

Now pre-pet training for owners



Dr Manisha Suryawanshi with her pet

Pooja Kulkarni

The idea of bringing home a pet can be quite exciting. Most pet lovers agree that it is almost like bringing a child home for the first time. To ensure that things don't go wrong, pet lovers are now increasingly undergoing 'pre-pet training' sessions before they bring home a pet.

Shalaka Mundada, owner of a pet hostel who also gives pre-pet training says, "The concept of pre-pet training is slowly making its way into the city. Earlier people would go for counseling before buying a pet. But now, pet lovers are showing an interest in learning about ways of handling a pet properly."

So what is pre-pet training? Shalaka adds, "Pre-pet training is an activity that gives people a hands-on experience of handling an animal correctly before they own it. It involves spending time with the animal, feeding, walking and bathing it. It's more of a mind building activity to make people understand the emotional and physical needs of animals. The programme also helps people evaluate their pet requirement as it introduces them to various breeds and to animals which are suited for different home conditions. Also how to puppy proof your home and disaster management lessons are given to minimize teething problems."

Dr Manisha Suryawanshi who underwent a pre-pet training before she bought a beagle two weeks ago says, "I wanted a small dog as I stay in a flat. But as this breed is still new in India, I didn't know of many owners. So I decided to approach a pet trainer for information who told me about pre-pet training. It made me aware that dogs



Arnav Banthia with his pet

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— Shalaka Mundada, owner of a pet hostel

have mood swings and need to be given social training, things I didn't know of."

Twelve-year-old Arnav Banthia now owns a golden retriever after he completed a six month pre-pet training. Arnav's mother Vaishali says, "Arnav had been asking for a dog for a while. But I was not sure of whether he really wanted it. But when I realized he was serious, we started visiting a pet hostel on weekends for a pre-pet training. It prepared us well as we got to know what to expect when we finally bring a pet home. Arnav has been voluntarily taking all responsibilities of his dog."

Priti Chauhan, pre-pet trainer advises, "Owning a pet involves a lot of responsibility. Pre-ownership training helps one to get a reality check on the duties involved and assess whether one can fulfill all these responsibilities."

