

## Questions about Adopting an "Older" Dog.....

**Won't I be adopting someone else's problems? If the dog were so wonderful, why wouldn't they have kept him?**

.....**Answer:** Older dogs lose their homes for many different reasons....most of them having nothing to do with problems the dog has, but rather with those of the person surrendering the dog. Many folks think dogs who end up at shelters or in rescue are all genetically and behaviorally inferior. But, it is not uncommon for very expensive, well-bred dogs to outlive their usefulness or novelty with folks who bought them on impulse and no longer want to take responsibility for them.



Other reasons older dogs become homeless: death of a guardian....not enough time for the dog..... change in work schedule..... new baby.....need to move to a place where dogs are not allowed.... kids going off to college.... allergies.... change in "lifestyle".... prospective spouse doesn't like dogs. (All these reasons are taken from real case histories.)

**Don't older dogs cost more in vet bills?**

..... **Answer:** Veterinary attention and medication are needed at all ages and may or may not be more costly for an older dog. **Before you adopt a senior, be sure you get a health report from a veterinarian.** That way, if you discover that the dog has a health problem, you can decide if you are able to make the needed financial commitment

**Do older dogs have any "special needs"?**

..... **Answer:** With a health assessment of the dog, you will know whether any age-related conditions are present and you can take appropriate measures to address them. Otherwise, older dogs need all the things younger dogs do -- good nutrition, exercise (although less intensive, usually, than for a younger dog), and regular visits to the vet.

**Isn't it true that you can't train an older dog the way you can train a puppy?**

.....**Answer:** Dogs can be trained at any age. The old adage, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks," just isn't true. Autumn was called "Stupid" by her family for the first ten years of her life. She was adopted at ten years by a caring person and, at age 14, she was winning awards for being first in her obedience class.

**How long will it take for an older dog to settle into a routine with me?**

.....**Answer:** Each dog is an individual and comes with a unique set of experiences and from varying circumstances, so it is hard to predict how long a

specific dog will require to make an adjustment. If a dog has been in a shelter or kennel, the stresses of such an experience may cause him to be confused and disoriented for quite some time. Some dogs forget or are confused about their housetraining. With care, patience, and a kind, understanding, loving attitude, just about any dog will come around after a while. It may be a few days, a few weeks, or a few months.

**Is there anything special I will need to do during the dog's "adjustment" period?**

.....**Answer:** Again, this will depend on the individual dog. In general, with a dog of any age, it is a good idea to set aside a period of several weeks during which you can spend more time than usual in reassuring the dog, establishing good communication with the dog, and creating the special bond that will ensure a good future together.

**I just lost my old dog. What if I lose another soon after I adopt him?**

.... **Answer:** Grief is a very personal matter. Some people feel that giving a home to an older dog in need is a tribute to their former dog and actually eases their pain. Also, knowing that adoption has saved a dog from euthanasia and will allow her quality time for whatever period she has left, often enables people to focus on the positives and to deal better with loss.

Consider also that there are never any guarantees about length of life with any dog. Quality of time together can matter a great deal more than quantity.

