

# FURRY FRIENDS

How to pick the right dog

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# How to pick the right dog

Bringing a new dog into your home is a big decision that requires careful thought. When doing research there are many things to consider to make sure you find a dog that suits your lifestyle. Whether that is a playful puppy, a mellow senior, a purebred or a lovable rescue, it is important to evaluate the needs of the dog and how that would integrate into your home. Here are some tips to help you along your journey of finding the perfect new family member.

## Choosing the Right Type of Dog for Your Life

Bringing a dog into your life is a joyful, often life-changing decision—but it's not one to be made lightly. Every dog is a living, feeling animal with needs that vary depending on its breed, size, energy level, temperament, and background. The key to a harmonious life with your canine companion is compatibility. Choosing the right dog for your lifestyle isn't just about what you like—it's about what you can sustain, support, and commit to.

## Know Thyself First

Before you start scrolling through puppy photos or visiting shelters, take a step back and ask yourself a few essential questions:

- How much time can I realistically devote to a dog each day?
- Do I live in an apartment, a house with a yard, or in a rural area?
- Am I active or more sedentary?
- Do I have children or other pets?
- Am I looking for a jogging partner, a cuddly couch companion, or a working dog?
- Can I afford the grooming that the dog requires?

Understanding your lifestyle will help you identify a dog whose needs align with your capacity.

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## The Energy Equation

One of the biggest mismatches people make is choosing a dog with energy levels that don't match their own. A Border Collie, for example, is incredibly intelligent and active—but if you're not regularly hiking, running, or giving it jobs to do, it can become anxious or destructive. Conversely, a laid-back breed like a Basset Hound might frustrate a marathon runner who wants a high-energy companion.

When assessing breeds or individual dogs, ask yourself: can I meet their mental and physical stimulation needs every single day?

## What Size Dog Is Best?

Size impacts not just how much space your dog might need, but also how manageable they are for you personally. Large breeds like Great Danes and Mastiffs can be gentle giants—but they still require strength to walk and space to live comfortably. Small breeds like Chihuahuas might be ideal for apartment dwellers, but they often have big personalities that need proper socialization.

Also consider your own physical ability: lifting a 70-pound dog into the car if it's injured is very different from lifting a 15-pound one.

## Temperament and Trainability

Breed tendencies offer some guidance, but every dog is an individual. Temperament—whether a dog is shy or outgoing, relaxed or high-strung—can make a world of difference. Some breeds, like Golden Retrievers and Labradors, are known for being family-friendly and trainable. Others, like Huskies or Chow Chows, may be more independent and aloof.

Visit with dogs before making a decision. Ask shelter staff or breeders about a dog's behavior and history. If you're a first-time dog owner, prioritize breeds or individuals known for trainability and sociability.






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## Puppies vs. Adults vs. Seniors

Puppies are adorable, but they require intensive care, training, and supervision. Think “baby with teeth.” If your lifestyle is busy or unpredictable, consider adopting an adult dog. They’re often house-trained and have a more established temperament. Senior dogs, while sometimes overlooked, can make excellent, low-maintenance companions for people who want a more relaxed pace.

## Lifestyle-Specific Matches

Here are a few lifestyle archetypes and potential dog matches:

-  The Active Adventurer: Border Collie, Australian Shepherd, Vizsla, Labrador Retriever
-  The Couch Companion: Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Shih Tzu, Newfoundland
-  The Family-Oriented: Golden Retriever, Boxer
-  The Quiet Companion: Greyhound (yes, they’re surprisingly chill!), Whippet, Basset Hound
-  The City Dweller: Boston Terrier, Pug, Maltese

## Adoption

If you’re adopting from a shelter or rescue, you may not get a purebred dog, but staff often have a good sense of each dog’s behavior and needs. Breed-specific rescues also exist and can match you with dogs that fit your lifestyle. Whether you adopt or buy from a breeder, always ensure the source is reputable, ethical, and prioritizes the welfare of the animals.

## Breeders

Not all breeders are reputable, doing research is key to finding a responsible breeder. Many breed multiple dogs and are not breeding for the health and mental capability of the dog and instead breed for money. Some things to look for in a good breeder:

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- Will they let you meet the parents/mother?
- Are the dogs health checked?
- Don't get fooled by AKC paperwork. This tells you nothing about the mental state of the dog or the health of the breeding. It ONLY says the dog is purebred.
- Is there a return policy? This one seems weird, I know, but a great breeder will take their dogs back and rehome them.
- Do they select the dog for you? Breeders often can know a dog's personality at a very young age and can determine if the dog is too scared to be in a family with kids, if they are too strong willed for an older couple, etc. They will pick the dog that they feel best suits your lifestyle.

These aren't all deal breakers, but a guide for you to assess the validity of where you are getting your puppy.

There's no such thing as a "perfect" dog—only a dog that's perfect for you. The time you invest in choosing the right dog will pay off for years in the form of companionship, loyalty, and love. Be honest about your lifestyle and limits. The right match will make both your lives richer.

If you ever need guidance in choosing a dog, our trainers here at Bark Avenue Daycamp can help guide you with your decision!

### Bringing a Dog into Your Home

- A big decision that requires careful thought and research.
- Consider lifestyle compatibility—puppy vs. senior, purebred vs. rescue.
- Evaluate the dog's needs and how they integrate into your home.

### Choosing the Right Type of Dog for Your Life

- Every dog has unique needs (breed, size, temperament, etc.).
- Compatibility is key—choose a dog you can support and commit to.

## Know Thyself First: Questions to Ask Yourself

- How much time can I devote to a dog daily?
- What's my living situation—apartment, house, rural?
- Am I active or more sedentary?
- Do I have children or other pets?
- What role do I want the dog to fill (jogging partner, cuddler, etc.)?
- Can I afford the grooming requirements?

## The Energy Equation

- Match the dog's energy level with your own.
- High-energy breeds (e.g., Border Collies) need daily mental and physical stimulation.
- Low-energy breeds (e.g., Basset Hounds) may suit less active owners.

## What Size Dog Is Best?

- Size affects space, manageability, and physical handling.
- Large breeds = more space and strength needed.
- Small breeds = better for limited space, but may need socialization.
- Consider your own physical capabilities.

## Temperament and Trainability

- Breed tendencies matter, but individual personalities vary.
- Some breeds (e.g., Golden Retrievers) are generally friendly and trainable.
- Meet dogs in person and ask about behavior and history.
- First-time owners should look for sociable, easy-to-train dogs.

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## Puppies vs. Adults vs. Seniors

- **Puppies:** Cute but high-maintenance; need lots of training.
- **Adults:** More predictable temperament, often house-trained.
- **Seniors:** Great for calm households; often low-maintenance and gentle.

## Lifestyle-Specific Matches

-  **Active Adventurer:** Border Collie, Australian Shepherd, Vizsla, Labrador Retriever
-  **Couch Companion:** Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Shih Tzu, Newfoundland
-  **Family-Oriented:** Golden Retriever, Boxer
-  **Quiet Companion:** Greyhound, Whippet, Basset Hound
-  **City Dweller:** Boston Terrier, Pug, Maltese

## Adoption

- Shelters/rescues may not offer purebreds, but staff know the dogs well.
- Breed-specific rescues are available.
- Always adopt from reputable and ethical sources.

## Breeders: What to Look For

- **Reputable Breeder Checklist:**
  - Allows you to meet the parents/mother.
  - Provides health checks and documentation.
  - Doesn't rely solely on AKC papers.
  - Has a return policy (a good breeder will rehome their dogs).
  - Selects the puppy based on your lifestyle compatibility.
- Warning: Many breeders prioritize profit over health or temperament.

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### 💡 Final Thoughts

- No dog is perfect—only perfect for *you*.
- Honest self-assessment leads to a great match.
- The right dog enriches both your lives with love and loyalty.
- Need help? The trainers at **Bark Avenue Daycamp** can guide your decision.





# How to pick the right dog

Finding the perfect dog for your home is a rewarding yet significant decision that requires careful consideration of breed, size, energy level, and temperament. This guide offers practical tips to help you assess your lifestyle and match it with the right canine companion, whether you're looking for an active adventurer or a laid-back couch buddy. With thoughtful evaluation and insight, you can ensure a harmonious relationship with your new furry family member for years to come.

