



**THE VILLAGE AT  
ORCHARD RIDGE**

A National Lutheran Community

# How Pets Can Enhance Your Life

Pets can be a great asset to us, especially as we age — they love us unconditionally and provide a sense of joy and purpose that may be especially welcome during the retirement years. Not to mention, there are also numerous health benefits associated with having a pet. There are a few factors to consider before choosing which pet is right for you, but our helpful guide outlines the benefits of owning a pet in addition to some of the details to keep in mind.



## Here are a few of the most common reasons to consider making a pet part of your family:

**Prevent loneliness:** Pets offer constant companionship which is something that older adults sometimes lack, especially if living alone. Your furry friend is always there for you, to listen or to cuddle, and sometimes just having the routine of feeding and caring for an animal can make you feel better if you're feeling down.

**Encourage activity:** Pets keep us moving, whether it's a walk outside, throwing a toy for playtime or even just getting up to feed your furry friend. Staying active can help improve stamina, balance and core strength which is important for preventing falls, a leading cause of disability in older adults. An active lifestyle also lowers health risks such as weight gain, depression and diabetes.

**Manage stress:** Research shows that pets can help reduce stress and even help lower blood pressure. The companionship and the active lifestyle that they provide can both contribute to lower stress levels. Plus, even the repetitive motion of stroking an animal's fur can be calming.

## Don't forget to consider space, budget and care requirements before adopting:

**Space:** If you're considering a dog, make sure you have space for them to run and play - this could be anything from a fenced-in yard to a nearby walking trail or dog park.

**Budget:** Don't forget about the costs of owning a pet - vet bills, grooming, food and supplies all add up. Research the breeds you are considering and you might find that some are more high-maintenance than others.

**Care:** Find a pet that fits into your lifestyle. Take into account their temperament, activity levels and any training required to ensure you can provide the care they need. The veterinarian's office can be a great resource for any questions you may have.

Lastly, if you are considering a move to a Life Plan Community, make sure to check their pet policies. The Village at Orchard Ridge is pet-friendly - contact us today to learn more!

Call 540-486-2956 or visit: [www.thevillageatorchardridge.org](http://www.thevillageatorchardridge.org)



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