

# The No-Surprise, Perfect Pet Adoption

Imagine adopting a pet that holds no surprises - what you see is what you get, has manners and respects your belongings. Best of all, you'll be gaining a new pal that's easy to kick back with and quickly form an especially close bond, as this special pet will be forever grateful you chose her.

**Analysis by [Dr. Karen Shaw Becker](#)**

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## STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- November is Adopt-a-Senior-Pet Month, which serves as a gentle reminder that older dogs and cats in shelters are the last to find homes, and too often, the first to be euthanized
- There are many reasons older pets are relinquished to shelters at a time in their lives when they need us the most
- There are also many reasons prospective adopters tend to steer clear of older dogs and cats, for example, they may seem too quiet or unsure as they wait patiently in their kennels
- If you're planning to add a new dog or cat to the family, I hope you'll consider the many wonderful rewards of adopting a senior pet

Many senior shelter pets live years with a family, and then during a time when they most need human care and companionship, they're surrendered to a shelter for any number of reasons, including ill health, incontinence, or another condition of old age. Sometimes the pet's owner passes away and surviving family members can't or don't want to care for the dog or cat left behind. The reasons potential adoptive owners tend to shy from older pets include:

- They're not as cute as puppies or kittens
- They may have, or may develop serious, expensive health problems
- They don't seem as perky or playful as younger animals
- The prospective pet parent has recently lost a furry family member and can't bear the thought of losing another companion to old age within a few years

Many older pets live out the remainder of their lives in shelters or are euthanized to make room for more adoptable animals. This is a heartbreaking end to the life of a once cherished pet. If you're thinking of adopting a shelter pet, an older dog or cat might be just the pet you need, so I encourage you to keep an open mind.

## 12 Reasons a Senior Dog or Cat May Be the Perfect Pet for You

1. **Senior dogs have manners** — Unlike puppies, many adult dogs have spent years living with a family and being socialized to life with humans. They may have received obedience training and respond to commands

like sit, stay, and down. Many are housetraining and it takes a matter of hours or a day or two to help them learn the potty rules in their new home.

2. **Senior pets respect your belongings** — Older adoptive pets are generally years beyond the destructive puppy or kitten phase. You don't need to worry about finding your favorite pair of shoes or a table leg chewed beyond repair. Chances are your senior kitty has no urge to dive head first into your potted plants or shred the handmade quilt Aunt Helen gave you.
3. **What you see is what you get** — A senior pet holds no surprises as to how big he might get, what color his adult coat will be, or whether his hips will be healthy. A senior pet comes to you with his own history, which makes his future much more predictable than that of a puppy or kitten.
4. **Older dogs can learn new tricks** — Adult dogs can focus on the task at hand. If your adopted older pet needs to learn a few things in her new life with you, not to worry. Enroll her in an obedience class, contact a trainer, or go the do-it-yourself route. Older dogs have longer attention spans than puppies and are more eager to please their humans.
5. **You can pick your perfect pet** — If you're looking for a short-haired cat, for example, or a kitty with no history of health problems, you can search until you find an older pet with exactly those qualities. If you have a cat and are looking for a feline-friendly dog, you can ask to see older dogs who lived with cats in their former homes.
6. **You can adopt a purebred senior** — If you really love a certain breed of dog or cat, chances are there's a breed rescue organization that can point you in the direction of older purebred pets in need of homes.
7. **Senior pets and senior citizens make a great team** — Many older folks find the calm presence of an older pet very comforting. They appreciate having a companion who is also getting up there in age, doesn't mind hearing the same stories again and again, and is happy to move through life at a slower speed.
8. **Older pets are easy to kick back with** — Senior dogs and cats have all the basics down and aren't full of wild energy they need to burn off. Because you're not constantly chasing around or cleaning up after your older pet, you have a lot more time to spend having adventures or just relaxing together.
9. **Adopted senior pets are forever grateful** — Somehow, older pets seem to know you gave them a home when they were alone and vulnerable. Many new owners form a close bond very quickly with their senior dog or cat, because the pet shows them a level of attention and devotion that is unique to older adopted animals.
10. **A senior pet is a relatively short-term commitment** — The fact is, a senior dog or cat isn't an 8 to 20-year responsibility like a younger pet is. This can be a serious consideration for an elderly person or someone who doesn't know what their living situation might be in a few years.
11. **We're heading into the holiday season** — Many people are looking for opportunities to be charitable this time of year, and I can't think of a better way to give back than to help one less animal spend the holiday season in a shelter.
12. **You can be a hero to a deserving older pet** — Almost without exception, people who adopt older animals feel a special sense of pride and purpose in opening their heart to a hard-to-place pet. Doing a good thing really does make you feel good!

## Sources and References

[National Today](#)

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