

How Adopting a Dog Can Trump Getting a Pup

Should you get a puppy or rescue an adult dog? There is no right or wrong answer to this question; each of us has different needs when it comes to a new dog in our life.

That said, dog experts, books, and even articles in this magazine promote the importance of a young puppy's early socialization and a good start in life to such an extent that it is hard to imagine why someone would choose to "risk" adopting an older puppy or an adult dog.

Still, many of us do. Why do we choose rescue dogs? Aside from the obvious reason – that you may be saving a life – there are a lot of advantages. Here are just a few:

- **What you see is what you get.** Size, conformation, coat color and texture are all developed.

- **Most rescue dogs are really nice dogs!** And while puppy experts may have an idea of how a dog's personality will develop, most of us will have a better shot at picking a good match with an older dog than with a young puppy.

- **The energy level and exercise needs**

of an adult dog will be more obvious. All puppies are energetic, but will they settle into a quiet house dog or become excellent candidates for agility? Even when you take breeds or mixes into account, there are no guarantees with a puppy.

- **You will probably sleep better.** Young puppies usually need to get up one or more times in the night.

- **In most cases, housetraining an adult dog will be faster.**

A puppy's bladder just isn't as developed as an adult dog.

- **You won't have to go through the puppy crazies.** It's normal for puppies to chew on things and people, jump up, and exhibit general rowdiness, but it's not always easy to deal with.

- **Adult dogs tend to settle quicker.** While your adjustment period with an adult dog will likely be weeks or months, it often takes several years for puppies to settle.

- **It's a risk either way.** Starting with a puppy doesn't guarantee a healthy or well-behaved adult dog.



Many adult dogs at the shelter come with lots of features pre-installed; they may already be housetrained, and know basic good manners and tricks.