

All the puppy love at half the price

Enjoying the company of a pet need not be as expensive as you might think. You'd be surprised how many effective and low cost ways to care for your dog or cat you already have.

Prevention is important for keeping a pet healthy. Regular access to clean food and water, shelter, exercise and the company of other animals are the most important things you can give your pet. Time together and play sessions with you mean a lot more to them than fancy toys.

Learn as much as you can about the animal you have. Borrow library books on animals. Talk to experts. Hang out with other pet owners to see how much care a pet takes. Think of it as inviting a two-year-old child to live with you. A little knowledge and planning go a long way!

Two of the most important things to remember: feed your pet the best food you can afford and in the right amounts. Second, invest in a sturdy collar and leash that will last a long time.

Keep your pet indoors, or on a leash while outdoors, to keep him safe. This lessens the chance of unwanted matings, eating poisonous plants or being attacked by other animals. Indoor cats live much longer than their outdoor cousins do. The risk and bother of fleas is greatly reduced, too.

As with a child, keep poisons and other dangerous items away from your pet to prevent expensive accidents. Put your breakables out of reach and set definite limits on where your pet is and isn't allowed in your home. Baby gates are a great way to do just that.

Keeping your pet and his surroundings clean and providing plenty of exercise will do a lot to ensure you and your pet enjoy many happy, healthy years together.



**Your animal
welfare partners**



* * * * *

* Blankets or sleeping bags make good dog beds. Air them regularly to keep them smelling sweet.

* Dilute your pet's shampoo by half to make it go further.

* Remove pet hair from furniture or clothes by: wearing a kitchen glove with textured palm and run it over the item. lightly dampening the pet hair and using short broom strokes to sweep it up. Or try a damp sponge. wrapping tape around your fingers, sticky side out, and patting down your furniture or clothing.

* Store your pet's food in a metal container or one with a tight lid to prevent it spoiling. This also discourages insects and pets helping themselves between meals.

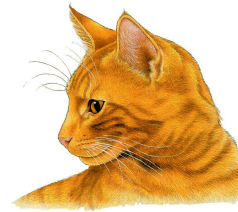
* Baking soda absorbs most odours from your pet's bedding. Also, brush a little through your pet's coat to act as a dry shampoo.



Stretching your dog care dollars

- * A hairbrush with rounded bristles makes a good grooming tool, especially for short-haired pets. Regular grooming keeps your dog feeling and looking good, and lets you see any changes in their health so you can address them early.
- * Choose toys for your dog that cannot fit entirely in his mouth. An excited dog can easily swallow a tennis ball or a fragment of a stick during a game of fetch, causing him to choke. Sturdy rope toys, Frisbees or partially inflated soccer or basketballs are great alternatives.
- * Your child's outgrown teething rings make good chew toys for puppies.
- * Recycle a sweatshirt into some welcome cold weather dog clothing by cutting the sleeves off and widening the collar so it slips easily over his head. Your dog will welcome the extra protection on your morning or evening walks.

Leaving more cash in the kitty



- Cat litter alternatives - Newspaper cut into ¼ inch strips, sand or wood pellets can be used. Or try ground corn or fine sawdust. Mix in baking soda to keep odours down.
- * Giving your cat its own scratching post will save a lot of wear on your furniture. Sisal twine wrapped closely around a piece of 2x4 makes a fun scratching post. Or give your pet a spare piece of carpet to sharpen his claws instead of your couch.
 - * Growing a pot with catnip, sprouting oats or simple grass will give your cat something of her own to nibble without destroying your other plants. Catnip is also a natural insect repellent, with its juice proven many more times effective than DEET for warding off bugs. Placing a pot of the plant in your favourite outdoor seating areas will go a long way to helping keep your patio mosquito-free.
 - * Two plastic laundry baskets, one upside down and tied to the rim of the other, make a good temporary cat crate for a trip to the vet.
 - * Cat toys are plentiful around your house. A box or a paper bag can provide hours of fun. A ball of yarn, a few paper clips in a film canister, a feather tied at the end of a string you dangle before them...simple and absorbing ways for your pet to stalk and chase for just pennies.