tea are for them.

If you can't get someone to take that responsibility, you should consider getting a professional pet-sitter. Check their references and visit them to assure yourself they are suitable well before you need them. Ask them to record your details so that you can get them on the job with minimum delay in an urgent situation.

The Last Vet Appointment

For each dog owner there comes a time when they must decide that their beloved pet is in pain which cannot be relieved enough to give it enough quality of life.

This can be a very difficult decision. You should consult your vet so you are sure that you make the best decision for the sake of your pet.

Some owners want the vet to come to their home to save them and their ailing pet the discomfort of travelling to the surgery and possibly having to wait for a period before the vet can attend to them.

Most vets will try to arrange that any pet and owner in this situation is moved into a private area quickly and seen as soon as possible.

Your vet may not agree to come to your home. If you get a different vet, they will be sympathetic and professional.

Some owners want the vet that their pet knows. But, the pet may not recognize them because of their degree of suffering at this time.

Most owners take their pet to the surgery.

Some people find it too hard to stay with their pet while it is euthanized. I understand their feelings. It is a decision which only they should make. The last moments can sometimes be very stressful.

The dog is given two injections.

The first reduces any pain which it has.

The second is like a powerful sleeping draught. The dog goes to sleep quickly for the final time.

For me, an important advantage of taking the dog to the vet is that you don't have the memory of its passing attached to a room in your home.

You can also reduce the stress of the visit by paying the estimated amount of the bill days before and carrying the dog on its bed or a blanket which it used in your home.

Be Prepared for the Cost and Reduce Stress

It is a good idea to set money aside for this event so that you don't have to work things out when you have so much emotional stress. This will ensure less trauma for you and your pet.

The cost of getting the vet to your home is likely to be more than a normal visit to the surgery.

It's a sad but inevitable duty.

Pet Burial and other Options

Will you have the pet's remains cremated, buried in a pet cemetery or will you bury it at home?

The commercial options are expensive and completely optional. They don't make any difference to your pet or indicate a greater love for it.

If you want to bury it yourself, you should check well before the time comes if there are any local health regulations about that.

Make sure you make the hole at least a foot deep if possible, so that it won't be disturbed.

Always remember the happy times you had with your pet and take comfort that, hard as your decision was to make and carry through, you did the right thing for your friend to reduce its suffering and show it proper respect.

If possible, let any other pets smell the body when it is wrapped for burial so that they know it has passed on.

Otherwise, they may fret and start looking for their friend which can be stressful for them and all members of your household.

When to get a New Dog?



All owners need some time to come to terms with their loss.

The decision to get another dog is very personal.

Although some friends and even family members may not understand the strength of your reaction to losing your pet, don't let anyone interfere with your

grieving.

Everyone has to deal with it their own way and in their own time.

Getting a new dog too soon can interfere with that and also make it more of a struggle for you to properly bond with the new dog.

There's no particular value in choosing a new dog because it resembles the one you had before. That can actually make the bonding harder as well.

Each dog is different, just like each person.

Your new dog will have its own unique special qualities and also get into trouble in its own way.

Resources

Template for Cost of Pet Ownership:

<http://www.asPCA.org/adoption/pet-care-costs.aspx>

The figures in this sheet are years old and probably much less than you pay. But, you could just use the format for your own fact sheet. Check your local dog club to see if they have something similar. If not, they'd probably appreciate a copy of your version when you have got current figures.

Help with Emergency Treatment for Pets (U.S.A.)

http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/resources/tips/trouble_affording_pet.html

The Humane Society of the United States lists organizations which provide assistance to people who have financial difficulty paying for urgent vet treatment or other pet bills. Assistance may be in the form of money, pet supplies, subsidy, transport or other help.

Dog Organizations

American Kennel Club

<http://www.akc.org/>

The American Kennel Club offers a wide range of services and information for all dog owners. It is the only non-profit registry for purebred dogs of all kinds in the U.S.A.

Check their site for more information.

The Kennel Club U.K.

<http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/>

The Kennel Club was founded in 1873 and says that it is the largest organization in the U.K. dedicated to the health and welfare of dogs.

It offers help and advice with dog welfare, health, training and breeding.

R.S.P.C.A. U.K.

<http://www.rspca.org.uk/>

Welfare organization for all kinds of animals, including dogs.

Australian National Kennel Council, Australia

<http://www.ankc.org.au/>

R.S.P.C.A. Australia.

<http://www.rspca.org.au/>

Welfare organization for all kinds of animals, including dogs.

Happy Tails!

I hope that my book will help make your dog ownership a happier and more exciting experience for you and your dog.

When you have a dog, the world is a happier place and they also will help you to be able to deal with the bumps in your life as well.

Wilma Sutton

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