

PETS = Love and Better Health



If your family includes a pet, you know the great love and companionship they can add to your life. But did you know pets actually give us a lot more than kisses and wagging tails? According to the American Heart Association, being a pet parent is linked to reduced depression and stress as well as lower blood pressure and cholesterol. If your pet happens to be a dog – or maybe a cat – you are more motivated to take daily walks. Perhaps you'll stop along the way and chat with other pet parents out with their furry friends! Also, having a pet gives you a sense of purpose and provides some structure to your daily routine.

Here are **ANIMAL PLANET's** top 5 benefits of having a pet:

Having a pet in the home can actually lower a child's likelihood of developing related allergies by as much as 33%. Research shows this can also lead to a stronger immune system overall.

1

If your pet is a dog, there's a good chance their need for exercise will help you get motivated, too! Those who walk their pups are less likely to be obese than those who don't.

2

A pet fills your heart with love, translating to improved heart health. Those who have experienced a heart attack tend to have better recovery rates if there's a pet in their lives.

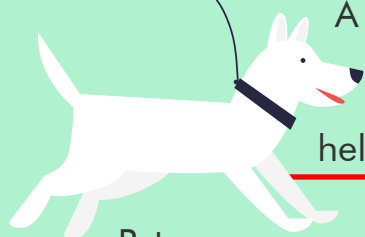
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A pet is an instant icebreaker. Talking about your pet and sharing stories with others can help you improve your social skills.

4

Pets can help you beat the blues. In addition to lowering depression and providing a sense of purpose, pets also combat feelings of loneliness by offering companionship.

5



If you're a senior and wondering what type of pet might be best for you, *3rd Act Magazine* has some things to consider:



Should I get a dog?

As mentioned, dogs are great companions and exercise buddies. Some can also be trained to provide supportive services to those with mobility, hearing or vision limitations. Look for a breed that is even-tempered and consider an older dog rather than a puppy.



How about a cat?

Cats require less maintenance than dogs as they are adept at grooming themselves and they are naturally neat. As with dogs, consider an older cat rather than a kitten.



Maybe a bird?

Many birds have energetic and bubbly personalities and are a fun addition to your household. Some sing and some just talk! Bird watching can have a calming effect on people of all ages, one reason why they are often part of an Alzheimer's or dementia care program.



What about fish?

Watching fish swim in a beautiful tank can be very soothing. They are easy to feed and generally easy to care for. Services are available to help maintain a healthy fish tank.

So, there you have it... reasons why you need a pet and choices for your consideration. Whatever you may choose, enjoy the companionship and joy a pet can bring to your life!

