

## How to find your *purr*-fect pet!

Humans are social creatures that, in general, require affection and close bonds with other beings in order to feel fulfilled. Caring for a pet can be a great way to fill your affection quota, lower stress, and improve your mental health. However, finding an animal companion that perfectly complements you can be a challenge. Not all pets are suitable for all lifestyles, and having a pet that clashes with your home environment can actually cause you *more* stress in the long run. Here are some tips and tricks for finding your perfect pet!



### FIRST

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Identify why you are looking for a pet in the first place. Are you looking for a 24/7 pal to quietly keep you company as you work from home? Are you looking for a playmate to work off the day's stress when you get home from the office? Are you looking for a roommate that will share snacks and watch movies with you? Are you looking for a best friend you can cuddle



and bury your face in to escape from the world? Are you looking for a partner that can perform tasks or help keep you safe? Figuring out what you most need or want in a pet before you go searching is crucial. There are so many companion animals to choose from, and each pet has certain roles it can fill beautifully – but no pet can fit into every role.

## SECOND

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Research your role! Once you have identified the role you want your pet to play, look for species or breeds that fit well into that role! For example, a quick search for “dogs that like to cuddle” will bring up breeds like golden retriever, Labradors, king Charles spaniels, and Newfoundlands and will typically not bring up breeds that are more suited for an athletic lifestyle such as border collies, Siberian huskies, and the Parson Russell Terrier. Check out multiple sources to confirm the information you are getting – only using one website makes it more likely you could get faulty information. Be sure to fact-check using credible sources like the American Kennel Club, The Cat Fancier’s Association, the American Rabbit Breeder’s Association, and so on. Make a list of pets that fit the role you desire.



## THIRD

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Identify your lifestyle! Just like every pet cannot fill every role, they also cannot fit every lifestyle. Some pet species can go days without direct attention, while others need near constant care. Take a look at your list of potential pets and narrow it down. If you know your schedule requires long hours at the office or weekend travel, cross out species or breeds that



are prone to separation anxiety. If you have children or plan to have children, cross out species or breeds that generally have low patience or are prone to nip. If you or a loved one have allergies, highlight species or breeds that are less likely to trigger those allergies. Expecting to keep a pet isolated or otherwise conforming them to a lifestyle they

are not suited for is a recipe for behavioral issues, destructive tendencies, and higher veterinary bills.

## FOURTH

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Research the requirements! Some pets require certain permits to keep, and others can be completely illegal in your region. Double-check your local laws for restricted species or breeds. Some pets require special food, special housing, or exotic veterinary care. Make sure you have easy access to all of your future pet's requirements. Attempting to alter a pet's specialized diet with simpler substitutions may lead to medical problems or death, depending



on the species. Housing large animals in confined spaces can lead to malformed bones, and depriving reptiles of UV light or the correct temperatures can be fatal. Make sure to talk to your veterinarian before obtaining your pet to make sure you are able to meet all its requirements.

## FIFTH

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Make a plan! Once you have narrowed down your list of potential pets and you are certain you can provide any necessary specialized care, the final step is to find your pet! Before you shop, look into reputable rescues and adoption agencies for your species and breed. Lots of animals are mis-homed when people compulsive-shop or select a pet based on appearances or status.



These animals still make wonderful pets, especially after you have done the previously-mentioned research! If you do decide to purchase a pet, make sure to research the breeders

in your area and ask for references! Talk to your local veterinarian and ask for a recommendation of breeders that go the extra mile for the health of their litters. While you are there, schedule an appointment for your “new pet” checkup and any vaccines your pet will need. It may also be a good idea to discuss pet insurance with your veterinarian or insurance representative, regardless of whether their care is specialized or not. Emergencies happen, and once they do it is better to know your animal companion will be cared for rather than worry about the bill.

## **FINALLY**

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Make the commitment! It is time to say “hello” to your perfect pet and it is time for your pet to say “hello” to their perfect owner! You have put so much work into making sure you and your pet flawlessly gel, and now you get to reap the reward! We wish you both luck on your life-long journey of companionship and fulfilment!

