

# The Right Pet Can Improve Your Health

*Studies have shown pets can have an impact on your mental and physical health. Learn what factors to keep in mind for choosing the right furry friend for your lifestyle.*



The idea that having a pet can help a person stay physically fit and mentally healthy is not a new one. The problem is that not everyone has a lifestyle that creates the best environment for a dog. There are other animal possibilities that will fit any lifestyle or personality.

## Keep these factors in mind:

### Lifestyle and energy level

If you're looking for an animal to be a companion on a jog, then you're probably in the market for a dog. Not just any dog though, you will need to be aware of any individual dog's physical capabilities. Other animals such as cats, hamsters, birds, and fish engage in their own activities for the most part. They also do not need to be taken outside for bathroom duties. Another question to consider: Does anyone in your family have allergies?

## Temperament

Want a low-key pet? Make sure you do your homework, and that you meet plenty of possible pets to help determine your tastes and needs. Animals that are too shy or too protective can cause problems in a large household. Even some smaller animals are more likely to bite, or to be so shy or inactive during the day so that they're never seen by children.

## Dietary needs, training, price of care

Some animals just need more upkeep. There are dogs and cats that need professional or extensive grooming, smaller exotic animals that need pricey specialized vet care or hard-to-find foods. Some animals benefit from intensive training. Consider life spans, genetic disposition to medical problems, and the possible cost of medical care before you select a pet. Make sure to budget for the usual pet care and keep some budget set aside for emergencies.

## Environment

Will you be at work most of the day? Do you go right from work to evening activities without going home? A dog is probably not for you. Do you have a large yard, a small apartment? Even small pets like rodents, reptiles and birds need to have cages and litter boxes cleaned regularly. Fish tanks must be maintained, and fish must be fed carefully. Think about where the animal will live, sleep, and eat before you make a selection.

Don't make quick decisions about selecting a pet. Your pet can be a great addition to your life. Your job is to make sure that you choose wisely so that you can enjoy your pet and so that your pet will enjoy you too.

**Here are some local animal shelters with adoptable furry friends if you are considering adding a new member to your family.**

- **Fort Wayne Animal Care & Control**
- **Humane Fort Wayne**
- **South Bend Animal Resource Center**
- **Pet Refuge**