

# Adopting Dogs As Survival Animals

Though a pet is a huge responsibility, the advantages of having one around when you or your family or property need protection are many. If you're looking for a fighting partner who would gladly lay down his life for you or a companion to keep you company when you're scared, tired and down, then a dog is a great bet. We'd like to talk about the benefits of adopting a dog versus buying one for your survival pet.

## Cost

Dogs can serve many purposes in a survival situation, depending upon the size and breed. One problem with buying a dog from a breeder (without going into the puppy mill conversation!) is that if you buy from a breeder or a pet store, you're going to pay through the nose. Some dogs cost upwards of \$2000 and even an "inexpensive" one is going to cost you \$400 or more.

Nowadays, the breeds have become so mixed that even what used to be considered mutts are now sold as "hybrid" specialty dogs; Peek-a-Poos, Australian labradoodles, and the originator of the idea, the Goldendoodle. These dogs are just as pricey, if not more expensive, than purebred animals. However, you can adopt a dog from a local shelter for less than \$100. Sometimes they even have free events. That's quite a savings!

Another savings for you is that shelter dogs are almost always already spayed or neutered and they have their immunizations. All of that is covered in the adoption fee for a fraction of the price that it would cost you to have it done at a vet.

## Choose Your Breed

One of the best things about adopting a shelter dog is that

you can go to the shelter and choose from a wide array of animals. Small dogs, big dogs, medium dogs, all in one place. Animal shelters are one-stop pet shopping and you can spend some time with each animal to see if you like his personality. Shelter workers tend to be a bit more honest about their observations than pet store folks, too.

We've adopted several dogs from different shelters and the one thing that shelters all have in common is an overabundance of large and medium-sized dogs. Everybody wants the cute little lap dogs so they go fast but the big ones often don't make it out alive because they cost more to feed, are too big for an apartment, or are intimidating to first-time dog owners. If you're looking for a dog for protection or work, this benefit definitely works in your favor!

### **Shelter Dogs are Often House Broken Already**

Without a doubt, one of the most frustrating issues with buying a puppy is house training it. You have to be there regularly and take it out often. Shelter dogs often end up there because their owners surrendered them for one reason or another and are already housebroken. You get all of the benefits with none of the mess.

### **You can Get an Adult Dog from a Shelter**

[Full-grown German Shepherds are terrifying when they have their teeth bared](#) while growling at you, but shepherd puppies aren't quite so intimidating. [If you want a dog that can protect you and yours](#) now then you want an adult dog, not one that will eventually grow into his role.

Shelter dogs tend to be full-grown, though there are sometimes puppies available if that's what you really want. For our purposes, though, it's good that we have so many dogs to choose from that can at least warn us of intruders on their first night home.

## **Dogs are Loyal, Regardless of Age**

Many people want to get a puppy so that the dog can grow up with the family. They believe that this makes the dog more loyal to them. As a person who has adopted many dogs over the years, let me dispel that myth right now. My shelter dogs are as loyal as they come and they were that way from almost the very beginning.

Dogs are smart; they know who loves them and feeds them and it doesn't usually take them long to build a bond with you and your family.

*Video first seen on [Southern Prepper 1](#)*

## **Words of Caution When Adopting**

Shelter dogs come from different backgrounds. Some were strays that were picked up by animal control, some were surrendered by their owners due to relocation, financial hardship or changes in circumstance and some were confiscated from people due to neglect or abuse.

You may be fortunate enough to learn why the dog was there but regardless of the reason, [he may have some issues that you should be aware of](#). Remember that even if he was in a loving home, he was abandoned and put in doggy prison. Shelters are loud and smell differently; also, the dog is probably mourning the loss of his family and familiar surroundings.

These factors may combine to create some unwanted behaviors that aren't representative of the dog's true personality, at least for the first few days. He may be guarded, standoffish or timid. Because he's been locked in a cage and was unable to be walked, he may have an accident or two. He may cry.

Give him a few days to calm down and settle in. Walk him regularly, be patient and show him some love. Chances are good that he'll adapt fairly quickly; dogs are tested pretty

thoroughly for good personalities before the shelter will allow them to be adopted out so aggression most likely won't be an issue. Still, be cautious at first when you reach for him and when you feed him because everything is still new and scary.

Especially if the dog has been abused, he'll come to appreciate the love and attention that he's getting and you'll likely have the most loyal friend that you could ask for within just a few weeks. Then you can begin training him to do whatever it is that he's suited for; guarding the house, babysitting, carrying a pack or pulling a sled are all options depending upon your dog.

The bottom line is that shelter dogs are suited to make great survival dogs in a SHTF scenario. You can choose the type you want and you can choose the age and training level. Basically, you get to hand-pick the perfect dog for you with plenty of choices if you go to a shelter, plus you'll be saving a life (and maybe more when he defends your home and your family when SHTF!). Finally, it won't cost a fortune to gain a tremendous asset to your survival efforts. Adopting a shelter dog for survival is a win for both of you!

Have you adopted shelter dogs for survival? If so, please tell us about your experience in the comments section below.



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