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## Pre-Puppy Guide - Purchasing a Puppy

### Is this a right time for you to have a puppy?

Please look at your current situation before making the decision of purchasing a puppy. If you work and are out of the house for several hours a day, then you need to question whether a puppy is suitable for your lifestyle. Is your current family situation suitable for a new arrival? Do you have very young children that will be bounced all over by an over-exuberant puppy or toddlers that may teach him inappropriate behaviour's? Or, more simply, do you have the time and energy to commit to a puppy? Have a think about what other, if any, dogs you have in the household. It may not be suitable to get a puppy if you currently have an elderly dog and also consider other pets in the household: some dogs are predatory towards cats and other pets.

### What Breed should I buy?

A dog's character can vary dramatically depending on its breed. For example, owning a Miniature Poodle is very different to owning a Dobermann. You need to investigate how big your intended breed will grow, how much grooming and exercise they need and how much food they eat; a big breed can be expensive to keep in good health! The best place to obtain this information is by either reading the Kennel Club's breed standard, speaking to a breeder, or owners of that breed. Also be aware of any hereditary medical problems that your chosen breed may be susceptible to, and speak to your chosen breeder about the relevant tests that should be carried out. Research into whether you wish to have a puppy from working or pet stock, as this can affect appearance, temperament and exercise requirements!

### Where should I get a puppy from?

We do not recommend sourcing your puppy from a puppy farm or a pet shop. You may not know you are visiting a puppy farm until you arrive, but do not be tempted to buy the puppy out of pity as this keeps the breeders in business! Puppy farms usually breed multiple breeds and often advertise in local papers. Try finding a reputable breeder through recommendation of other happy dog owners.

### What should I be looking for when I go to meet the puppies?

- Meet both mother and father of the litter and check for history of any hereditary medical or behavioural problems. If the breeder is reluctant to let you interact with the mother, this usually indicates that the bitch has temperament issues (which may have been passed on to the puppies).
- Check the breeder's house for a clean environment. Any older dogs, as well as the puppies must look bright and healthy.
- Check what environment the puppies are being raised in. Are the pups raised in the house or in a kennel? We believe it is important to raise a puppy in a home environment so that they are used to the hustle and bustle of a house, as well as meeting visitors. Check that the puppies are not brought into the house for your purpose only.
- Look at how much the breeder has done with the puppies, at seven weeks of age can they sit, and have they started their housetraining? Has she mentioned that she has started to socialise them with people or introduce them to household objects such as a Hoover? Check the breeders training methods, does she advocate "rubbing the pup's nose in it" for inappropriate toileting and smacking/shaking the pup for any misdemeanour? If so, the chances are that she has done this with your prospective pup, which could cause problems in the future.
- When choosing your puppy from the litter, look at the behaviour of that puppy. Do not choose a pup that cowers in the corner; similarly, be aware the feisty, large one who muscled in and shoved the other out of the way.



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### **Should I purchase two puppies from the same litter?**

Purchasing two puppies from the same litter is not advisable. You may have hierarchy problems in the future, as the puppies compete with each other.

### **What age should I bring the puppy home?**

Eight weeks is the optimum age to obtain a puppy. At that age they will have picked up plenty of canine social skills from their mother, yet remain receptive to novel situations, training & development. Be wary of a breeder saying that they were keeping the pup to show, and have only now decided to give him up. The chances are that he has been returned from another home as he was unsuitable for various reasons, possible because of inappropriate behaviour traits. If this is a genuine situation and the puppy has been kept by the breeder for longer than recommended, please check what socialisation and training has been done with the pup.

### **Where do I go now?**

Now you have the perfectly reared puppy you now need to ensure that you keep him that way. Make sure you socialise him correctly and take him to puppy socialisation and training classes. Please see Puppy Handy Hints and the Puppy Socialisation sections for further guidance.