

3 Tips to Prepare for Being a Great First-Time Pet Owner

If you're about to be a pet parent for the very first time, you're more than likely a bundle of nerves and excitement. There are so many things to consider and prepare for, and you want to be ready to enjoy your little four-legged friend without running last-minute errands. Don't fret. If you follow these tips, you'll be prepared for being a great first-time pet owner.

1. Don't Overlook the Necessary Supplies

You may be so excited about your new pet that you're spending more time buying toys and choosing names than making lists of the necessary supplies. Make sure you have the



necessities first and then spend time buying the fun toys and narrowing down your name lists. [Must-have pet supplies](#) include a leash, collar, and identification tags. You should check with your local ordinance officer and determine which licenses you should have to protect yourself and your animal.

You'll also need mealtime supplies for your new pet. Make sure that you choose bowls that are sturdy and will

be difficult for your pet to flip over, yet aren't so big that your pet will have difficulty reaching his food and water. Stainless steel bowls are a good idea because they are easy to clean and don't contain toxic chemicals that may be present in plastic bowls. Decide where you are going to place the food and water bowls and if you want to put a mat underneath to help contain the mess. You should check with your veterinarian and the place where you are purchasing or adopting your pet from to determine which food is best to give him at home.

If you will be crating your animal to aid in house-training and to give him a safe place of his own in your home, now is the time to get the crate. You want your pet to know where his place is from day one. Along those same lines, if you are getting a pet bed or will be putting blankets in the crate, have those items prepared for your new pet's arrival as well.

2. Make Sure You Have Contingency Plans in Place

Remember when you were in school and your parents had to fill out the emergency care cards at the start of each new year? As a new pet parent, you'll want to make sure that you have a contingency plan in place for your pet in case you run behind at work or get caught

in traffic during the first few weeks of being a new pet owner. One part of that plan should be to choose a [local dog walker](#) who can pinch hit for you when you can't be home to stick to the houstraining schedule.

Just like choosing a veterinarian, choosing a dog walker should involve an online search and a check of reviews prior to scheduling a face-to-face meeting with the candidates on your short list. Observe the potential candidates with your pet and call references before making your final choice.

Once you have a dog walker in place, make a schedule for visits during the first couple of weeks. You'll want to make sure that all three of you (the dog walker, your dog, and yourself) are comfortable with each other before you have to rely on him in a pinch.

3. Choose a Veterinarian

[Choosing a veterinarian](#) is just as important as choosing the right pet. It's better to have a vet in mind before you bring home your new pet because you will feel more comfortable taking your new furry friend to someone you've already met or spoken to and with whom you have started a relationship.

To choose a vet, ask your pet-owning friends and colleagues for recommendations. You'll be more likely to trust someone that your loved ones know and trust, and you'll get honest answers from them. Then, you can get some unbiased opinions by checking the vet's website and reviews online. Once you have narrowed down your potential vets, call the offices and speak with the staff. Ask whatever questions you have, but don't make an appointment until you have spoken to each office. You'll get a fairly good feel for the vet's level of professionalism after a few minutes on the phone with her staff or the vet herself. It's also a good idea to visit your final two choices to get a tour of their offices, ask your questions in person, and see the staff in person. Then, make your final decision and see how the first visit with your new pet goes. If you have any reservations, or if you don't like the treatment your pet receives, choose a different vet.

Whether you're adopting for your own [personal growth](#) or because you want to give back by providing an animal in need with a loving home, pet ownership is rewarding and fulfilling. By being proactive and getting as many supplies and plans in place ahead of the day you bring home your new furry friend, you'll be much more prepared to be a first-time pet owner. You'll also have more time to spend playing with and enjoying your pet since you won't need to run errands or make appointments.

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