

By **Karen Rosenberg**

Preparing for Your New Pup

There are so many dogs in rescues and shelters these days! It's heartbreaking, and a continuous problem. As an animal lover and pet care professional I often ponder how we can resolve it?

I believe a lot can be done if we change our thinking about dog ownership.

To begin with, owning a dog is not cheap. Before bringing a new dog into your home you should be certain that you can afford the vet bills, food and a dog walker - at a minimum. Secondly, make sure you have time to care for your new family member. Ideally everybody in the household is on board and willing to take on dog duties because dogs, especially puppies, require a lot of care.

Too many dogs get returned to the shelter because of lack of funds or time.

Having a puppy or young adult dog, while also working full

time is possible only if you have help during the day. Many dog owners hire a professional dog walker to help out throughout the day, but you should at least plan to have time with your puppy in the mornings and evenings. It's important to budget for 2-3 visits a day with a dog walker. On average, a puppy of 8 weeks can hold potty for about 3 hours maximum.

Potty Training Your Pup

When dogs are in the litter their mom teaches them basic play and how to eat, but by 8 weeks old most puppies are off to their new homes. That can be quite a confusing change for them. All of a sudden, the puppy is alone in a house with humans and they don't speak the same language. It's not natural for a dog to know where he has to go potty and like children they need to be taught step by step. Of course you can watch videos online, but potty training a pup is not always so simple; it requires consistency and scheduled walks to be successful

and can benefit from experience.

Hiring a professional dog trainer who comes to your home and helps you with ground rules for potty training is a huge advantage and will set you up for success. It will save a lot of time and frustration. Puppy will learn faster, without confusion, and humans will have far fewer accidents to clean up.

Personally, I am an advocate of crate training. Puppy is too small to roam freely throughout the house. That much space is just too much for puppy to undertake, just like it would be for a toddler. I recommend a crate or baby gate to offer a safe space for your puppy. Don't leave your puppy in the crate too long or without positive reinforcement. It is not a prison or punishment, but a safe haven, so use treats to reward puppy for being quiet and good in his safe zone.

Take him out regularly to relieve himself and gradually expand the period of time between potty breaks. A good day in the life of a puppy is long, very long! Starting with a potty break, a hearty breakfast, another potty break, play time in the pen with safe toys, some running outside, nap time, potty break, lunch time, potty break, a walk or play time, a mid afternoon potty break, nap time, again a potty break, dinner, potty break, play time, one final potty by 9-10 PM and into the night. Some puppies also need care during the night... Sounds overwhelming? Caring for a puppy requires a lot of work, just like taking care of a baby.

Socialization

Also important are puppy classes for socialization and to teach general obedience. Before signing up for a dog class make sure your vet gives the okay and your puppy is up-to-date on all vaccinations. Socialization at a young age is very important and sometimes forgotten. Do not shelter your puppy at home and away from other people and dogs because it will make him



nervous once he goes out into the world. Make sure you give your puppy positive experiences and encounters with other friendly dogs. I don't recommend going to dog parks because you do not always know how the other off-leash dogs in the park will behave.

To rescue a dog and give him a second chance in life and love is the best gift of all and you will be rewarded greatly with his loyal companionship. After all they are called man's best friend for a reason, but don't underestimate the time and resources needed to properly care for your pet.

Reach us in the office at **703 945 5045** or via email info@ksrpetcare.com to discuss dog walking, pet sitting and training classes. You can register for group classes online at ksrpetcare.com/classregistration/



Karen Rosenberg is the owner of KSR Pet Care, located in McLean, VA. With passion for pets, organizational

talent, a degree in communications and business administration and as a responsible care taker, Karen started her mission to provide pet care in Northern Virginia in 2008. Today KSR Pet Care services McLean, Tyson's Corner, Falls Church, Vienna, North Arlington, Merrifield, Dunn Loring, Fairfax, Oakton, Springfield, Annandale and Great Falls. She manages a team of mature professional dog walkers, pet sitters and trainers. They offer pet exercise, vacation visits, cat sitting, overnight care for dogs and cats, exotic pets; small animal care, puppy and senior pet care in addition to general obedience and potty training instruction.



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