

Advantages to Adopting a Mature Dog

Puppies, although cute and moldable, are a handful and labor intensive! Soiled carpeting and rugs, late nights and early mornings, runny stools, teething and other things such as chewing, digging, barking, nipping, scratching and jumping are just some of the behavior challenges owners will have to confront again. Following are the unique advantages to adopting an older dog.

What you see is what you get

With an older dog you know what you're getting in terms of size, physical appearance, health and temperament. They have already developed their personalities, temperaments, and physical characteristics. There is no way to know whether the tiny puppy you adopt today will be 90 pounds of hard-to-manage dog a year from now, or if she will shed constantly or fall victim to a genetic disease.

Low physical demands

Fortunately these animals are not as demanding as some of their younger counterparts. Although they still need quality time in the form of attention and walks, they may be more content to sleep and curl up at your feet and nap. The nice thing about older animals is that they will prefer quiet walks to running or active play and will usually not pull you around on the leash or jump on you.

Convenience

Training a puppy means starting at ground zero; an older dog will most likely be housebroken and may have had previous training. At the very least, an older dog will not have to be fed or taken outside as often as a younger one, and can be left alone for longer periods of time. The older the dog, the more independent they can be.

Great for older people

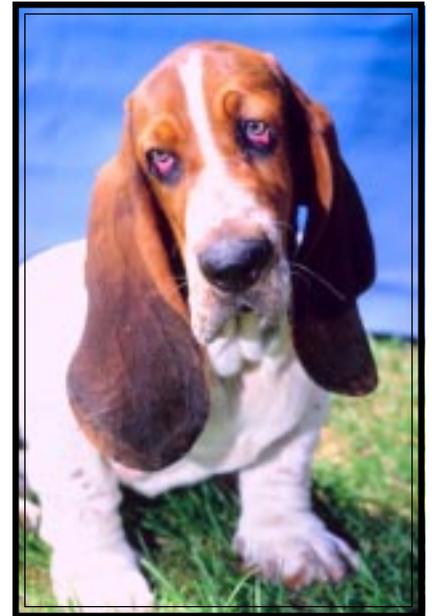
Older dogs often make great companions for older people, who don't have the stamina to keep up with a young, energetic dog.

Longer attention spans

Contrary to the old myth which says "You can't train an old dog to do new tricks," training can actually be quicker because they probably may already know some of the "basics" (come, sit, stay, etc.). You can use this to your advantage to teach more advanced commands or tricks. In fact, older dogs have a longer attention span, and often give more recognition to their trainers than puppies and young dogs do. Because they have "mellowed" they can often be easier to train making them great candidates for new tricks and further training.

Won't chew inappropriate items

Older dogs are not teething puppies, and won't chew your shoes and furniture while growing up. An older dog has already gone through the destructive phases of adolescence and puppyhood, and will most likely be more focused and self-disciplined.



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Settles in much quicker

Older dogs settle in easily, because they've learned what it takes to get along with others and become part of a pack.

Knows what "no" means

Older dogs have learned what "no" means. If they hadn't learned it, they wouldn't have gotten to be "older" dogs.

A good night's sleep

Older dogs let you get a good night's sleep because they're accustomed to human schedules and don't generally need nighttime feedings, comforting, or bathroom breaks.

Give you more time for yourself

Older dogs leave you time for yourself, because they don't make the kinds of demands on your time and attention that puppies and young dogs do.

Fast learner

By adopting an older dog, you bring into your home a more mature thinker, and in many cases a very intelligent dog (intelligent dogs can be hard to handle – which is why so many end up in rescue). While they may have emotional issues to overcome, they more than make up for that in the fact that they learn FAST. Adopting an older dog is like a “pass” to skip the chewing phase and fast-forward through housebreaking. Many older dogs up for adoption are already housebroken, but if they aren't, housebreaking can be accomplished over the course of a few days instead of weeks or months.

With all the superb qualities possessed by older dogs, it is unfortunate that they are often overlooked. Before heading to the nearest puppy kennels in search of your next companion, take a moment to ponder the possibilities of an older dog. You may be surprised what (and who) you find.

If your time is limited, consider an adult dog. A puppy that is left alone all day can't learn how you want it to act. It could take months, or even years, before you reach the same comfortable relationship with a puppy that you could have with an older dog in a matter of days.

