

## So you want a french bulldog ?

Owning a dog can be a fulfilling and rewarding experience. However a dog is a long-term responsibility. Before you even consider buying one, you need to be absolutely certain you are committed to the caring for the dog for its entire life.

- Have you considered if a dog will suit your lifestyle and commitments ?
- Do you have time for feeding, general care, exercise, obedience and teaching the kids how to behave correctly around a dog?
- Can you afford the myriad of expenses dog ownership brings?
- Do you have a large yard with secure fences and gates?
- Will the dog be accepted and treated as a member of the family for the rest of its life?

If you are able to answer yes to all the above, you are ready to choose a breed.

Without a doubt a french bulldog, or frenchie as they are often known, will make a wonderful companion. He is an endearing little character with a personality all of his own. A wonderful characteristic of the breed is that each frenchie has its own unique personality, which makes it extremely difficult to settle on just one. Frenchies are described as the clown of the dog world and can be a little mischievous at times. They are intelligent. However their ability to learn is masked somewhat by their stubbornness, yet frenchies are able to quickly learn the things that are important to them.

The frenchie is a loyal friend who requires plenty of companionship and so is not suited to outdoor life. Their small size and short hair makes them excellent housedogs. Frenchies enjoy a little exercise, may it be a walk or a game with their favourite toy, but also love some quiet time curled up on your lap. Due to their short noses frenchies should not be subjected to extensive exercise any time of the year and in the summer months care should be taken to avoid the heat. Frenchies enjoy a dip in the kiddies wading pool to cool off, but they should always be supervised around water. Due to their front heaviness they are susceptible to drowning.

If you are looking for a guard dog, then a frenchie may not be suitable. People may be deterred by their appearance, but as they are not the yappy type, a frenchie is unlikely to bark at an intruder.

It is most important to gather as much further information as you can and learn more of the characteristics and temperament of the frenchie. You can look in books or on the internet or go to dog shows where you can talk to owners and see dogs of all ages. Like most breeds, frenchies have some hereditary conditions. Ensure you find out about these and any other potential health problems to be watched for.

Once you feel confident that a frenchie will suit your lifestyle and commitments and you are able to provide the necessary care and attention, it's time to find a breeder. Before approaching a breeder, you should decide whether you would like a pet or a show dog, a dog or a bitch.

You are making a long-term commitment, so don't settle on the first breeder you meet, make sure you have chosen a responsible breeder. It is important to talk to as many breeders as possible and to ask as many questions as you can think of. If possible, visit the home of the breeder and observe the cleanliness of the premises plus the general health of both dogs and puppies. The breeder should exhibit a willingness to answer questions, show photos, pedigrees and other relevant documents. Question the breeder on the health checks that they conduct. A responsible breeder should be willing to provide on-going support and advice during the life of the puppy and therefore it is important that you chose a breeder with whom you feel personally comfortable, someone you can communicate with.

Responsible breeders will ask you questions to evaluate your suitability as a potential owner. Don't be discouraged, this is a sign of a responsible breeder. Remember, you are the potential owner of their baby and the breeder has put considerable time, effort and love into raising this puppy. They need to be certain you are going to give the puppy all the love and care it needs. One eminent person wrote "It is not easy to breed good dogs but it is even more difficult to place them in the right hands." Many breeders have a written agreement stipulating both the breeder's and the owner's responsibilities.

Being a relatively rare breed, you may need to wait until the chosen breeder produces a litter. Be prepared to wait, you have put so much time and effort into your decision, why stumble at the last hurdle? Puppies may be ready to take to their new home at 8-12 weeks having been regularly wormed and had their first vaccination at 6-7 weeks. Vaccination records, a registration certificate, microchip documentation, a copy of the pedigree and a puppy care and diet sheet should be available to you when or before you collect your puppy.

Should you ever have any questions regarding the health or just the general well-being of your frenchie at any stage of life, you should contact your chosen breeder. You won't be bothering the breeder. The breeder should care about the welfare of the puppy throughout its entire life. As frenchies are a relatively rare breed, your breeder may be the most knowledgeable and experienced person to contact in the event of a problem, sometimes more so than your local vet, who possibly may have never seen a frenchie before. If you are unable to contact your breeder for whatever reason, do contact any member of the [committee](#) of **The French Bulldog Club** who should be happy to provide you with help.

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