



THINKING OF GETTING A DOG? DON'T

Brochure about the realities of dog ownership, November 2010.
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Why this brochure

Many dog adoptions end in failure. This is a guilt-laden and traumatic experience for family and dog.

Failed adopters are not selfish, careless or impulsive... Just not sufficiently informed.

Love dogs? Yes!
Ready for one? Do the test.

1. Nobody home

Your whole family is **away from home....**

- ... For full days, most days. _____ ☹️
- ... A couple of days a week _____ 😐
- ... For half days, most days _____ 😐
- ... For short periods only. _____ 😊

With a 9-til-5 office job, your dog is **home alone for 10 hours straight**. Many such dogs become destructive.



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2. Predictable changes

Which is your current life phase:

Pregnancy leave _____	☹️
Failing health _____	☹️
Between jobs _____	😐
A full-time student _____	😐
Pet-friendly workplace _____	😐
Working from home _____	😊
Retired (and fit) _____	😊
A home maker _____	😊

Ideally, you need a dog-friendly situation for the next 15 years.

Pets tolerated at work: Boss could leave, colleague could be allergic...

Pregnancy leave or between jobs: You will have to return to work.

Student: Your life will soon change.

3. Children

Your children (living at home) are:

... Between 0 and 4 years old. _____ ☹️

... Between 5 and 12 years old. _____ 😐

... Between 12 and 18 years old _____ 😊

Precautions around children:

- Pick a calm, patient, secure and tolerant dog.
- Pick a dog of sensible size (risk of knocking the kids over).
- Educate your kids about dog body language (check the **Blue Dog Project**).
- Never leave the kid alone with the dog. **Not even for a toilet break.**
- You are liable towards your children's little friends too.



4. Accommodation

You live in:

... Rented accommodation. _____ ☹️

... A block of flats. _____ 😐

... You own your home _____ 😊




Rented accommodation: Landlords refusing pets, larger deposits.

Flats: Check with your upstairs and downstairs neighbours first.



5. Holidays and trips abroad

You make overnight stays:




- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| ... More than 2x / year |  |
| ... 1x to 2x / year. |  |
| ... Rarely |  |

Pensions: Many dogs do not tolerate a pension stay.

Friends: Willing, reliable, pet- and child-free, and working from home!

6. The walks

Walking your dog for **3x 20 minutes per day (come rain or shine)...**

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| ... What?! _____ |  |
| ... Not great, but I'll do it. _____ |  |
| ... Hurray! _____ |  |

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Why walk? Even with a big garden, they need the novelty, stimulation and exercise of walks.

Beware some breeds... need a lot of exercise.

7. Dog training

Lame, lame, lame _____ 😞

OK I guess. _____ 😐

Bring it on! _____ 😊

Figure you'll be getting Rin Tin Tin? You will need to go to training school and patiently train your dog: not to beg, jump, steal, bark, pull on the leash ...

8. Home sweet home

Your house is dirty, you:

Hate it _____ 😞

Tolerate it. _____ 😐

Don't really mind _____ 😊

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A dog home means **dog hairs** (even low shedders) and **dog smells**.

Really want to vacuum every day?



9. Your social life

Do you have close friends or family with:

Allergies _____ ☹️

Fear of dogs _____ ☹️

Small children _____ ☹️

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10. Grooming

Grooming the dog for 1/2 hour / week...

... No thanks. _____ ☹️

... Tolerate it. _____ 😐

... I can do that! _____ 😊



Even “low-maintenance” breed occasionally need:

- **brushing**
- **nail clipping**
- **baths**
- **worm, flea and tick** treatments

11. Nasty finances

Conservative estimate (€/\$/£):

- Vet bills: **350 / year**
- Worm/flea/tick cures: **120 / year**
- Pension/dog sitter: **160 / year**
- Dog training: **200 / year**
- Accessories (toys, bed, treats, etc.): **100 / year**
- Food: **240 / year**
- Grooming: **60 / year**
- Insurance (pet liability): **25 / year**

Grand total:

1,255 / year

This is very conservative considering the fact that most older dogs develop chronic ailments.

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Don't give up: go for a test drive

A less-than-perfect score? Not to worry, **there are creative solutions**. Dog adoption can be wonderful. Just be realistic.

So why not test-drive dog ownership and:

- Foster a dog from a local shelter, or
- Look after a dog for a few weeks?

You'll know whether **you can take the commitment long-term**.

Returning a dog

If you must give up a dog, please find the best possible alternative solution.

If you are returning the dog to the shelter, **please do this face-to-face**. That way, the staff can ask you the relevant questions which will help your dog's chances of being rehomed.