

Tips for Being a Good Pet Owner

Welcome to Moscow, Idaho, home of the University of Idaho – one of the top 20 pet-friendly college campuses in the nation

The Humane Society of the Palouse would like to take a moment to introduce ourselves and discuss what it means to be a caring, responsible pet owner, whether you live on-campus or off.

If you already have a pet in your home, you probably already know the importance of the following:

Spay/Neuter

Probably the most responsible thing you can do as a pet owner is to spay or neuter your dog or cat. Shelters across the country are filled with animals desperate for homes. Sadly, there are more pets than people who want them. By having your pet altered, you won't be contributing to the homeless pet problem. Your pet will also be healthier and happier if she or he is spayed or neutered, since altering can help ward off certain types of cancer as well as prevent or reduce some less-desirable behavior traits such as urine-marking, fighting and attracting mates.

Keep Your Pets Indoors

Unless you live on a farm with working animals, your pets will be happiest and healthiest living indoors with you. Many rental housing contracts require pets to be inside your unit at all times unless on-leash and supervised outdoors. If your pets are safely inside, they will not be at risk due to cars,

predators, theft, disease, poison or the occasional passing skunk.

Identification

Even though you will make every effort to keep your pets indoors, sometimes accidents happen. The first line of safety is a collar with an ID tag. This way anybody who finds your pet will be able to contact you immediately. Secondly, all dogs residing within the city limits must purchase a city dog license. You may pick these up either at the police station downtown or the shelter on White Avenue. Last but not least, consider a microchip. If your pet should lose his or her collar while out on the town, this will allow you to be reunited again. The shelter as well as all vet clinics have a device capable of reading microchips.

Clean Up

Make sure you clean up after your pet. Carry poop bags when walking your dog, and dispose of used cat litter appropriately. Make sure all waste is securely sealed in bags to help control odors and flies at the dumpster.

Be a Good Neighbor

You don't want a neighbor who stinks, makes noise all day and night, or leaves messes in the public spaces. Neither does anyone else!



University of Idaho

If you think you're ready to make the jump into pet parenting, here are some things to think about before making a 10+ year commitment:

Housing Policy

Check your lease to find out what is required of you before you visit the shelter or pet store.

Pet policies vary widely depending on your housing situation. Some places don't allow any pets, others have size or breed restrictions.

Costs

The price of pet food is the least of the costs associated with pet ownership.

You will probably have to pay a pet deposit to your landlord, and maybe additional monthly pet rent.

Dogs require a city license. Most pets will have some substantial veterinary bills more than once throughout their life in addition to an annual exam and vaccines.

Time

Make sure you have the time to dedicate to your chosen pet. Dogs require a significant daily time investment in exercise, training and companionship. Cats can get some of their daily companionship snuggled up to you at night, but still need some interactive play and grooming time. If your time is limited, consider a pocket pet or even fish. And remember that whatever time you think you have now to dedicate to puppy training and play time, you must be consistent. Fluffy doesn't know when it's finals week, or care that you picked up extra shifts at work.

Vacations

If you've traveled a fair distance to attend the University of Idaho, there's a good chance you'll be heading back to your hometown for holidays, maybe even summer vacation. What will you do with your pet then? Do you have a friend who will watch Fluffy if you go away for the weekend? Is your family open to a furry house-guest at Christmas? Do you have a new pet-friendly apartment lined up for next year?

These are all things you need think about before bringing home a fur-kid.

Moving and Other Life Changes

Any pet is a long-term commitment. A dog or cat can easily live over 15 years. When you're in college, trying to imagine where you will be even 5 years down the road can be hard to predict. Is your biggest dream to work overseas after graduation? Humanitarian work in under-served communities? Traveling the world? Perhaps you'll get married or start a family. Whatever the future holds for you, it also holds for your pet. Are you willing to put the extra effort (and money) into finding pet-friendly housing, even if you're moving far away?

What do I do if I find a stray or unattended animal?

If the animal has a collar with an ID tag, great! Call the owner, hang on to the wayward critter until the owner can meet you, and everyone's happy! Can't get a hold of the owner, there's no ID, or can't wait for a meet-up? The city of Moscow is in charge of animal control, but the law regarding pets "at large" only applies to dogs. So if you have found a dog that you can't keep an eye on for a while, call 882-COPS and an officer will pick Fido up and impound him at the shelter. There he will be safe and cared for until the owner can reclaim him. Frolicking felines can be a more complex matter. The rule within city limits is that cats are permitted to be free-roaming, as long as they are not being a nuisance. However, certain housing developments, including those on-campus, do prohibit unattended, free-roaming cats. If Fluffy is friendly, you may catch her and bring her to the shelter yourself for safekeeping.

Despite all my planning, I cannot keep my pet. What now?

Don't waste time worrying. Life is sometimes unpredictable. Start planning as SOON as you even think you may have to re-home your pet. Our Humane Society is a no-kill shelter; we don't euthanize one animal to make room for another. This means that once your pet is in our care, he or she is safe. On the flip side, this means we often have a waiting list to bring pets in,



Get your dog fix as a volunteer at the Humane Society of the Palouse.

especially cats in the springtime when we are being inundated with kittens. So call the shelter first thing and discuss your options. If you do not wish to surrender your pet, we can still help your re-homing efforts with free listings on Petfinder.com and Petango.com. Petfinder also has numerous articles with tips on how best to go about finding homes on your own.

I love cats and dogs, but I can't get my own pet right now — I really just need to get my "fix!"

You have all the qualifications needed to volunteer at the Humane Society of the Palouse. Set up a time to come in and get all the puppy kisses and kitty purrs you need and help de-stress a shelter animal while you are de-stressing yourself. Can't get off campus? Check out Campus Commons during Dead Week for Daytime Distractions. We'll bring the animals to you!