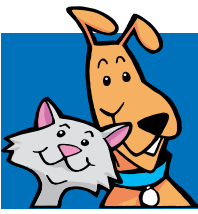




Southern Lakes Pet Connection

- Pets and microchips
- New puppy checklist
- Exercise for house cats



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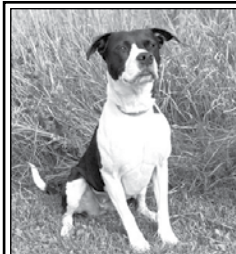
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Pets and microchips

A review of the basics and commonly asked questions

Pet owners generally want to do all they can to safeguard the well-being of their companion animals. This includes taking steps to ensure that pets can be returned safely should they get lost while outdoors.

Utilizing collars with identification information on them is one option, but that does not offer peace of mind if the collar comes loose and falls off.

However, microchipping is a permanent solution that is ideal for pets.

What is a microchip?

A microchip is a small device that is injected under the pet's skin. It is about the size of a grain of rice.

Unlike collars or tags that can fall off or become illegible, a microchip always contains the data that has your identification.

Here are some common questions about microchips and answers collected from PetLink, HomeAgain, The Humane Society, and the American Veterinary Medical Association.

Does the microchip have a battery or charge?

No, a microchip is simply an electronic chip enclosed in a glass cylinder. It is activated when a scanner sending out radio waves is passed over the chip, which then transmits the ID number to the scanner. The microchip is known as a transponder.

You do not have to worry about replacing batteries or recharging the chip. Typically microchips last for 24 years, well past the average life span of many pets.

Is insertion of the microchip painful?

Veterinarians assert that injecting the microchip is no more painful than a typical vaccination. However, the needle to place the microchip is slightly larger.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



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above: Microchipping is a permanent solution that is ideal for pets. It offers peace of mind to pet owners in the event their pet becomes lost.

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329433

New puppy checklist



Everything you need to get started

by **Janelle Leeson**

CONTRIBUTOR

You want to give your puppy a warm welcome to their new home. However, buying for your puppy can be overwhelming when you don't know where to begin.

There are many things to know about caring for your new fur baby.

So, let's look at this checklist to help you in your preparations when bringing a new puppy home.

Establish a relationship with your veterinarian

Veterinary visits are crucial when it comes to caring for pets. Puppies should visit their veterinarian about every three to four weeks, says Dr. Efreem Hunter, DVM, MBA, a vet and Director of Veterinary and Scientific Affairs at Blue

Buffalo.

Chrissy Joy, a celebrity dog trainer and host of *The Dog Moms*, has four pups of her own. She says that the first few veterinary visits are critical, even for pups who come from healthy moms.

"Meeting with your vet soon after bringing your puppy home is important," she says. Puppies need essential vaccines that allow them to safely explore the outdoors and socialize with other pups. They're also prone to parasites, which your vet can check for and quickly treat.

Setting your puppy up with a qualified vet makes it easy to navigate their primary medical care. Consider these factors when choosing your vet:

- **Distance from home:** You don't want to drive far for routine visits, and you'll want to be able to get to the vet quickly in case of an emergency.

- **Services provided:** Make sure the vet offers the services you want, such as dental care, nutrition counseling, and spay and neuter surgeries. Having all services in one office can be a perk, though it's not mandatory.

- **Experience:** Choose a vet

who routinely works with your pet's breed. Additionally, fear-free certified vets can prevent and reduce fear, anxiety, and stress in pets.

- **The space:** Ask whether you're able to enter the examination room with your pet and if the office has separate waiting areas and rooms for cats and dogs, as this can help prevent potential conflicts and stress between our different furry friends.

In talking with your vet, you'll quickly understand that preventative care is key to your pup's well-being, including keeping vaccinations up to date and protecting your precious pooch against fleas, ticks, and heartworms.

Puppy food

You'll need to have plenty of high-quality puppy food on hand for your newly adopted pup.

To help them power through their days, select a puppy food with a nutritional adequacy statement for growth or all life stages from the Association of American Feed Control Officials. You'll find this info on the pet food label.

"It's always a good idea to ask your vet for nutritional counseling, to make sure your dog's specific calorie requirements and other nutritional needs are being met," Dr. Hunter says.

If your puppy will be 50 pounds or more by adulthood, they may require large breed puppy food.

Puppy training treats

Bonding over treats is also an important part of raising a pup.

"Rewards such as toys or tasty treats can help shape your dog into understanding how to volunteer good manners and behavior," Joy explains. "We do this by rewarding our puppy soon after they offer the new behavior."

Because they have a sensitive stomach, it's not a good idea to share human food with your puppy.

Small treats or treats that break into smaller bites allow you to provide frequent rewards without overfeeding your dog.

You'll also want a few other essential puppy training supplies, such as a treat pouch and a six-foot training leash.

Water, food bowls

Packing bulky pet bowls can be difficult – that's why you'll want to invest in a bowl for home and one for the road.

At-home bowls come in a variety of materials, heights, and designs. For puppies, you'll likely want a shallow one with a non-slip base.

Dog bowls made for on-the-go generally come in two designs – the collapsible doggy bowl and the doggy water bottle. Both designs are lightweight and portable, which makes them easy to take with you on walks, hikes, or to the park.

Toys

Providing both mental and physical stimulation is fundamental for the well-being of your new puppy.

Mental activities – such as puzzle toys and training exercises – help keep their mind sharp and engaged. Physical activities like playtime and short walks will help burn off excess energy and promote physical health.

A balanced combination of these activities not only contributes to a happier and healthier pup but also helps create a strong bond between you and them.

"There are so many great options for toys. The selection can be exciting, but a bit daunting," Joy says.

To help you pick the best toys for your new puppy, Dr. Mike Greenberg, DVM, a veterinary advisor with GoDog, shares a few of his favorites:

- **Kong:** A classic and durable treat-dispensing toy that can keep dogs entertained and mentally stimulated. Greenberg says, "Fill it with some peanut butter and treats, and watch them enjoy themselves!"

- **Chuckit! Launcher:** Save your arm and watch your rambunctious puppy burn off excess energy. This launcher allows you to throw balls at greater distances with ease.

- **Tug toys:** "Sturdy rope toys or rubber tug toys provide an excellent outlet for dogs who enjoy a good game of tug-of-war," Greenberg says.

- **Flirt pole:** These interactive toys have a lure attached to the end that puppies can't help but chase.

Don't be afraid to experiment with new sounds and textures, Joy said.

"So many fun puppy toys offer crinkle sounds, squeaks, and funny noises that can be great exposure and used in playtime," she added.

Avoid any toys that are too hard or are a choking hazard; keep an eye out for any loose strings, stuffing, or squeakers; and make sure to promptly replace any toys that are falling apart or showing signs of wear and tear.

Watch your puppy closely after introducing a new toy to make sure they are not tearing it up and eating parts of it. The same goes for other household items, such as socks!

Puppies will teethe and mouth non-food items while they're cutting in their new adult teeth. Make sure anything they're chewing on or playing with is not being eaten unless it is 100% digestible.

You can try freezing peanut butter in Kong toys, as the cold may feel soothing on their gums. If your pup likes to tear up and try to swallow their toys, consider replacing them with digestible chew toys like Nylabones.

Puppy pads

Puppy pads typically work by attracting puppies with a scent, encouraging them to go to the bathroom on them.

They're especially useful for puppy parents who live in high-rise buildings and may not have quick access to the outdoors.

"Ideally, you want to move this potty pad closer and closer to the door that you will use to take your puppy outside," Joy says.

Don't forget to add enzyme cleaner to your cart, too.

Gates, playpens, crates

Puppy proofing, gates, playpens, and crates are all important in keeping your puppy safe.

When choosing a crate, make sure that it's appropriately sized for your puppy. This can help reduce the likelihood of potty accidents, as dogs instinctively avoid eliminating in their



sleeping area.

"Ideally when crate training your puppy, you want just enough space for your puppy to sit, stand, and turn around to lie back down," Joy says. Some crates come with a divider that allows you to adjust the crate size with your puppy's growth.

It's also collapsible and has a leak-proof removable tray.

Bedding

Add to your list of puppy supplies a bed that your pooch can call their own.

"A puppy's sleeping area should be a quiet space where they can get used to sleeping apart from you and any distractions or activity," Joy says.

She adds that at her house pups are allowed in bed too, but they always have a choice to rest in their own safe space.

Consider these factors when choosing a bed for your new puppy:

- **Durability.** Pick a bed that can withstand puppy teeth. Joy says she prefers placing a puppy bed with minimal fillers in her pooch's crate.

- **Ease of cleaning.** Accidents are bound to happen. When they do, you'll want a bed that you can wipe off or throw in the wash.

- **Size.** Puppies come in all shapes and sizes; they should have a bed that suits their frame. Ali Smith, founder of ReBarkable and an award-winning force-free dog trainer, says her favorite for large-breed pups is the BigBarker. It comes with a washing machine-safe

microfiber cover.

- **Design.** Dog beds come in a variety of shapes and sizes to suit different dog preferences and needs. The design of the bed you choose will depend on your dog's preferences and intended use. For example, if your puppy likes to curl up, a round donut bed might be a good option.

When your puppy can no longer stretch out or get comfortable in their bed, it's time for a larger size.

Socialization

Socialization is extremely important for puppies. It teaches them how to interact with new people and animals in a positive way while reducing fear and anxiety. All-in-all, socialization encourages the development of a happy, well-mannered dog.

The best time to start socializing your puppy is between the ages of 2-16 weeks of age. This window of time is when they are developing core memories of new experiences. You can start with letting them see new people, children, people in hats, people on bikes, people in wheelchairs, seniors with canes, and so on.

Establish positive happy interactions with a variety of new people while they're in this impressionable stage. See if the delivery person or mail carrier is willing to give your new puppy a treat.

After their first round of vaccinations, you can broaden their exposure to vaccinated pets of friends and family. While they're young, let them meet a

friendly cat or other species of pets they may later be exposed to and be sure that the interaction is as positive as possible.

Wait to take them to dog parks or other places where potentially unvaccinated dogs may be until they have completed their full series of parvo vaccines.

General exploration of the world with new sights, smells, and experiences will help socialize your puppy.

Here are a few activities to consider:

- Observing other people and pets from a distance
- Short greetings with other pets and people
- Scent walks
- Doggy daycare
- Puppy kindergarten
- Visiting dog-friendly establishments

Joy warns that rushing your puppy into a social situation before they're ready can cause them to lose confidence. Instead, slowly introduce them to new stimuli using positive reinforcement techniques.

ID tags, microchipping

A microchip is a tiny electronic device that is implanted under your dog's skin.

It's about the size of a grain of rice and contains a unique identification number for your dog. This number is linked to your personal information, such as your name, address, and phone number.

If your dog ever gets lost, a veterinarian or animal shelter can scan the microchip and contact you to bring your pet home, even if their collar has slipped off.

To ensure peace of mind, discuss the advantages of microchipping your new puppy with your vet.

While puppies are a lot of work, the time, energy, and budget you invest in your new furry family member using this checklist will give you all the tools you need to start your journey together.

Janelle Leeson is a freelance writer. This story first appeared on the PetMD website by Chewy, petmd.com.

above: Providing both mental and physical stimulation is fundamental for the well-being of your new puppy. There are toys available that can serve both purposes. **opposite:** You'll need to have plenty of high-quality puppy food on hand for your newly adopted pup.



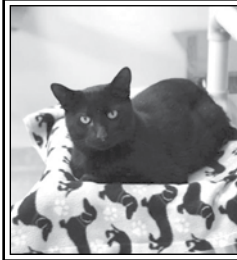
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Common health issues that affect aging pets

Cats and dogs are living longer so it's good for owners to be informed

Pet owners' devotion to their companion animals is evidenced in the lengths modern pet parents go to keep their furry friends happy and healthy.

A recent survey from GOBankingRates found that 70 percent of pet owners spent between \$600 and \$1,200 on their pets in 2023, which underscores how important companion animals are to the people who take care of them.

Millions of pet owners might admit there's no limit to what they would do to protect their pets, but even the most devoted dog owner or cat caregiver recognizes that age can catch up to companion animals.

Much like humans can't stop their own bodies from aging, pet owners have little recourse against Father Time when it comes to caring for their pets.

The American Veterinary Medical Association notes that cats and dogs are living longer now than ever before, so it's good for pet owners to familiarize themselves with common health issues that can affect older pets.

Senior pets

The AVMA notes that cats are generally considered "senior" after 10 years of age. It's a little harder to pinpoint when dogs enter their golden years, as the size disparity between breeds affects their senior status, or lack thereof.

According to the association, small or toy breeds (less than 20 pounds) acquire "senior" status



It's good for pet owners to familiarize themselves with common health issues that can affect older pets. That way they can pay attention to potential related symptoms and whether or not they should seek veterinary care.

STOCK PHOTOS *Pet Connection*

between eight and 11 years of age; medium-sized breeds (20 to 50 pounds) between eight and 10 years of age; large breeds (50 to 90 pounds) between eight and nine years of age; and giant breeds (more than 90 pounds) between six and seven years of age.

Cancer and senior pets

The AVMA reports that cancer is the cause of death in roughly 50 percent of all dogs and around one-third of senior cats.

Cancer in pets may produce a variety of symptoms, including:

- Abdominal swelling
- Bleeding from the mouth or nose or other body openings
- Difficulty eating or swallowing
- Breathing difficulties
- Lumps, bumps, or discolored skin
- Sores that will not heal
- Persistent diarrhea or vomiting
- Decreased appetite or body weight
- Swelling, heat, pain, or lameness that cannot be explained

Additional issues

Though cancer is responsible for a significant percentage of deaths among senior cats and dogs, it's not the only issue that can affect aging pets.

According to the AVMA, a number of

common health problems affect pets as they age, including:

• **Heart disease** – The Animal Medical Center, a New York-based nonprofit organization, notes degenerative valve disease, dilated cardiomyopathy, and heartworm disease are common types of heart disease in dogs. Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy is a common heart disease found in cats.

• **Kidney or urinary tract disease** – The Veterinary Diagnostic Library at Michigan State University notes that chronic kidney disease affects up to 10 percent of aging dogs and 35 percent of aging cats.

• **Liver disease**

• **Diabetes** – The AVMA reports that diabetes is most often diagnosed in dogs between the ages of seven and ten and in cats older than six years of age.

• **Joint or bone disease**

• **Overweight or obesity**

• **Vision or hearing loss** – The AVMA notes senior pets can develop cataracts that affect their vision and may not respond as well to voice commands as they did when they were younger.

Cats and dogs are living longer. Pet parents can prepare for their pets' golden years by learning about common ailments that affect aging animals.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Sweet doggy dreams?



STOCK PHOTO: Pet Connection

Many dogs move around and make noises while sleeping

It can be disconcerting to new dog owners when they discover their pooches whimpering, shaking or seemingly crying in their sleep.

Although there may be some rare instances when this behavior is linked to pain and distress, by and large it is a natural response in many animals when they doze off.

There is no exact way to measure what is going on in the pup's mind, according to

experts like Dr. Bonnie V.G. Beaver, DVM, author of Canine Behavior Insights.

Beaver says the main reason that dogs produce noises in their sleep is that they are probably dreaming during the REM phases in their sleep cycles. Dogs, just like humans, have the potential for vivid dreams while sleeping, as evidenced by looking at dogs' brain waves during REM sleep.

During these phases, dogs may show movement like wagging their tails, twitching their paws, fluttering their jowels, or making noises like whimpers. In some cases, dogs also may bark while sleeping, says PetMD.

Pet owners should rest assured that very likely these vocalizations and movements are completely normal. However, if they are new behaviors, it could be worth a discussion with a veterinarian.

Also, new pet owners should know that a dog who makes noise while napping may also do so during the night and should not be overly concerned if they are woken from bed by pet noises.

The general consensus is to simply let the pooch be as they work through those REM stages.

(METRO CREATIVE)

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Possible causes of low energy in dogs

A variety conditions can contribute, many of which can be improved

Many dog breeds love to get outdoors and run. Dogs' love of activity endears them to millions of animal lovers, and it's one of the first distinctions people make between canines and other popular pets, such as cats.

It's not uncommon for dogs to look for a place to lay down and relax after a play session. And certain dog breeds, such as English bulldogs, tend to be less physically active than others.

However, low energy levels throughout much of the day and an unwillingness to get up and run around could be signs of something serious in dogs that typically embrace physical activity.

The United Kingdom-based People's Dispensary for Sick Animals notes that lethargy in dogs may indicate a host of problems.

Pet owners identifying the cause of low energy in dogs can be the first step toward helping man's best friend get back to being his or her energetic self.

Potential causes of lethargy

The PDSA notes that various medical conditions can contribute to low energy in dogs.

A veterinarian should be consulted immediately if a dog's energy levels suddenly dip. That's because certain issues that compromise canine's energy levels could prove fatal if left untreated.



Infections are a potential cause of lethargy in dogs. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, canine distemper is a serious disease caused by infection with the canine distemper virus.

Vaccination can prevent canine distemper, but dogs that are not vaccinated can suffer a range of symptoms, including lethargy, if they are infected with the virus.

Obesity is another potential cause of lethargy in dogs. The PDSA notes that overweight dogs tend to move around less, so pet owners may need to alter pets' diets and exercise routines to help them lose

weight and become more physically active.

Overweight dogs are at an elevated risk of developing diabetes, which the PDSA notes is one of a handful of hormonal issues, including Cushing's disease and hypothyroidism, that also can cause low energy in dogs.

Each issue is serious, and dog owners are urged to work with their veterinarians to help dogs lose weight.

Dogs also can suffer from heart disease, which can cause low energy.

According to PetMD, many dogs develop heart disease as they age. The most common forms of heart disease in dogs are heart valve disease, myocardial (heart muscle) disease, heartworm disease, and arrhythmia.

Heart disease in dogs affects blood flow and makes it hard for the heart to pump blood, which can make dogs tired.

Additional causes of low energy in dogs include anemia, kidney disease, and liver disease.

Certain medications also can cause low energy in dogs, so it's vital that pet owners discuss potential side effects of any medicine prescribed to their dogs.

Low energy in dogs can be a warning sign of various issues. Dog owners are urged to contact their veterinarians immediately if dogs exhibit signs of low energy.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Identifying the cause of low energy in dogs can be the first step toward helping man's best friend get back to being his or her energetic self.

STOCK PHOTOS Pet Connection

It's a bird, it's a plane –

IT'S A Dog!



Area resident takes his dog to new heights on the AKC FastCAT circuit

by Jennifer Eisenbart

STAFF WRITER

Who are the heads of the Tonge household? Why Jess and Harry, of course – an English Setter and an orange tabby domestic shorthair, respectively.

“In this house, the fur flies,” joked Delavan resident Erik Tonge.

The fur-family of the home are Harry – the 13-year-old orange tabby – and Jess Lea Tonge, the Setter. Jess claims the family star status, but not because of the friendship she shares with the cat.

Jess is an American Kennel Club FastCAT racer, with the CAT standing for coursing ability test. Dogs must have the ability to chase a lure, running a 100-yard course for the best time while chasing said lure.

She’s taken part in 30 races since the beginning of 2023, finishing last year undefeated and breaking a breed record across 100 yards for English Setters.

Now, having registered the top time of 2023 for her breed, Jess was expected to

show off her speed at the AKC FastCAT Invitational in October in Wilmington, Ohio, where the top five dogs in each breed compete.

With 200 breeds recognized by the AKC, plus non-invitational races being held the same weekend, hundreds of dogs were making their way to Ohio - including Team Jess, fueled by Bark River Freeze-dried Dog Treats.

Bringing home Jess

Like most pet owners, Tonge has had a close bond with the animals he has owned. In April of 2021, he lost his Rhodesian Ridgeback/Cocker Spaniel mix, Jack, and said it was like losing a child.

“Not having a child, he was my boy,” Tonge explained. “I just really appreciated the unconditional love.”

A few months later, Tonge and his girlfriend, Melissa, put a deposit on a Brittany Spaniel, hoping to fill the hole losing Jack left in their lives. That deal fell through, so the couple found themselves in the market for a dog yet again.

“We weren’t looking for a purebred. We were looking for a puppy,” Tonge explained.

The couple had trouble finding a rescue that would allow them to adopt during the COVID-19 pandemic, and Tonge admitted their frustration was growing when he and Melissa decided to check out an English

Setter breeder in southern Illinois.

As it turns out, it was a match made in doggy heaven.

“There were these nine little English Setters in this pen,” Tonge said. “I kneeled down, and this little girl comes flying at me and just knocks me down.”

Proving further it was meant to be, she was available.

“I brought her home, and she slept right next to me in the car on the way home,” Tonge said. “That’s where the journey began.”

Little did Tonge understand just how active an English Setter could be. Thanks to the breed’s hunting background, English Setters need regular exercise, outdoor activities, and interactive games.

“She’s a busy bee,” Tonge explained, and, he added, one with a stubborn streak. The first time he let her outside, she bolted right into Delavan Lake.

“From then on, we got a trainer,” he said.

The trainer got at the heart of what Jess needed, and Tonge got Jess out and about to area dog parks for exercise beyond just walking.

As it turned out, though, Jess didn’t just have a stubborn streak. She was also competitive.

A chance meeting

A random trip to the Williams Bay dog park saw Jess find another dog – a Whippet

– whose owner was throwing a ball. Every opportunity she had, Jess tried to beat the Whippet to the ball.

While the dog might have been getting annoyed, its owner had a suggestion.

“He said, ‘have you ever heard of the AKC FastCAT? You should try it out,’” Tonge explained.

As it turned out, the Whippet dog was a former FastCAT champion.

When he got home, Tonge looked up information on FastCAT.

As the AKC website explains, the FastCAT gives dogs a chance to test out their top speeds and race against a clock while chasing a lure. The timed 100-yard dash allows some breeds to reach up to 35 to 45 miles per hour – faster than Usain Bolt when he broke the world record in the 100-meter dash.

Tonge decided to give Jess a try at FastCAT, running her in a free race at the Racine Kennel Club. There were 300 people racing their dogs that day, but Jess immediately made a splash.

“Her first time, she tied the fastest time that was posted on the AKC website,” Tonge said.

“Wow. You have a fast setter,” the man running the lure told Tonge.

“He took interest in sharing stuff with me, what I could do to prepare her,” Tonge recalled.

That first race was in May of 2023. From there, Jess did 19 races during the remainder of 2023. She’s quickly established herself as one of the top English Setters in the country, and by the end of 2023, had broken the lifetime record for English Setters.

That top time earned Jess an invite to the AKC FastCAT Invitational in October.

During the week-long event, Jess will have the chance to show her quality against the other four fastest English Setters.

Jess’s time has since been passed in the all-time records, by her sister, Fhf Mabel, who won’t be at the invite because of the timeframe for which invitations are issued (based on calendar year).

It’s interesting that Fhf Mabel passed Jess. The two happen to be sisters – a dog from the next litter of the same two dogs at the breeder where Erik purchased Jess.

“What are the chances of that? I didn’t get this dog to race. It’s incredible,” Tonge said.



JENNIFER EISENBART *Pet Connection*

“I am a competitive person, and I like to do things where I’m challenged by other people. Jess is just really determined. She’s exciting to watch,” he added.

This year, Jess has raced six times, four in Oshkosh. She’s running a bit faster than she did last year, according to Tonge.

Looking ahead

Jess has continued her training in 2024 as well as continuing to race.

Tonge said she is racing a “little more consistently faster,” and he’s hoping she can earn the record back in Wilmington.

As for training...

“I swim her a lot in Delavan Lake. It’s very good for their hips,” he explained. “Then a lot of dog walking, and she pulls you around the whole block.”

Prior to the October competition, Tonge said his goal for Wilmington was to be competitive, but also to have fun and spend time with Jess.

The two have formed a strong bond, which is all he wanted when he went to the breeder and she ran up to him.

“I got lucky,” he said. “Jess, she picked me out.”

above: Jess, an English Setter, sits with her owner, Erik Tonge, at their home on Delavan Lake, in front of her numerous ribbons and awards. **opposite:** Jess is shown here running the 100-yard FastCAT track at a competitive event. **inset:** Jess qualified to compete at the AKC FastCAT Invitational in Wilmington, Ohio, in October.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS *Pet Connection*

The procedure can be done during a routine office visit and does not require anesthesia.

Some vets will implant the chip during a procedure for spaying or neutering so that the animal will be calm and still under anesthesia.

Who can read the chip?

Virtually all shelters and veterinarians have scanners that can read microchips.

Twenty years ago in 2004, the 134 kHz microchip was introduced with specifications developed by the International Standards Organization.

This frequency is usually considered the global standard for pet microchips and the

one that most scanners will read.

Where is the microchip placed?

Most dogs and cats are microchipped along the dorsal midline, which is just between the shoulder blades.

Horses are injected along the left side of the neck, about an inch below the mane. Birds receive the implant in their breast muscles because they have less mass than other animals.

These locations make it easier for scanners to find the chips.

Can a microchip migrate in the body?

Usually, your pet's subcutaneous tissue will bond to the chip within 24 hours, preventing it from moving.

There are rare instances when a chip migrates elsewhere in the body.

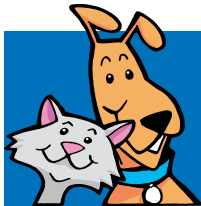
How can I register my pet?

The microchip is only effective if it is programmed with the pet's contact information. Microchip registries coordinate with the chip used.

You'll simply make an account and link the chip to your name, phone number, and other identifying information. It is important to update this data as needed when you move or get a new phone number.

Microchips, when used in conjunction with collars and ID tags, offer the best protection for pets.

(METRO CREATIVE)



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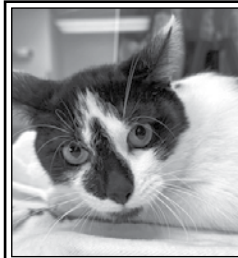
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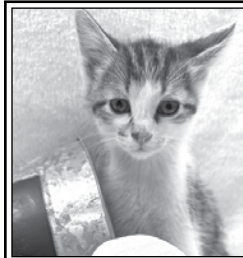
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How to get house cats some exercise

With patience and some creativity, owners will figure out what works

Cats make beloved pets for any number of reasons. Many pet owners love their cats for their quirky personalities, while others like the companionship of an animal that does not require the same level of hands-on attention as a dog.

In a testament to the love pet owners have for their cats, many would do anything to keep them safe, happy, and healthy. Cat health can be easy to take for granted, as felines are generally quiet and many prefer to spend ample time alone.

However, pet owners must take an active role in the health of their cats, and that includes ensuring the felines get enough exercise.

The United Kingdom-based People's Dispensary for Sick Animals notes that cats that stay fit and remain active are less likely to become obese and develop diabetes and arthritis.

Cat owners know that the very quirks that make cats such lovable pets also can make it hard to get them to do things they won't necessarily want to do.

But the following are some ways to ensure cats get enough exercise to stay fit and healthy.

Determine which toys cats like best

Some pre-exercise observation can help lay a strong foundation for feline fitness sessions.

The PDSA advises cat owners to identify which toys cats seem to like best and then use those toys during exercise sessions to entice participation. Use one or two toys each session and swap them every few days so cats do not grow bored with their fitness routines.

Incentivize physical activity

Much like dogs respond to treats during behavior training, cats are more likely to engage in exercise when sessions end with

There are ways to ensure cats get enough exercise to stay fit and healthy, even house cats. Among the suggestions are figuring out which toys they like, using a laser pointer and giving treats after some rambunctiousness.

STOCK PHOTOS Pet Connection

a reward.

PetMD notes some post-exercise praise and a few healthy treats can encourage cats to participate willingly in exercise sessions.

Don't overdo it

Cats are not humans, so felines' fitness sessions don't need to mirror their owners' lengthy workouts. Play sessions intended to get cats to exercise can last between 10 and 15 minutes each.

PetMD recommends limiting sessions to two or three per day for older cats, while as many as 10 sessions per day can be effective for younger cats.

Let cats sink their teeth and claws into a workout

WebMD recommends letting cats sink their teeth and claws into toys during a workout. This type of engagement satisfies cats and will encourage them to embrace exercise sessions.

Keep some replacements at the ready in case cats are especially enthusiastic.



Employ a laser pointer

Cat owners are undoubtedly aware and likely amused by how much cats are drawn to laser pointers.

Make the most of that inability to resist laser light by using a laser pointer during a cat's workout routine. Cats will chase the pointer all over the room, all the while getting some beneficial exercise.

Cats can benefit from routine exercise just as much as their owners, and there are several fun and even some amusing ways to encourage felines to enthusiastically engage in physical activity.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Subtle signs a pet might have cancer

It may produce only subtle symptoms making it challenging to distinguish



Researchers have made considerable progress in understanding the spread and development of various forms of cancers. In fact, millions now go on to live long lives after successful treatments, even though much about the disease remains a mystery.

While cancers that affect humans garner substantial

attention, the disease also can be diagnosed in pets.

Pets can develop neoplasia, which involves the abnormal growth of cells or tissues in the body that form into a neoplasm (tumor). A tumor can be benign or malignant. Malignant neoplasms can be unpredictable, grow at various rates, and spread to other

parts of the animals' bodies. When malignant neoplasms are present, then the pet is considered to have cancer, says the American Veterinary Medical Association.

The National Cancer Institute says crude estimates of cancer incidence in pets indicate there are roughly six million new cancer diagnoses made in dogs and a similar number made in cats each year.

Although sometimes the signs that an animal is unwell are readily apparent, often cancer may produce only subtle symptoms that are challenging to distinguish and may overlap with other health issues.

Here are some signs to watch out for.

Weight loss: Unless a pet is on a specific weight loss regimen or has increased exercise significantly, a sudden drop in weight could be a sign of cancer.

Appetite changes: If appetite suddenly increases or decreases, that may be a red flag for cancer. Pay attention to the eating habits of your pets.

Bathroom habit changes: Dietary factors or eating a foreign item in the yard can affect a pet's bowel movements, but so can illness. Pets struggling with urination or defecation or those exhibiting changes in urine or

stool may be sick with cancer.

New growths or bumps: The presence of new growths on a pet's body should be checked by a vet. Not all lumps are cancerous, but pay attention to lumps that grow, don't go away, or change in shape.

Behavioral changes: Pet owners get to know the dispositions of their companion animals. When a pet that is normally boisterous becomes lethargic, withdrawn, or less playful, that could be a sign of illness.

Unusual bleeding or discharge: If abnormal bleeding from the nose, mouth or rectum is present, or if the animal has unusual discharge from the eyes or ears, that could be a warning sign for cancer.

Swollen lymph nodes: Pets' lymph nodes are located beneath the jaw, in front of the shoulders, on each side of the chest, and on the back side of the legs. Swollen lymph nodes may be an indication of an illness like cancer.

The cause of most cancers in pets is not known and therefore cannot be easily prevented.

It is important to keep up with routine well visits for pets so that vets can catch cancer at its earliest stage when it is the most treatable.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Cancer may produce only subtle symptoms that are challenging to distinguish and may overlap with other health issues. Experts offer a list of numerous signs pet owners can watch out for.

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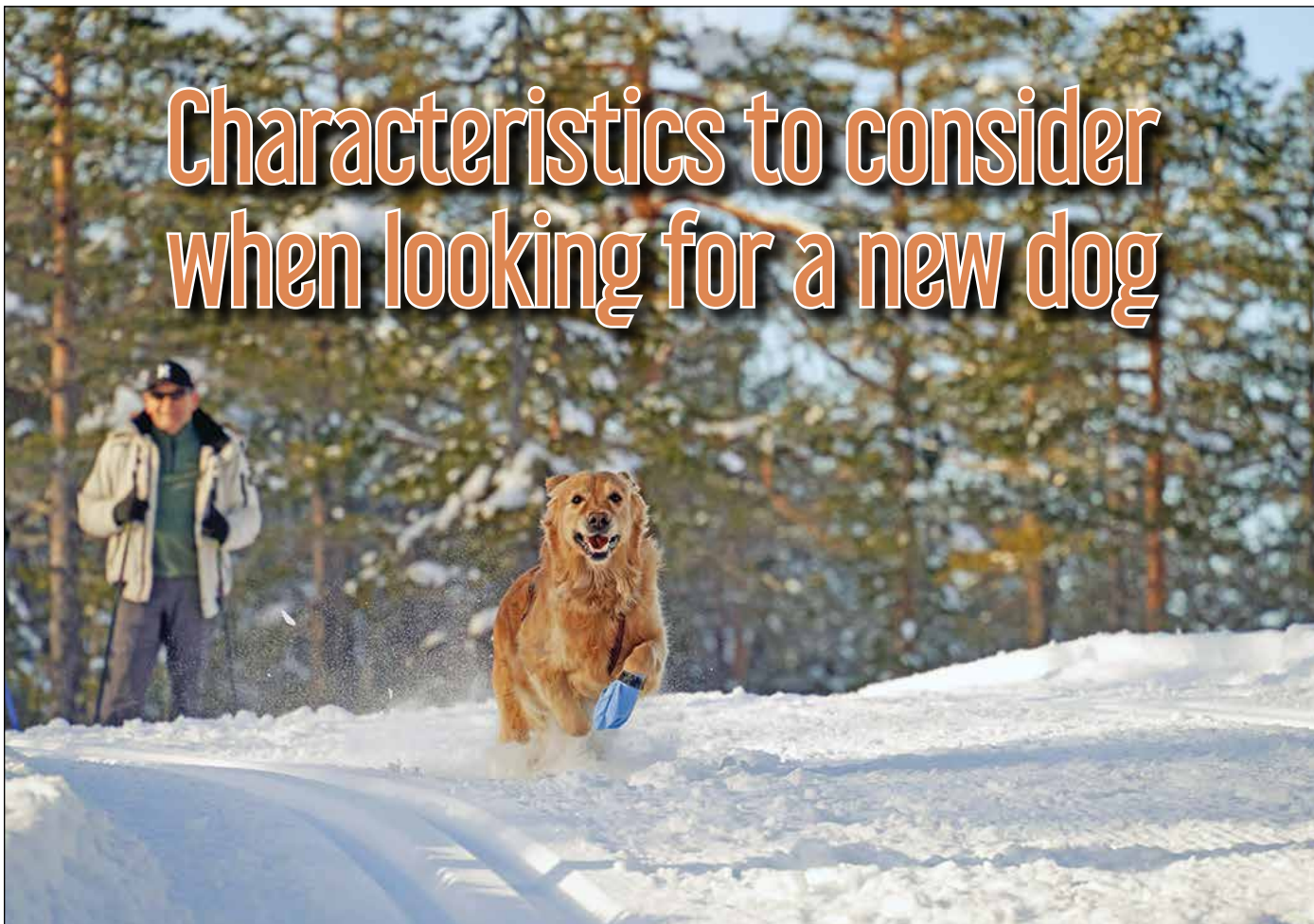
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Characteristics to consider when looking for a new dog



Dogs have been faithful companions to humans for hundreds of years. Dog owners know their canine companions can be friendly, affectionate, and entertaining. Dogs also are quite intelligent and can perform various jobs that help them stay focused and healthy.

Anyone considering bringing a dog home might be wondering which dog is best for them. Every dog is unique, and a breed that is a perfect fit for one person or family may not be the right choice for another.

The following characteristics are worth considering when searching for a new dog.

Energy level

Dogs require different levels of exercise and are sometimes classified by how much energy they are likely to exert. A working breed like a German shepherd, for example, may need more exercise than a dog that is known to lounge more often, such as a basset hound.

Talk through exercise expectations and be realistic on how much time can be devoted to walks and play sessions before narrowing down breeds.

Size

The larger the dog, the more indoor and outside space the animal will require. Larger dogs also will need more food and

larger toys and sleeping spots. They also may be more difficult to walk if they are particularly large and strong compared to the individual doing the walking.

Some people may want a dog that can be easily transported in a carrier when traveling. Therefore, size is an important consideration when looking for a new dog.

Health predispositions

Though predisposition to certain health issues may not be too great a concern with mixed-breed dogs, purebred animals are another story.

For example, RSPCA Pet Insurance says pugs and bulldogs, as well as other brachycephalic (flat-faced) dog breeds, may experience overheating because they have trouble panting to cool off. Some brachy dogs are predisposed to skin, eye, or oral health conditions.

Other dogs may be more prone to allergies or hip dysplasia. It's important to do your homework on breeds and identify potential health issues a given dog may be predisposed to.

Grooming needs

Coat will determine how often or how much grooming a dog will require. Dogs with double coats may need to be brushed regularly to avoid matting and to help with the shedding process.

While certain dogs are billed as hypoallergenic, this really isn't a thing. Allergies often form from exposure to dog dander or the oils on their skin, so reduced propensity for shedding will not remove the chances for allergic reaction entirely.

Personality

It is important to read the breed standards on dog disposition. While personality will be affected by breeding and how the animal was raised, inherent traits may make some dogs act a certain way across the board.

Dogs bred to be watchdogs may be more aloof or weary around strangers. Dogs that are bred to do jobs like herding may be more independent.

Other dogs are family-oriented and bigger love bugs, which is why golden retrievers are so popular among families. Speak with a qualified breeder or veterinarian about which dogs will best fit a particular lifestyle.

Various characteristics merit consideration when shopping for a new dog.
(METRO CREATIVE)

The characteristics to consider when searching for a new dog include size, health predispositions, grooming needs, energy level, and personality.

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