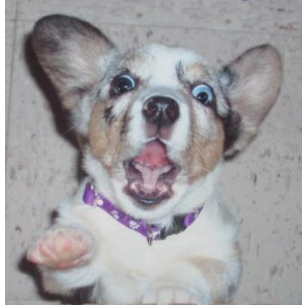


A Happy Dog – How to Avoid Behavioural Difficulties

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With dogs frequently in the media, most often in a bad light, it is easy to think of them as dangerous animals. When they bare their teeth and growl, it takes a brave person to not feel intimidated. Why did these dogs make the news for bad behaviour? Is it still safe to add a dog to the family? And what about the kids?

It is common knowledge that dogs are pack animals. As such, dogs need companionship and this helps make them such wonderful pets. They are sociable beings, perhaps even more so than the humans they easily accept as family.

If you have just adopted a dog, or are thinking of doing so, there are a few things to consider.

When you adopt a dog, you become the dog's family, his pack. Your dog will feel the need to be included in pack activities. One of the worst things you can do to a dog is to keep him away from human companionship. This will make the dog feel anxious and stressed, perhaps even jealous, which will make him more likely to bark and, in extreme cases, lash out.

Don't turn your dog into an outside pet. Keeping him chained in the backyard does not allow him to socialise. He won't learn what acceptable behaviour is, and he will feel lonely and excluded. This again can lead to frustration and even aggression.

You do not have to spend all day interacting with your dog but experts recommend allowing him access to at least the living space and a sleeping space in the house at night. It is easy enough to allow him near you when you are relaxing in front of the television, or working on the computer. Talk to him when you can, pet him, and let him know he is behaving well.

Train your dog. If you can, take him to a training and socialisation class. The best time to do this is when your dog is a puppy. This will help avoid undesirable behaviour early on. It also helps the pup to understand that you are the leader of the pack, which is important. If you have adopted an older dog, training him as soon as possible will help him fit in.

Take your time introducing the dog to each member of his new family. Instruct your children on how best to approach their new friend, and make sure that they know not to pull his tail or his ears. Most dogs are very tolerant of children. It seems that they know children are the human equivalent of puppies, and therefore they can get away with more. However, it is important to supervise any playtime between your children and your dog, allowing you to step in when needed.

A dog is constantly looking for cues as to how to behave and how to please you. Reward positive behaviour and discourage inappropriate behaviour. Avoid physical punishments – they will do more harm than good. If your dog is scared of you and becomes scared of humans, he is more likely to feel defensive. If you treat him with love and encourage him to be kind and happy, he will feel accepted and pleased with his place in the household. He will not have reason to be stressed and anxious.

Your dog needs exercise. The amount of exercise needed will depend on the breed. It is advisable to do a search online to find out as much about the breed as possible. Do take your dog for walks, and do allow for proper playing time. Most dogs will love you forever if you just throw that ball, or stick and allow him to

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fetch it a good few times. Other toys, such as squeaky bones, may seem annoying to you but can make for hours of fun for your pet.

Above all, allow your dog to be your friend. This is what he wants more than anything. Give him a chance, and together you will build many happy memories.

This article has been submitted in affiliation with <http://www.PetLovers.Com/> which is a site for Pets.

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