

# Best ways to Become a Responsible Pet Owner Today



# ABSTRACT

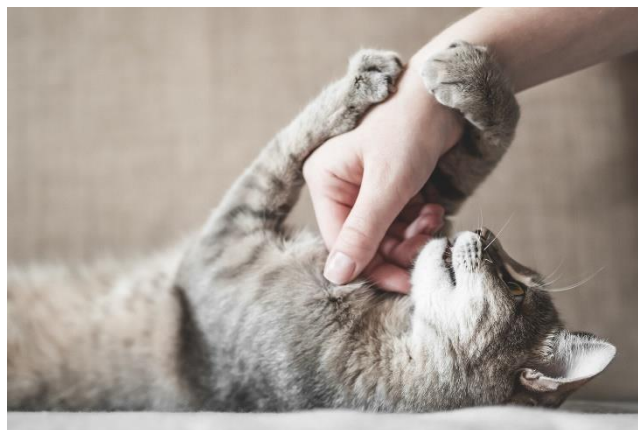
Choosing the right pet is key to ensuring a strong bond and lifelong commitment to our animals. The pull of love at first sight when we meet a cute fluff-ball can be very powerful, but being a responsible pet owner means earnestly considering whether we are a good fit for our new pet as much as they are for us before committing to taking them home.

# INTRODUCTION

Owning a pet is a lifelong responsibility but there are many positive benefits. Pets really can make us physically and mentally healthier. It is well documented that the bond between people and their pets can increase fitness and immunity, reduce stress and loneliness, and bring happiness to their owners. They can help us feel safe while we're home alone.

## I. Responsible Pet Ownership

Pets are great company, and are loyal friends. They not only bring an innocent joy into our lives, but the human-animal bond is a deeply personal and mutually beneficial experience.



Pets also benefit from having their own human. They enjoy a personal daily caregiver, a safe home, and longer lifespans than their homeless cousins. A recent study\* has shown that the stronger the human-animal bond is, the better veterinary and preventative care that animal will receive in its lifetime.

### Pick the Right Pet

It is your responsibility as a pet owner to thoroughly research the basic requirements of your chosen pet, and it's important to do this before bringing your pet home so

that you are well informed about the specific needs of your new pet. It's also important to understand that owning a pet is a lifelong commitment. Depending on the breed, health and lifestyle, cats can live for 15-20 years, dogs for 10-20 years and birds for up to 80 years. Companion animals thrive on human company and will always depend on you. You should also consider:

- your working hours
- your social life
- the time you spend away from home, including holidays
- whether you are prepared to walk a dog every day
- whether you are home often enough to keep a cat company
- who will care for your pet when you are away from home

Pets also need to be:

- fed and watered
- stimulated and exercise – all pets need species appropriate daily stimulation and exercise
- given access to appropriate shelter when in the yard
- groomed and bathed
- played with and entertained
- trained – many behavioural issues stem from lack of time spent training your pet (in particular, dogs). Training is mental stimulation and helps prevent bad habits that often stem from boredom. Training good manners is important too.

Before adopting or buying a new pet, make sure that it is the right one for you and your family. Do some research beforehand about the specific needs of the animal. Ask yourself these questions before getting a pet:

- How long will this animal live?
- What are the ongoing costs? (click the link)
- What does the pet eat?
- How much exercise does the pet need?
- How large will it become?
- How much will it cost for veterinary care?
- Do I have enough time to properly care for and clean up after the pet?
- What type of habitat does this pet need to be healthy?
- What type of exercise does this pet need?
- If you are a tenant, are pets allowed in the house, apartment, etc?
- Can I take my pet with me if I have to move to a new home?

## Keep Your Pet Healthy

No matter whether you have a dog, cat, horse, bird, small mammal (rodent, rabbit etc), bearded dragon, or other pets, providing regular life-long veterinary care is important for keeping your pet and family healthy. Regular veterinary visits are essential to good pet health. Talk to your pet's veterinarian about how to keep your pet healthy.

Provide your pet with a good diet, fresh water, clean bedding, and plenty of exercise. Keep up with your pet's vaccines, de-worming, and flea and tick control.

By keeping your pet healthy, you help to keep yourself and your family healthy. Contact your veterinarian if you have any questions about your pet's health or if you think your pet may be sick.



## Teach Children How to Interact with Animals

Pets can teach children compassion and responsibility. However, children should be supervised while interacting with animals to ensure the safety of the child and the pet. Teach children to wash their hands right after playing with animals or anything in the animals' environment (cages, beds, food or water dishes).

Teach your children how to understand the animals body language when the animal is telling you/your child that they have had enough and need space, and to be left alone. Don't let children kiss pets or put their hands or other objects in their mouths after handling animals.

## **II. 8 things every pet owner should know, according to experts**



Owning a pet can be a wonderful experience, but it also comes with many responsibilities.

Bottom of Form

Owning a pet is a huge responsibility and although it can be rewarding, it's not always easy. Fortunately, there's a lot of handy advice out there that can benefit you *and* your pets.

Here are some useful things for pet owners to know, according to experts.

**All pets should be seen by their veterinarian at least once per year, even if they seem healthy**

You may be tempted to skip your pet's annual exam if they seem healthy, but Katy Nelson, host of "The Pet Show TV" on WJLA in Washington DC, said she recommends staying on top of wellness check-ups to ensure your furry friend is as healthy as they appear.

She told that annual check-ups can help you catch health issues "early on while you still have time to intervene," which can save you money and keep your pet feeling as well as possible.

Obesity is quite common in cats and dogs, so it's important to keep an eye on what your pet eats and how much they weigh



"Being overweight is devastating to our pets and overlooking it by calling them cutesy names like 'Chunky,' or 'Fluffy' is doing them no favors," she said. "Adipose cells, known as fat cells, are hormone factories, producing dozens of inflammatory cytokines that increase your pets risk of diabetes, heart disease, joint disease, and even cancer."

She said she suggests individuals speak to their veterinarian about their pet's diet, their eating habits (including treats), and exercise patterns. She also encourages owners to try to keep their pets active.

"Find creative ways to exercise your pets like hunting feeders for cats or doggy daycare [or] anything that you can do to get them moving is a move toward getting healthy and fit,"

Many of us forget that our pets don't understand things as we do — so sometimes it's helpful to guide them to proper actions, especially when they are doing something you're trying to discourage.

"Your dog may be chewing on something inappropriate, like a piece of furniture, and you quickly tell them to stop. They do for a short time but then they go right back to that same undesired behavior," said Paciotti. "Why? Because you told them what not to do, instead of telling them what to do. The appropriate action would have been to give the dog something they were allowed to chew on."

## If your dog is pulling on its leash, you may need to change how you act before and during a walk

Paciotti said one of the main behavior issues many dog owners complain about is that their animal pulls when it is on a leash. She said that sometimes owners are the cause of the problem, not the dog.

"Stop and see if you are actually setting your dog up to do this. Are you one who gets your dog all excited to go? Or are you one who knows your dog is distracted by other dogs and you proceed to walk them when everyone in your neighborhood walks their dogs?" said Paciotti.

"Or, maybe you have a puppy and want them to walk with you. A 6-foot leash and a new puppy are two things that should not go together. The pup must learn to focus on you and not the surroundings," she added.

## When teaching your dog a new command, try speaking in plurals and using a high-pitched voice



Another tip that Paciotti shared is that you should try to be mindful of the tone and pitch in your voice when talking to your dog. She said that speaking in plurals and even changing the tone of your voice can help you train a puppy in a lot faster.

"For example, if you want your dog to sit, say 'sitting,' and if you want your dog to lay say 'laying,'" she said. "Dogs hear tone and pitch in our voices. The tone of our voice will change and peak the dog's ears to pay attention."

## Whenever your pet's behavior changes, you may want to go see a veterinarian as it can be a sign of something more serious

As tempting as it may be to use the internet to diagnose changes to your pet's behavior, Steve Dale, a certified animal-behavior consultant and host of several pet radio shows, said that a veterinarian should always be consulted to rule out a possible medical explanation for behavioral issues.

"Don't assume, don't wait, and don't depend on [search engines]. Until a time comes when [the internet] can do blood work or heart your pet's heart online, seeing your veterinarian is the right thing to do," added Dale.

## Declawing a cat is considered to be inhumane and it's not necessary

"A declaw is an amputation no matter how you slice it ... the veterinarian amputates the end section of the last bone which contains the growth plate along the nail," explained Dale. "It's a procedure that we now know may cause long-term pain, including phantom pain."

In addition, the Humane Society advises against removing a cat's claws and multiple countries and some cities and states in the US, such as New York, have made declawing cats illegal.

## Socializing your pets is important to help keep them happy

Most pets enjoy getting out and playing with other animals, Larissa Wohl, a pet expert on Hallmark Channel's "Home & Family" show.

"Socializing your animals, particularly dogs, is so important. We get so busy with our own day-to-day responsibilities that oftentimes [we forget that] our animals sit at home for the entire day," said Wohl. "The dog may get a walk in the morning or night, but socializing the animal with other animals helps them mentally and physically and helps them play nicely with other animals."

She suggests dropping your canine off at a doggy daycare location a couple of times a week or scheduling a play date with a friend who has a dog. And, if you have a social cat and are prepared to adopt more pets, you may want to look into adopting another feline for it to socialize with throughout the day.

### III. Pet-Friendly Decorating: Stylish Furniture And Decor To Please Your Entire Pack

Pet owners know that it doesn't feel like home without their furry friends. On the same note, most will admit they can do without the shedding, accidents and the way Fido's crate or Fifi's litter box disrupts the flow of their space. If you've ever thrown out a rug (even after cleaning it on your hands and knees) or considered leaving a sheet over your sofa for an indefinite period—it might be time to consider redecorating in a way that is equally people and pet-friendly.



#### A Pennsylvania Pack

ALLISON WEISS BRADY

When Chip Brady, Allison Weiss Brady, and their children moved from Florida to Pennsylvania, they enlisted the help of Alexis Rodgers to design their new home. With two rescue dogs, Bear (a Yorkiepoop) and Toby (a Bichon Frise), the space would need to accommodate the entire family. Especially Toby, who after being rescued at age three, still has occasional incontinence issues.

Floors are one of the most important elements to consider when designing a home around pets because that is where animals spend most of their time. Rodgers chose to stain them a custom dark color with variations in tone to conceal any messes and scratches. However, if your animals are fawn or white and tend to shed—a lighter wood will show less hair.

Rodgers was equally intentional about what rugs she used in each room. In the breakfast/dinner nook, she chose a neutral color circular carpet from Stark that would be more forgiving when it comes to food and dog messes. The color also

contrasts the bolder hues of the chairs. Additionally, she sprayed the fabric to make it more stain-resistant.

Unlike the eating nook, the home office space is brought together with a brighter, more lively patterned rug with a pet-friendly texture. Rodgers explained to me, "[I picked a] low pile so that the dogs can wrestle on it and take naps on it without anyone having to constantly brush out the dog paw marks."

For the family space, it was absolutely required for Rodgers to find a sofa that would accommodate everyone. Sofas especially bear the brunt (no pun intended) of wear and tear from both pets and people—not to mention kids. She revealed, "The custom Lee Industries sofa was pre-treated with a stain guard in the living room and also has a lower back so the dogs can drape their paws over and see all the action going on in the room."

## Live In Your Living Room

Lisa Gilmore is an interior designer from Florida who has worked on many pet-friendly homes. She believes that choosing indoor/outdoor furniture and rugs can make a lot of sense for pet owners. The upholstery is usually much easier to clean and more durable. The current trend of indoor/outdoor furniture and décor looking more like indoor furniture really makes this a viable option. So, you won't feel like you brought the patio inside. Lulu and Georgia has a beautiful selection in this category with table and chairs that are simply charming.

If you can't find anything that works, Gilmore suggests looking into commercial grade furniture.

## A Hybrid Approach To Pet-Friendly Decorating

Wayfair recently introduced a new line of pet furniture and accessories called Archie & Oscar. There is virtually a Noah's Ark of options with hundreds of items for every species you can imagine.



However, the hybrid pieces for dogs stand out more than any other category in this line. There are several crate/end table (as pictured above) and crate/credenza options. One of the most interesting pieces is a dog bed/coffee table. All of these can be game changers for pet owners who live in small spaces. This is in addition to the myriad of dog beds, sofas, sleek steps and stylish crates offered.

Also notable are the accessories for cat owners. From furniture already designed to hide litter boxes (no custom construction necessary) to classic condos and scratching surfaces could be confused for modern art sculptures—kitty never had it so stylish.

## Protect And Maintain

IROBOT

Accidents and messes are inevitable with pets. So, have the right tools on hand to maintain and protect your floors and furniture. The iRobot Roomba 980 can clean an entire level of a home up to 2000 square feet. It even has an app so you can schedule cleanings during regular walk times or at night when everyone is asleep.

If you prefer a more traditional vacuum, consider the Dyson V7 Animal. It's cordless, can convert to hand-held, and comes with three tools to get litter, food, and hair off every surface and out of every crevice.

While both Gilmore and Rodgers suggest Scotch Guarding fabrics, it's still important to have a pet-safe stain remover on hand. Nature's Miracle is safe and effective, with several formulas for different pets and needs.

## **IV. Best pet beds: keep your furry friends cosy and comfy**

Looking for the best pet bed to suit your (and your furry friend's) style? From luxury mattresses for dogs to pretty cat beds, we've found the best pet beds around



Choosing the perfect dog bed does actually go beyond the question of 'will it match my interior style?'. Obviously, this is a big part of the selection process when you're looking to buy a pet bed, but along with considering colourways and funky patterns, you need to think about important factors, like the size, age and sleeping style of your four legged friend. Is your pet a sprawler or do they tend to burrow? Do they like the comfort of sides or something more open? Do they need any extra support?

It's times like these that it would really help if your pet could just tell you exactly what they are after in a bed but, alas, instead you will have to turn to our round up of the best pet beds we think will suit every style, budget and pet. Cats and dogs shown not included...

## 1.best pet bed for dogs: the casper memory foam mattress

*A memory foam mattress built around doggy habits*



- Specifications

Suitable for: Dogs

Material: Nylon, Polyester and Olefin Cover, Visco Elastic Memory Foam body

Size: small: 66cm x 48cm x 15cm medium: 84cm x 64cm x 15cm large: 114cm x 89cm x 18cm

Machine washable?: Yes

- Reasons to buy

Innovative design

Removable machine washable cover

- Reasons to avoid

Expensive

Engineered by the same team behind the coveted Casper mattress, this doggy sized variant is a durable, pressure-relieving memory foam bed with a removable, machine-washable cover, plus it features excess material on top to mimic the sensation of pawing at loose earth so your doggy can dig before laying down. It also conveniently comes with the same 100-night guarantee and the 30 night trial as the human sized mattress. Woof woof.

## 2. Best pet bed for interiors junkies: cox and cox rattan pet cocoon

*For the cool cats*

- Specifications

Suitable for: Small dogs and cats

Material: Rattan and polyester

Size: H46.5 x D40cm

Machine washable?: Yes (well the cushion is)

- Reasons to buy

Super stylist design

- Reasons to avoid

Perhaps design more for the owner than the pet...

If you were concerned that your pet bed might disrupt your immaculate style, just look at this gorgeous offering from Cox & Cox. Suitable for cats and small dogs, this bang on trend rattan pet cocoon comes complete with a cosy machine washable cushion. Can someone make this in human size please?

### 3. Best pet bed for cuddly pets: ralph & co nest dog bed

*A cosy bed for cute but needy pets*



- Specifications

Suitable for: Dogs and cats

Material: Polyester fabric with fibre filling

Size: Small: L68 x W51 x D20cm; Medium: L77 x W64 x D20cm; Large: L93 x W80 x D20cm

Machine washable?: Yes

- Reasons to buy

Simple and stylish

Plenty of colour choices

With its nest like shape, the Ralph & Co bed is perfect for those dogs and cats who like to curl up and feel some protection whilst they sleep. The cover (which comes in loads of stylish colours and patterns) is removable and machine washable, plus this

pet bed comes with a reversible cushion with matching fabric on one side and fleece on the other, just to up the comfort levels. There are three sizes for you to choose from.

#### 4. Best budget pet bed: made hyko felt round pet bed

*A great budget friendly option*

- Specifications

Suitable for: Dogs and cats

Material: Polyester

Size: Small: H17 x W60 x D45 cm

Machine washable?: Yes

- Reasons to buy

Cheap

Stylish design

- Reasons to avoid

Not the most hardwearing

Looking for a stylish pet bed on a budget? This is the one for you. Hyko's fitted with a removable cushion cover. And it's machine washable too, so you can always keep you pet's sleep space clean. Plus its sleek design, white faux sheepskin cushion and subtle colours will fit in pretty much any interior style.

#### 5. Best pet bed for old pets: petface ultimate luxury memory foam pet bed

*The perfect bed for older pets*



- Specifications

Suitable for: Dogs and cats

Material: Polyester

Size: H12 x W80 x D60cm **\*\*Machine washable?:\*\*** Yes

- Reasons to buy

Designed for ultimate comfort

Machine washable cover and wipeable base

- Reasons to avoid

The larger sizes are pretty pricey

This bed has been hailed as the best pet bed for animals who are recovering from illnesses or getting on a bit. The luxury memory foam mattress moulds to the pet's body for supreme comfort and cushions joints and muscles to help relieve aches and pains. It's available in four sizes, including a very roomy extra large.

## **V. 9 Ways to Keep Pets Happy and Healthy While You're Away**

Most people want their pet by their side as much as possible. But occasionally, pet owners need to leave their dog or cat for longer than usual – for example to attend an all-day event or something that runs late into the evening.

When that happens, pets can get lonely or anxious. It's important to plan ahead for their comfort and safety, and to be a good neighbor if you share walls with anyone else.

Below are tips to help.

We hope this goes without saying, but of course if you'll be away more than 6-8 hours, or you might not get home when expected, be sure to make care arrangements like boarding your pet or hiring a pet sitter. Talk with your vet if you need advice!



### 1. Don't give free rein.

Close off rooms where pets can get into trouble or cause damage while you're away. If your dog is kennel- or crate-trained, consider putting them in their "safe zone" while you're gone.

### 2. Make their space comfortable.

On warm days, make sure your home is well ventilated and comfortable. Leave a fan on (but place it out of reach so your pet can't tip it over) or run your AC. During cold weather, make sure you are heating the rooms your pets will be in.

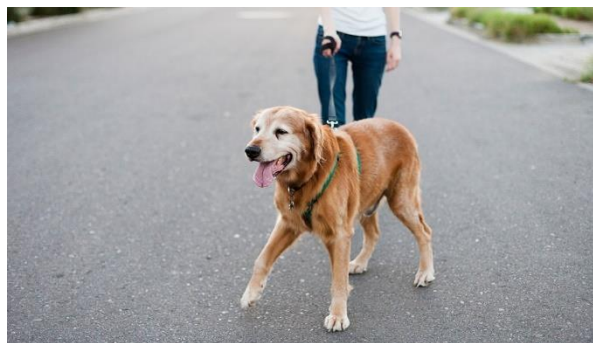


### 3. Keep pets healthy and hydrated.

Make sure you leave enough pet food for the time you'll be gone. If your cat or dog eats wet food, put that down before you leave. Provide dry food for the rest of the day. Leave water in several places – especially on warm days.

### 4. Keep it clean.

Remember to leave fresh potty pads for dogs or a clean litter box for cats. Arrange for a relative, friend or neighbor to stop by and take your dog out if needed while you're away. Just be sure your helper knows how to keep your dog safe, for example by keeping the dog leashed while outside.



### 5. Get some exercise before you go.

Take your dog for a walk or run prior to leaving for the day, or if you have a cat take time for active play. This helps your pet expend some of their excess energy and get the healthy exercise they need.

### 6. Plan for play.

Leave pets' favorite toys where they'll be able to find them. Think about giving your dog a treat-dispensing toy to keep him or her busy. Cats love toys that skitter around when they chase them around the house.

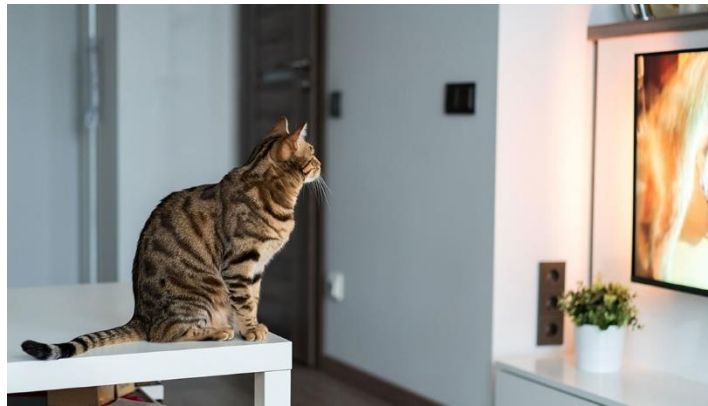


## 7. Reduce temptation.

Dogs and cats get bored when left alone for long periods of time and can get into trouble. Secure or remove temptations like electrical cords, shoes and small items that could be chewed or ingested. Also, be sure to secure items that could be tipped over or broken.

## 8. Soothe with sound.

Consider leaving your radio or TV on to keep your pet company, but at a low volume that won't disturb your neighbors. If you're concerned about wasting energy, set the timer for a few hours. By then, your pet will be more accustomed to being alone.



## 9. Know where pets are.

You might want to set your pet up with a wearable tracker like Whistle™ Health + GPS, so you know what they're doing. Whistle™ trackers let you track your pets' activity and whereabouts on a smartphone.

# **VI. The Art Of Having A Pet And A Clean House**

Australia is a pet-loving nation, as two third of its households have a pet, meaning there are more pets in the country than people. Most people enjoy having a loving animal(s) at home because they are a source of happiness, companionship, humour, and belonging.

However, keeping a pet is not easy as they need love, care and attention. Furthermore, the struggle to have a clean house with a pet is real when you have dogs, cats and other fur babies that leave behind hairs, smells and dirt marks everywhere.



A dirty house is a serious problem, especially when you are a renter. Landlords in Canberra cannot have a no-pet policy, but you need their approval if they ask to disclose your pet status. It also means you are responsible for damage and cleanliness-related issues and can lose your bond if they are unaddressed before your tenancy ends.

Many people hire professional end of lease cleaners in Canberra to thoroughly clean and disinfect rental properties to help get your bond back in full.

However, you must maintain optimum house sanitation with pets generally to keep your home neat and odour-free at all times. Thus, here is your complete guide to mastering the art of having a pet and a clean house.

### Clean Your Pet's Paws After Outdoor Visits

Make sure to thoroughly wipe your pooch's paws with a soft brush or cloth to remove dust, dirt, and grime. Cleaning their paws every time you bring them indoors after an outdoor visit will reduce dirt spots, dust and scuff marks on floors, carpets and baseboards.

Keep the cleaning supplies in the mudroom or at the entrance to always remember to sanitise pet paws and their legs as well if they are dirty.

### Invest In Stain-Resistant Furniture

Get stain-resistant couches, chairs, pet beds and other furniture to clean quickly and prevent bad smells in your house. Pet stains on household furniture are difficult to remove when the upholstery absorbs them, and the stain spreads. You can use enzyme cleaners to eliminate these messes immediately after they happen.

However, moisture or spills will run off if you get good-quality furniture with stain-resistant fabrics. Also, you will only need to wipe with a microfiber cloth to remove dust, dirt and smudges.

## Remove Pet Hair Regularly

After a tiring day, you can skip removing pet hair from the couch, carpets and other areas. However, the more you procrastinate doing this task, the more difficult it becomes to get rid of pet fur in your home.



Thus, develop the habit of removing pet hair daily to prevent excessive strands from gathering in one place. Use a rubber squeegee or latex gloves to bunch pet hair and easily pick them up, then throw them in the garbage. Do this activity before vacuuming household surfaces and fixtures.

## Get An Automatic Vacuum Cleaner

Robotic vacuum cleaners are a godsend for pet owners because you can schedule them to clean carpets and floors remotely. These advanced machines have superior technology and sensors to navigate their way around your house without your manual intervention. They can independently vacuum your entire house collecting dust, debris and pet hair. You can set a timer or turn the vacuum cleaner on your mobile device.

## Create Daily Cleaning Checklist

Cleaning your house routinely is key to having sanitary surroundings and keeping pet smells at bay.



Therefore, streamline your daily tasks by creating a complete house cleaning checklist. Include necessary chores like dusting, vacuuming, sweeping, mopping, and others on the list. Using a checklist is a professional technique of trusted cleaners who offer end of lease cleaning Canberra. It helps them complete house cleaning without wasting time, energy or effort.

### Groom Pets Outside

Avoid mess indoors by grooming your pet in the yard or deck. Whether you want to bathe or brush their fur, do it outside to minimise pet hair, grime and dirt in your home. Taking this measure will also keep away dust mites and illness-causing germs in the house. While grooming your pet outside, keep everything you need on hand to avoid running inside to grab them and dirty household areas in the process.

### Get Area Rugs For Pets

Every pet has a favourite spot where they love to sleep, sit and relax. To keep these areas from becoming smelly and dirty, get area rugs that you can place where your pet sits. This way, you can protect floors, carpets and the couch from wear/tear and damage. Vacuum the area rugs to keep them fresh and fur-free at all times.

Additionally, please give them a good wash every week to maintain sanitation and increase their shelf-life.

Once you master the art of having a pet and a clean house, you can enjoy the love and care of your pooch even more. Thus, use the tips above to keep your home neat and tidy, even with pets.

However, at the end of a tenancy, hire professional end of lease cleaners in Canberra to deep clean the rented premise and ensure you can get 100% of your rental bond back.

## **CONCLUSION**

As a pet owner, you already know that pets are not just playthings or accessories, but living creatures with personalities, feelings, and emotions. They require dedicated care and attention to be happy. Owning a pet is an enormous, but rewarding, responsibility. Here are effective ways you can continue to practice responsible pet ownership.

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