

# Happy Dog. Happy Home!



Keep a dog happy and you'll have much less stress and conflict over the coming years. Local dog behaviourist Dave Brice shows you how

**T**HERE are several considerations to take into account and here are three vitally important ones:

**1. Training your dog is not all about rules and being in charge.** It's about giving your dog information in a way so they understand that what you want is worth it for them, and is a better alternative to the behaviour they may have been doing previously. A simple example is jumping up: the dog jumps up, they get no attention (which is what they want), but when they don't jump up they gets loads of attention - so not jumping works for the dog and you as well.

**2. The right breed for you, your family and your lifestyle.** This is really important. If you don't like excitable, don't get a Staffordshire Bull Terrier; if you don't like

mud in the house don't get a Springer Spaniel or Golden Retriever and if you hate barking don't get a Lhasa Apso or Miniature Schnauzer because unless you are very, very, lucky they will bark. The best approach is to research a breed and make sure your family and your lifestyle is compatible with their traits.

**3. Exercise and mental stimulation are mandatory not just an occasional bonus.** Make sure you are capable of meeting the dog's physical needs but also their personality needs. Play is great, activity toys will stop the bolting of food and engage the brain; make feeding fun, but also slightly tiring. Tailor your play sessions to the dog's abilities and breed; ball games, tracking games, chase games, tugging games (will not cause aggression!), agility, fly ball are all mental stimulation as well as physical exercise. And finally when walking please remember that the walk is for the dog, let them sniff; even high drive dogs will relax if taken on lead walks



where they are allowed to be calm and do dog stuff.

Please consider the above and make a small amount of effort and the relationship with your dog will be enhanced; they will be happier and calmer and so will you.

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