

Checklist: how to prepare for getting a pet

Getting a pet is always very exciting, but it also comes with a great responsibility. Therefore, it is a good idea to check online about what you will need and what you should be aware of before getting a pet.



Important questions to ask yourself before getting a pet



Firstly, discuss with your family whether everybody would be happy getting a pet. In addition, keep the following questions below in mind:

- 1 Do you have enough space in your home for a pet?
- 2 Do you or any family members have any allergies?
- 3 Will you have enough time to give your pet the love and care it needs? Does everyone want to be involved in looking after your pet?
- 4 Will you be able to afford a pet? You will need to keep the following costs in mind in addition to the purchasing costs: food, bedding, vaccinations, pet insurance, toys, etc.
- 5 Would you have enough money or would you be able to save money in order to be able to pay for vet visits/operations, neutering if necessary, dog training, pet sitter, etc.?
- 6 Would you be able to organise pet care for your pet when you are going away on holiday?



Different types of pets and their space requirements and how much time and care they need



	Dogs	Cats	Rabbits & guinea pigs
Life expectancy	On average around 10 - 16 years	On average around 16 years	Guinea pigs on average around 6 - 8 years & rabbits 8 - 10 years
How much time would they need on a daily basis?	Around 1,5 - 3 hours	Around an hour	Around 20 - 30 minutes
Can they be kept on their own?	Yes, if they get enough care and attention from their owner	Yes, if they can go outside, otherwise you will need two	No, you will need at least two so that they don't feel lonely
How much space will they need?	Depending on the size and breed, you will need to make sure that your dog goes on regular walks, especially if they are kept indoors.	Cats should be kept indoors, but make sure you have a cat flap so that they can go outside and come back in. If your cat has no access to an outside space make sure that they have plenty of room in your home.	For two rabbits, it is recommended to provide at least 6 m ² of space and in addition, enough space where they can freely run about in on a daily basis. Guinea pigs should have about 1 m ² per animal and somewhere they can freely run about in on a daily basis.



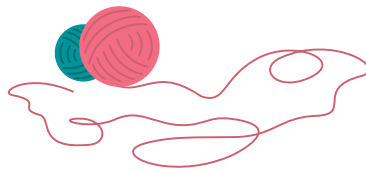
	Hamsters	Budgies	Fish
Life expectancy	On average around 3 years	On average around 5 - 10 years	Depends on the fish species
How much time would they need on a daily basis?	Around 20 - 30 minutes	Around 20 - 30 minutes	Around 20 - 30 minutes
Can they be kept on their own?	Yes	No, you will need at least two so that they don't feel lonely	No
How much space will they need?	Ideally, hamster cages should have several floors and an area of around 1 m ² .	Your budgie's cage should not be smaller than 1,5 metres long and 1 metre high.	Pet fish need a spacious aquarium, possibly with a base cabinet or stand depending on the size. An aquarium with a capacity of at least 54 litres is recommended for beginners.

What to keep in mind when getting a pet



If you want to buy a pet, in most cases you have the choice between a (young) animal from a breeder, a pet from an animal rescue centre or animal welfare organisation or a (small) animal from a pet shop.

- ✓ Don't decide "spontaneously" to get a pet. Consider the responsibility you are taking on and the potential costs.
- ✓ Don't buy pets as gifts. You should not expect someone to take on such a big responsibility.
- ✓ If you live in rented accommodation, always seek permission from your landlord before getting a pet.
- ✓ Make sure that no family members have any allergies to animal hair/feathers, hay or animal bedding.



Adopting an animal



You can support animal rescue centres or animal welfare organisations by adopting a pet and giving them a new home. Below you can find out more about why you should adopt an animal:

- 1 You can give an animal from an animal rescue centre a new and loving home. With patience and a lot of affection, you will have a new loyal companion.
- 2 By adopting a pet you can help support the animal rescue centre so that they can offer space for other pets that need their help and support.
- 3 You will have time to get to know your new potential pet. This will help make sure that you both get on.
- 4 You will not support dubious breeders who breed animals just to make as much money as possible.
- 5 Adopting an animal is cheaper than buying a pet from a breeder. In addition, your money will also go towards the protection and care of the other animals at the rescue centre.

Buying an animal from a breeder



A trustworthy breeder will openly show you where their pets are kept and they will also show interest in you as a potential new owner. Below you will find some tips on how to recognise a reputable breeder:

- ✓ The breeder should inform you about any important characteristics/health conditions.
- ✓ All of the breeder's animals are well cared for, healthy and well fed.
- ✓ The animals trust and know their breeder.
- ✓ You will have the opportunity to get to know the parent animals.
- ✓ Where the animals are kept, they should have enough room and it should also be clean, bright and adapted to that specific type of animal.

Buying a pet from a pet shop



Small animals, pet birds and fish are often available to buy in pet shops. Before deciding on a pet it is recommended to visit your local animal rescue centre or a breeder. If you do decide to go to a pet shop, keep the following information in mind:

- ✓ Animal species must be kept in groups of the same sex.
- ✓ Animals are in a protected environment away from where they can be petted by customers.
- ✓ Enclosures are well kept and the animals have enough food and water.
- ✓ Animals that do not like to be kept on their own should be kept in a group or pairs.
- ✓ Cages should have the right size to house the appropriate animal.
- ✓ Qualified members of staff who can offer advice and tips on buying a pet.

You can find more information about buying and looking after pets in our [pet guide](#).