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Lifestyle



# 10 DOs and DON'Ts when getting a new dog

How to go about getting the right dog for your family

**G**etting a new puppy is almost like having a new baby. It is not a decision that should be taken lightly and definitely not without serious consideration. Making up your mind about the breed that is ideal for you is a long process and your final decision should only be taken after much research. Here are 10 things to consider before making your final choice.

## 1 Shortlist your favourite breeds

Start by putting together a shortlist of breeds that you like. Then do more in-depth research to find out which breed will suit you and your family best. Search the Internet, look at breed articles and profiles in magazines like *Animaltalk* and the *Dog Directory*, phone

dog behaviourists and speak to owners and breeders about your favourite breeds. Find out how much exercise they need, their grooming requirements, if they bark a lot, do they get on well with children and other pets, how much space they need, and if they are hyperactive or laid back, for example. Remember you are going to share your home, family and life with your new dog for the next 12 to 15 years, so you want to make sure that you'll be prepared and able to meet his needs.

## 2 Choose a responsible breeder

Look for a reputable breeder and do not support backyard breeders. You must be able to view both parents to make sure they are healthy and happy. The breeder should

not let the pup go before he is at least eight weeks old. During the first eight weeks a mother teaches her pups bite inhibition

### When is a good time for 'the snip'?

Have your new dog spayed or neutered before he or she reaches sexual maturity. If a female is spayed before her first heat (at eight months), chances of developing breast cancer are much lower. Male dogs can be neutered from as early as six months. Neutered males are calmer, less likely to roam and more sociable with other dogs.