



CONSIDERATIONS

Despite the fact that many people enjoy and benefit from having an ASSISTANCE DOG, it should be noted that this option may not be the best choice or even beneficial for everyone. For example, if you're not really a "dog person," An Assistance Dog might not be the best option for you. There are many ways of mitigating a disability, from considering other resources medical equipment, assertive technology to therapy, and everything in between. Even for animal lovers, there are some important considerations including the time, cost, emotional investment involved in caring for and working with the dog. It is also important to understand your own needs and the needs / limitations of the particular type of assistance dog you are considering.

In short, choosing whether or not to get an Assistance Dog is a very personal decision, one in which you must consider your needs, desires, and lifestyle. So, this overview of Assistance Dog consumer information is not to provide you with a definitive answer to the question:

"Is an Assistance Dog right for me?", but rather serves as a starting point in your inquiry and research process. Please note that this information is geared more towards an education of the overall process involved with any Assistance Dog program rather than specifically what is involved with qualifying and obtaining a dog from Aussie Angels Assistance Dogs. That way you will have a much clearer picture of what might be involved should you decide to apply with any of the other Assistance Dog Organisation. There are many important points to consider before bringing an Assistance Dog into your life. On this page, we have covered what we feel will get prospective clients off to a good start on the path to becoming an Assistance Dog / Handler team. If you are considering an Assistance Dog for yourself or a loved one, please read through the information we've included here and in our additional information resources.

There are many things a dog can do, but there are also many things they cannot. Before getting an Assistance Dog, make a list of the things you want a dog to do for you, and then consider if the list is reasonable. Some tasks may be easy to teach; others may take many months of practice. Some tasks that you might wish for may not be a teachable. For example, a dog cannot be expected to actively change emotions, for instance when feeling sad a dog cannot make you feel happy except to the extent that it may have this affect. It is not something for which they can be responsible and it is an unacceptable expectation. The task list should be talked over with family, friends and Specialist Trainer

YES! A DOG CAN ASSIST YOU WITH DAILY TASKS AND COMPANIONSHIP

BUT! AN ASSISTANCE DOG CAN IMPACT YOUR LIFE IN OTHER WAYS

Would you consider yourself a "dog person"? It's highly likely that an assistance dog would spend

more time with you than any personal assistant or family member. Given the dog's responsibilities, this means the dog will likely sleep next to you, pick up things with its mouth, and need to be walked regularly. It also means that your clothes and your living space will regularly be covered in dog hair. So, if dog slobber and animal fur are anywhere on your list of pet peeves, you may want to rethink the idea of getting an Assistance Dog

IMPACT ON family/spouse/partner/flat mate DO THEY approve of this decision?

The people with whom you live will understandably have opinions about adding a dog to the household. A flat mate for example may not want a dog around, so it may mean getting a new flat mate or change accommodation, but a spouse or partner is a different matter. Do not underestimate any resistance to having a dog in the home, as a ASSISTANCE DOG lives with you 24 hrs a day. To do so may leave you and your dog open to very difficult situations.

IF the dog is for a child, and are there other children who may want to be involved with the dog? How will the dog fit into everyone's daily schedule? Who will supervise training? Who will be ultimately responsible for the dog?

The first year requires a great deal of effort and you will need to make sure you have the time to dedicate to develop your skills, the dog's skills and the bond and communication between you.

What demands do you have on your time over the next 12-18 months?

Do you have the time to commit to working with a new dog?

Are Your Expectations Realistic?

Living with an Assistance Dog can be a life changing experience with many advantages, however, as with any partnership it does not happen overnight. To reap the rewards there will be some challenges and frustrations to overcome. You will have to make some changes to accommodate your new dog, so please consider:

Can you plan and think ahead in order to avoid problems?

Are you prepared to take on the role of "leader" with all the responsibilities that this entails?

How Will Having A Dog Affect Family And Friends?

How will the other people in your life feel about having a dog around constantly?

What areas of life may be affected positively or negatively?

Are My Current Living Arrangements Suitable?

Think about the possible modifications you may need to make...

Is your current housing suitable and safe for a dog?

Will the dog have enough room to exercise and toilet safely?

Are you or someone else prepared to exercise the dog in wet weather?

Are there others who can be relied upon to help with the dog if needed?

Can I Live With A Dog?

Living with a dog involves some not so pleasant tasks. If you are fanatical about cleanliness, then think about...

- Who is going to pick up poo, both at home and out on walks?
 - How will you deal with wounds and accidents?
 - Dogs lose hair and require regular grooming...Who will do this?
 - Slobber on your clothes...can you deal with this?
 - Dogs can be attracted to things and potentially pull.
- So we need you to be realistic; weight up all the positives but do not minimize the negatives to make your decision do not be afraid to ask questions or talk to us about your concerns

Regards The AAAD Team