

Being a Good Dog Owner



Photo by Paul Flecher

Your legal responsibilities.

- **Identification:** All dogs must be clearly identified, wearing a collar and tag with the name and address of his owner on it. If a dog appears to be straying, it may be picked up by the dog warden and taken to local kennels. Dogs that are not claimed or rehomed after seven days (five days in Northern Ireland) may be put to sleep.
- **Microchipping:** Many dogs in the UK are put to sleep because their owners cannot be traced. If a dog is microchipped and registered on a national database, his owners can be traced very quickly and he can be returned safe and sound.
- **Control:** Your dog must be kept under control at all times in public places. A court may order the owner to keep him under proper control or to be put to sleep if he is found to be threatening to the public. If a dog is found worrying livestock he could be shot without warning by a farmer, and the owner could face prosecution. Dogs must also be kept on a lead on any designated road.
- **Guard Dogs:** It is an offence to use a guard dog unless the dog's handler is present and the dog is under control. The dog must not be able to roam freely and warnings about him must be clearly shown at each entrance to the premises.
- **Dangerous Dogs Act (1991):** There are four types of dog including 'the type of dog known as the pit bull terrier' that the Act bans as dangerous. Owners of banned breeds must follow certain legal requirements, including having their dog registered, neutered, microchipped or tattooed and insured. It is also a criminal offence to allow any dog to be dangerously out of control in a public place.

- **Protection of Animals:** It is an offence to abuse or ill treat any animal, or to allow any unnecessary suffering to be caused to them. It is also an offence to be involved in any form of dog fighting including recordings of a fight. An owner can be banned from keeping a dog altogether if found guilty of any of these abuses.

Be a responsible owner and neuter your dog – it's simply the best choice for you and your pet.

**If you are interested in rehoming a dog, supporting Dogs Trust or for more information and factsheets about all aspects of dog ownership, please visit www.dogstrust.org.uk or contact Dogs Trust
17 Wakely Street
London
EC1V 7RQ**

**Tel: 020 7837 0006
Reg. Charity Numbers: 227523
and SC037843**



Photo by Andy Catterall

Having a pet dog can bring you a lifetime of fun and happy memories. Follow this advice and you'll make a great dog owner!

Before you get a dog

- **Do your research.** Think about which dog (if any) will suit your family and lifestyle. Ask friends about their dogs, and find out more about the breeds you like.
- **Talk to the experts.** If you are thinking of rehoming a rescued dog, talk to the kennel staff about the dogs they have. At Dogs Trust Rehoming Centres you will be asked about your home and lifestyle, to help them match you to your ideal dog. If you are going to buy a pedigree dog, only go to a reputable breeder. Never buy from shops or through newspaper adverts where many breeds are listed, as this could mean that the puppy is from a puppy farm. Make sure that you see all paperwork when you visit the puppy.



- **Be prepared.** Owning a dog is a long-term commitment and expense – dogs can live for up to 15 years or more! Costs to consider include: food, toys, collar and lead, vet bills, insurance, training classes – and that's just to start with! Dogs also need your time and attention; some breeds will need much more mental stimulation and exercise than others or they may become destructive.

Being a responsible dog owner

As a dog owner, your main responsibility is to provide your dog with everything he needs in a caring and loving home.

- Make sure your dog is not left alone all day, as he may get bored, bark loudly or become destructive. If you need to leave him alone for a while, make sure someone he knows is able to call in on him.
- Your dog needs to be safe and well behaved with people and other animals. Ask for advice from your vet or animal welfare groups

such as Dogs Trust about training classes or books to help you raise a polite pooch!

- Regular exercise is essential for your dog's health (and yours!). You must be prepared to give your dog two walks a day and spend time playing with him as well.
- Your dog should have a balanced diet, which is very easy to give him as most dog foods are designed to supply the health needs of most dogs. Make sure he always has access to fresh water, and give him chews and toys to occupy him.
- Vet care is essential for your dog, including vaccinations, worming and flea treatments, grooming, and checking their teeth, ears and nails on a regular basis for any potential problems.

Neuter your dog

Neutering is the most responsible and safest thing to do to prevent unwanted pups being born – pups are quite a handful and often difficult to find homes for. Neutering also brings health, and in some cases, behavioural benefits to your dog. For further information about the benefits of neutering talk to your vet or Dogs Trust.



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Responsibilities to other people.

- By law you must keep your dog under control at all times and prevent him from being a nuisance to others.
- It is an offence to let your dog foul in a public place and not clear it up - always carry a poop-scoop or plastic bag so that you can clean up after your dog.