



# 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.