



Pet Tricks

Bringing Home Baby

WHEN YOU ADOPT AN ANIMAL, TAKE A FEW STEPS TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVEN'T BITTEN OFF MORE THAN YOU CAN CHEW.

By Brandi Broxson

Call a Family Meeting

Figure out responsibilities. Who will walk the dog? Feed the cat? And—the all-time favorite—scoop the litter box or pick up the lawn? Decide whether your pet will be allowed on furniture and where he'll sleep, so everyone knows the rules and agrees to use the same training tactics.

OUR EXPERTS

KITTY BLOCK, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

MARY GARDNER, DVM, VETERINARIAN IN BOYNTON BEACH, FLORIDA

DIANE ROSE-SOLOMON, AUTHOR OF *WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN ADOPTING A DOG*

Prep the Paperwork

When there's high demand at a rescue or shelter, it helps to have your application preapproved, meaning your references and paperwork have been checked. That way, when you fall hard for that puggle, you'll be at the top of the list of potential homes. You'll probably need to share proof of homeownership (or a permission letter from your landlord), identify what vet you plan to use, and agree to spaying or neutering. You should ask if the animal is potty-trained or litter-trained, if she has any health concerns, what her previous home was like, and if she gets along with kids or other pets. Bring a picture ID, cash or a card to pay the adoption fee, and a leash or cat carrier with you to the shelter.

Ready Your Space

Pick a room in your house—preferably one with a tiled floor, for the easiest cleaning of potty accidents—and set it up as a home base. Keeping your pet in a small, contained area at first will help him feel less overwhelmed. (Expand the parameters as he gets more comfortable.) Set out bowls for food and water, a soft bed, a litter box, and a couple of toys to soothe your new friend. Remove any fragile items, toxic cleaning products or plants, and anything he might like to nibble and gnaw.

The Gear



REFLECTIVE LEASH

This lightweight lead can be held in your hand or worn around your waist. It adjusts from 3½ to 6 feet, features a padded handle, and stands out on nighttime walks.

TO BUY: Crag Reflective Dog Leash, \$35; ruffwear.com.



WATERPROOF BLANKET

This plush, 40-by-30-inch blanket is reversible, machine washable, and a great place for a new pet to relax. **TO BUY:** Petmaker Waterproof Blanket, \$22; overstock.com.



COMFY CARRIER

Transport a cat or small dog in this tote. It has multiple mesh panels and a washable liner. **TO BUY:** TrustyPup Dog Travel Soft Sided Carrier, \$28; walmart.com.