



"A better world through kindness to animals."

## The Adoption Option

### Where can I get more information?

For more information on basic pet care, training and behavior, visit the "You and Your Pets" section of the Best Friends website at [www.bestfriends.org](http://www.bestfriends.org). The following books can also be helpful to you:

- *Second-Hand Dog: How to Turn Yours into a First-Rate Pet* by Carol Lea Benjamin
- *The Chosen Puppy: How to Select and Raise a Great Puppy from an Animal Shelter* by Carol Lea Benjamin
- *Child-Proofing Your Dog: A Complete Guide to Preparing Your Dog for the Children in Your Life* by Brian Kilcommons and Sarah Wilson
- *How to Get Your Cat to Do What You Want* by Warren and Fay Eckstein
- *Cat Love: Understanding the Needs and Nature of Your Cat* by Pam Johnson
- *Twisted Whiskers: Solving Your Cat's Behavior Problems* by Pam Johnson

If you need additional advice, you can try a behavior helpline, a professional trainer or a behaviorist. Check out the resource called "Behavior Helplines" in the "You and Your Pets" section of the Best Friends website.



If you need additional advice on adopting a pet or working with a new pet, visit the Best Friends website at:

[www.bestfriends.org](http://www.bestfriends.org)

**Best Friends** – the nation's largest sanctuary for homeless pets.

**Best Friends** – the nation's largest network of people who care about animals.

**Best Friends** – working with you and with humane groups across the country to bring about a time when there are No More Homeless Pets.



**Best Friends**  
ANIMAL SOCIETY

#### Best Friends Animal Society

5001 Angel Canyon Road • Kanab, UT 84741  
Phone: (435) 644-2001 • Fax: (435) 644-2078  
E-mail: [info@bestfriends.org](mailto:info@bestfriends.org)  
[www.bestfriends.org](http://www.bestfriends.org)

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ANIMAL SOCIETY



## Why should I adopt?

If you have room in your home and in your heart for a new dog or cat, adopting makes sense for lots of reasons. Here are just four of them:

1. You will be saving a life. Even if you adopt from an organization that has a no-kill policy, you will be helping to rescue another animal by making space available at the shelter.
2. You will be saving money because adoption costs less than buying an animal from a pet shop or a breeder.
3. By adopting rather than buying a new companion animal, you will reduce the demand that drives the commercial breeding of puppies and kittens. Each year, millions of healthy and well-behaved animals are destroyed in shelters simply because there are not enough homes for all of them.
4. If you adopt a young adult or older pet, you can avoid many of the domestic hassles related to house-training and teething. Puppies and kittens are cute, but they require lots of attention, training, patience ... and newspapers!


An older dog might fit in better with your loyal old Labrador than a rambunctious torpedo of a puppy. Kittens are easier than puppies, but you may also want to consider the benefits of an adult kitty, who has already gone through the precocious kitten stage.

So, there are plenty of good reasons to adopt your next pet, but probably the best reason to adopt a dog or cat is that you just might meet your best friend.

## Where can I adopt?

You may already know of several shelters and rescue organizations near where you live. If not, here are a few suggestions:

1. The municipal animal control shelter or local humane society is a good place to start. If you don't know where it is, call your local police and ask for the name and location of the facility or organization that handles stray animal problems in your community.
2. Many animal rescue organizations hold regular adoption days at pet supply outlets. Most of the larger and more enlightened pet supply stores don't sell dogs and cats at all. Instead, they partner with the humane community in promoting pet adoptions. Check your Yellow Pages for pet supply stores or feed stores near you.
3. Some rescue groups specialize in specific breeds of dogs and cats. So if you have your heart set on a Jack Russell, a German shepherd, or a fluffy Persian cat, you can adopt one through a breed rescue organization.



To find a rescue group for a particular breed, check the Yellow Pages or do a search on the Internet.

## What else do I need to know?

**Health.** If you already have a dog or cat at home, make sure that your new pet has a clean bill of health from a vet before exposing your other animals to any risk. This is particularly important if you adopt from a municipal shelter, where veterinary care is usually minimal.

Most private rescue organizations will guarantee the health of your new pet and will see to it that the animal has been tested for any contagious diseases, received the necessary shots, and been spayed or neutered before you take him or her home.

**Spay/Neuter.** If your new pet is not already fixed, you'll want to make sure to arrange for spay/neuter as soon as possible. Information about low-cost spay/neuter services in your area is available by dialing 1-800-248-SPAY or visiting [www.spayusa.org](http://www.spayusa.org).

*...you just might meet your best friend.*

**Children.** A new pet in the house is an exciting event for youngsters, but don't let their enthusiasm turn into a nightmare for you or the new animal. Being pulled from under the bed by eager little hands or being flopped on by a child is very distressing to most animals, and especially for those in unfamiliar surroundings. Their only recourse is to scratch, snap, or run. Two out of three of these natural responses are likely to land them back in the shelter, which is hardly fair. Teach your children to respect animals as they would any other playmate. If their new pet doesn't want to play for now, teach your children to leave him or her alone.

**Behavior.** While your new pet may turn out to be the perfect lady or gentleman from day one, it is more likely that he/she will take a little while to adjust to new surroundings and routines. Be patient. Be positive. Yelling or hitting an animal in order to correct unacceptable behavior will only make matters worse. If your new kitty wants to hide under the bed for a few days until she feels safe, that's OK. Just make sure she has food, water, and a litter tray.

Behaviors like chewing, digging, and separation anxiety are just as common in dogs who come with a fine pedigree from a pet store or breeder as they are in mutts who have been rescued. Most behavior problems can be straightened out with patient and consistent application of a few simple training techniques.

