

## **1. What are the arguments against keeping pets?**

Some animal activists argue that we should not keep or breed pets regardless of whether we have an overpopulation problem. There are two basic arguments against keeping and breeding pets.

One argument is that cats, dogs and other pets suffer too much at our hands. Theoretically, we may be able to provide good homes for our pets, and many of us do. However, in the real world, animals suffer abandonment, cruelty, and neglect.

Another argument is that even on a theoretical level, the relationship is inherently flawed and we are unable to provide the full lives that these animals deserve. Because they are bred to be dependent on us, the basic relationship between humans and companion animals is flawed because of the difference in power. [PETA opposes keeping pets](#), partially for this reason:

Their lives are restricted to human homes where they must obey commands and can only eat, drink, and even urinate when humans allow them to. Because domesticated animals retain many of their basic instincts and drives but are not able to survive on their own in the wild, dogs, cats, or birds, whose strongest desire is to be free, must be confined to a house, yard, or cage for their own safety . . . Even in "good" homes, cats must relieve themselves in dirty litterboxes and often have their digits removed by "declawing," and dogs often have to drink water that has sat around for days, are hurried along on their walks, and are yelled at to get off the furniture or be quiet.

Retrieved from:

[http://animalrights.about.com/od/companionanimalspets/a/Keeping\\_Pets.htm](http://animalrights.about.com/od/companionanimalspets/a/Keeping_Pets.htm)

## **2. What are the arguments for keeping pets?**

Many people consider their pets to be members of the family, and treat them with love and respect. The feeling often appears to be mutual, as our dogs and cats seek us out to play, to be petted, or to just simply sit in our laps. They provide unconditional love and devotion. To deny them and us this relationship seems unthinkable to some.

Also, keeping pets does not "use" the animals in the same way that factory farms, animal testing labs or circuses use and abuse the animals.

The Humane Society of the US [argues that we should keep pets](#):

So, should we have pets? Of course. Pets are creatures with whom we share a world, and we rejoice in their companionship. You don't have to anthropomorphize to recognize that the feelings are returned. If we are wise enough to see, they teach us about humility and

empathy and loyalty. Their eyes hold the spark of life, the same as ours. Let us be close and cherish each other always.

The vast majority of animal activists advocate spaying and neutering. However, most will say that the reason is the millions of cats and dogs who are killed in shelters every year, as opposed to any basic opposition to the keeping of pets.

## **How pets can help you make healthy lifestyle changes**

Adopting healthy lifestyle changes can play an important role in easing symptoms of depression, stress, bipolar disorder, PTSD, and anxiety. Caring for a pet can help with those healthy lifestyle changes by:

- **Increasing exercise.** Exercise doesn't have to involve boring repetition at a gym. Taking a dog for a walk, riding a horse, or simply chasing a kitten around are fun ways to fit healthy daily exercise into your schedule. Studies have shown that dog owners, for example, are far more likely to meet their daily exercise requirements than non-owners.
- **Providing companionship.** Isolation and loneliness can make disorders such as depression even worse. Caring for a living animal can help make you feel needed and wanted, and take the focus away from your problems, especially if you live alone. Most pet owners talk to their pets, some even use them to work through their troubles. And nothing beats loneliness like coming home to a wagging tail or purring cat.
- **Helping meet new people.** Pets can be a great social lubricant for their owners. Dog owners frequently stop and talk to each other on walks or in a dog park. Pet owners also meet new people in pet stores, clubs, and training classes.
- **Reducing anxiety.** The companionship of an animal such as a dog can offer comfort, help ease anxiety, and build self-confidence for people anxious about going out into the world.
- **Adding structure and routine to your day.** Many pets, especially dogs, require a regular feeding and exercise schedule. No matter your mood—depressed, anxious, or stressed—you'll always have to get out of bed to feed, exercise, and care for your pet.
- **Providing sensory stress relief.** Touch and movement are two healthy ways to quickly manage stress. This could involve petting a cat, taking a dog for a walk, or riding a horse.

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