



THE PAWS PACK

CHOOSING A PUP

So how long would you take to decide on your next car?

You would probably buy some auto magazines, browse the internet about your best options, talk to friends, work out the economics, consult the family, etc. Right?

And how long would you normally own that car? 5 years?

So imagine the thought that should go into bringing home a pet. He will be your companion for the next fifteen years and unlike a car he has feelings.

First of all choose what type of pet you would like to keep.

Would you like a dog? Does your lifestyle have the capacity to fit in time for such a commitment? If not, maybe you could think of a cat. But remember whichever pet you choose, YOU ARE responsible for that life. Your pet will look up to for care, protection and most importantly love.

So in case you are thinking of bringing home a puppy, here are a few points that you should consider.

First and foremost, discuss the idea with the entire family.

Remember to respect everyone's point of view. A Dog is a social animal, and if there is anyone in the family that is averse to dogs, he will pick it up. Do not make an impromptu decision. Consult a veterinary doctor for a list of responsible breeders or visit your local shelter if you are kind enough to adopt a stray, they make very good companions too. Talk to pet owners you know to get an idea of what it is like. Also find a reputable trainer who can help you with the right selection. A good trainer will be happy to help you with this process.

Do not make an impulsive decision with the first puppy you see.

Have patience, you will find a puppy that will be apt for you. If you are buying a pedigree, understand the breeds that interest you. Besides the way they look, dogs were bred in a certain way so they could perform certain tasks. If you want a companion dog that loves kids and is great with people, a Doberman might not necessarily work for you. Similarly, if you do want a dog that will guard there is no point in bringing home a Labrador! There is plenty of information available online about breeds and types of dogs, know your facts. It is worthwhile investing time, energy and expertise in your choice, this puppy will be spending the next ten to fifteen years with you.



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Once at the breeder's place, insist on seeing both the parents and the whole litter.

A good breeder will be happy to show off his facility and his dogs. Observe the parents and their behaviour, see the dynamics of the littermates. The puppy that comes bounding out to you may not be the puppy that's "for you"...it will just be the puppy who is the most confident and outgoing and has nothing to do with your connection with him :). All puppies are adorable in their own way; you have to choose one that suits your lifestyle.

Puppies should never be less than 45 days old when allowed to go home.

Be very careful of breeders who want to palm off puppies which are very young. If in doubt about the age, insist of having the puppy shows to a veterinarian chosen by you.

A good breeder will ensure that the parents and the litter are de-wormed and vaccinated as per schedule by a reputed veterinary doctor.

Ensure that you have checked all the certificates for the same. Also certain breeds are prone to congenital ailments such as hip dysplasia and skin conditions. Make sure that the parents have been certified healthy by a good veterinary doctor and that their hips have been x-rayed and required blood tests have been run, etc. You can also insist on showing the puppy to your vet for a health check up. Check if the mother and litter have been on a healthy diet from pregnancy onwards.

Although a kennel club registration will ensure a certain pedigree, what it will give you on the certificate is just the family tree for your puppy. What are more important are the health and temperament of the puppy and history of health and temperament in its family tree.

A responsible breeder will not give away the puppies one by one over time.

Instead he will allow prospective owners to come and select their puppy and tag it with a specific colour code. He will then choose a specific date and time when the puppies are old enough to go to their new homes, and call all the new owners at the same time. He will have the puppies leave together. This ensures that the puppies are not exposed to the stress the mother faces when they leave. A puppy that is exposed to such stress invariably grows to be wary of strangers, because it is imprinted in his mind that a stranger brings stress.

Always check if the puppy is motivated by toys and how it is around food.

A puppy that has been exposed to toys from a very young age will respond well to toys and will love playing with a toy; he will not end putting his teeth on your skin because he will teethe on his toys. One that has no exposure will think of his litter mates as toys and will use his teeth on them and invariably you once he comes home! If the breeder has fed all the puppies from one food bowl, they will learn to become competitive for food, and will show early signs of possessiveness, food aggression and greed. To combat this, the best solution is to have double the number of food bowls as puppies. Even the weakest one will get a chance to get to one of the many bowls!



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Observe the surface that the litter is using for toileting.

In all probability this is the surface your puppy will seek once you reach home for his daily rituals. If the breeder has provided the puppies with two very different surfaces to sleep and to toilet, the puppy will learn the difference very quickly because they do not like to toilet where they sleep and eat.

So this is some information to keep in mind while selecting your dog, and also selecting where you are getting it from. It is very important to make sure you are supporting responsible breeding. Because as with everything else, you control the market as a prospective owner. If you buy your pet from a puppy farm or puppy factory you are encouraging the irresponsible breeders. But as pet owners if we make an inherent effort to either adopt pets, or buy them from responsible, qualified breeders then the bad ones will have no choice but to follow the right methods.

We at The Paws Pack, want to have happy pets and happy owners. Contact us if you need any help with choosing a pet that will suit your lifestyle and if you have any queries about finding the right puppy.