

Top 10 Reasons To Consider a Rescue Dog

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1 Housebroken

With most family members gone for 8 hours or more on weekdays, house-training a puppy and its small bladder can take a while. Puppies need a consistent schedule with frequent opportunities to eliminate, in order to establish a pattern of when and where. During the night, extra awareness is needed to anticipate the puppy's needs, or listen closely for possible warning sounds.

An adult dog can "hold it" much more reliably for longer time periods. Best of all, most rescue groups have spent the time to ensure their adult dog has been housebroken before he is adopted.

2 Intact Underwear

With a chewy puppy, plan on at least 10 mismatched pairs of socks and a variety of unmentionables rendered to the "rag bag" before he finishes cutting teeth. And don't get too attached to your shoes! The "chewing" age will find you with holes in your carpet (along with the urine stains), pages missing from books, stuffing exposed from couches, and at least one dead remote control. No matter how well you watch them, it will happen—this is a puppy's job! By contrast, an older dog can usually have the run of the house without destroying it.

3 A Good Night's Sleep

Forget the softly ticking clocks and hot water bottles, a puppy can be very demanding at 2am... and 4am... and 6am... when he's missing his littermates, and that stuffed animal does not feel like a warm puppy pile to him. If you have children, you've been there and done that. How about a little peace and quiet? How about an adult rescue dog?

4 Finish the Newspaper

With a puppy running amok in your house, don't plan to relax

when you get home from work. It's a rare kid that will really feed him, clean up the messes, and take him for a walk in the pouring rain every hour to get him housetrained. With an adult dog, it will only be the kids running amok, because your dog will be sitting calmly next to you, while your workday stress flows away and your blood pressure lowers as you pet him.

5 Easier Vet Trips

Those puppies need a full series of puppy shots and fecals, then their rabies shot, then a trip to be altered, maybe an emergency trip or two if they've chewed something dangerous. Those puppy visits can add up (on top of what you paid for the dog!).

Meanwhile your donation to a rescue group when adopting an adult dog will get you a dog with all of his shots current, already spayed or neutered, and usually with any pressing health issues already handled.

6 What You See Is What You Get

How big will that puppy be? What kind of temperament will he have? How active will he be? Will his personality be what you were hoping for? Will he be easily trained? Will the time you didn't find to spend during the early training months show up as bad behavior or habits within a year?

When adopting an older dog from a rescue, all of those questions are easily answered. You can pick large or small; active or couch potato; goofy or brilliant; sweet or sassy. The rescue and its foster homes can guide you to the right match (rescues are full of puppies who became the wrong match as they got older!)

7 Unscarred Children (and Adults)

When the puppy isn't teething on your possessions, he will be

teething on you and your children. Rescue groups routinely get calls from panicked parents who are sure their dog is biting the children. Since biting implies hostile intent and would be something any rescue group would have to carefully consider before accepting a "give-up" dog, Rescue groups ask a lot of questions. And we usually find out the real reason a dog is being nippy.

Parents are often too busy to have watched the circumstances leading up to the nip, and after the nip happens, often feel their natural parental protection emotions kick in so much that it's hard to recognize the difference between a puppy simply needing correction, and a problem biter in the making. Again, a growing puppy is going to put everything from food to clothes to hands in their mouths, and as they get older and bigger it definitely hurts (and will get worse, if they aren't being corrected properly.) Most adult dogs have "been there, done that, moved on."

8 Matchmaker Matchmaker Make Me a Match

Puppy love is often no more than an attachment to a look, or a color, or a childhood memory, or even good marketing text on a breeder's website. These reasons are not much of a basis for decision-making that will hopefully last 15+ years.

While that puppy may have been the cutest of the litter, he may grow up to be super-active (when what you really wanted was a couch buddy); she may be a couch princess (when what you really wanted was a tireless hiking companion); he may want to spend every waking moment in the water or catching a ball (while you're a landlubber or a busy mom with far more to do than keep a ball in the air); or she may turn out to prefer being an only child (while you were intending her to be the kids' best friend).

Top 10 Reasons, continued

Pet mismatches are one of the top reasons rescue groups get “give-up” phone calls. Good rescue groups do extensive evaluating of both their dogs and their applicants to be sure that both dog and family will be happy with each other until death do them part.

9 Instant Companion

With an older dog, you automatically have a buddy that can go everywhere and do everything with you NOW. There’s no waiting for a puppy to grow up (and then hope he will like to do what you enjoy.) You can select the most compatible dog with proven traits: one that travels well; one that loves to play with your friends’ dogs; one with excellent house manners that you can take to your parents’ new home despite the new carpet and the reupholstered couch. You can come home after a long day’s work and spend your time on a relaxing walk, ride or swim with your new best friend (rather than cleaning up after a small puppy and working on those puppy class homework skills.)

10 The Rescue Bond

Ask any rescue group and they’ll tell you the same thing: Rescue dogs always seem to recognize that they’ve been given a second chance. Dogs who have been uprooted from their happy homes or have not had the best start in life are more likely to bond very completely and deeply with their new people. While some dogs who have lost their families through death, divorce or lifestyle change do go through a mourning process, once attached to a new loving family, they seem to want to please as much as possible to make sure they are never homeless again.

Dogs that are just beginning to learn about the good life and good people seem to bond even deeper. They know what life on the streets, life on the end of a chain, or worse, is all about, and they revel and



**“Sitting Pretty”
“Sasha” the German Shepherd Dog
Honorable Mention in SPDR’s Photo Contest
Submitted by the Torgersons**

blossom in a nurturing, loving environment. Most rescue dogs make exceptionally affectionate and attentive pets and extremely loyal companions.

Unfortunately, many folks think that dogs who end up in rescue are genetically or behaviorally inferior. Not so. In fact, it is not uncommon for rescue groups to get \$500 dogs that have outlived their usefulness or novelty with impulsive owners who considered a dog a possession, rather than a friend or member of the family; or more commonly were given up because the family simply did not consider the time, effort and expense needed to be a dog owner.

Not all breeders will accept “returns,” so choices are often limited to animal welfare organizations and rescue groups, or the owners trying to re-home their own dogs.

Good rescue groups evaluate the dog medically and behaviorally before accepting him, will rehabilitate or retrain the dog if necessary, will adopt the dog only when he/she is ready, and will carefully screen potential new families to ensure a good, life-long match to a home that is realistic about the commitment necessary to provide the dog with the best home possible.

Choosing a rescue dog instead of a purchased pup will not solve the pet overpopulation problem (only responsible pet owners and breeders can do that), but it does give many dogs a chance they otherwise would not have had.

But, beyond doing a “good deed,” adopting an adult rescue dog can be the best decision and addition to the family you ever made. Rescue an adult dog and get a devoted friend for life.