

## Benefits of Having a Pet in Law School

By: [Ioana Zanchi](#)

I have grown up with many pets throughout my childhood, be it my hamster Sammy, several kinds of fish, my service dog Marie, or our three cats – Lulu, Tiger, and Oliver. Each pet my family has had holds such a special place in my heart, and frankly, I am not sure as to what my life would look like without a pet or two around the house. They have been part of every happy moment or significant milestone and every trying or uncertain period of our lives. It would be hard to think about not having the comfort of my service dog when I came home from surgery in the seventh grade, the happiness of getting a new kitten for my 12th birthday, or welcoming our Maine Coon when starting off my first year of law school. Our pets are as unique and different as each person that I have met and known, and I can't help but think about what it would be like if I didn't have the added joy of them in my life.

I genuinely believe that a pet is one of the purest forms of affection and love. The act of taking care of a pet unlocks a part of ourselves that reminds us of our more childlike, playful, and nurturing state. A pet gives us unconditional love and can be an immense benefit when healing both mentally and physically as we go through life. When tending to our pets, it provides a sense of newfound purpose when it seems like there is no other reason to get up in the morning. Knowing that somebody, besides ourselves, depends on our care-taking gives us a boost to keep going.

The past year has been hectic, confusing, and overall unnerving for every corner of the world due to the novel COVID-19 pandemic. Levels of anxiety and depression have risen, and more people have had to stay home and isolate. We have had to change our daily living ways and accustom ourselves to novel ways of working, going to school, and socializing. While the advent of technology has allowed us to carry on with certain aspects of our lives, it has significantly transformed others. The new school year will look vastly different from before, as many schools, colleges, and universities opt to transition to an online platform. Teachers will teach the same content, but instead of seeing, hearing, and interacting with our teachers and fellow peers as we once did, the classroom will inevitably be different. We will either now be disguised by masks and six-feet apart or peering into our classrooms through a computer

screen. This new educational experience has been liberating because students do not have to worry about travel time and early wake-up calls. Still, it has also been a very lonely and isolating experience when we do not interact with our peers face-to-face. As law students, school pressure is already high, so this transition into an already highly competitive environment now with less interaction can be daunting. Law students are often reminded to take care of their physical and mental wellbeing because of the grueling long hours that have to be put into studying.

A significant way to work through this challenging time, especially as a law student, is by investing in a pet. Pet adoption has spiked in the last several months as more and more people are looking for companionship. For a law student, a pet can have many significant physical, mental, and emotional benefits. It provides the opportunity to establish a routine, increase exercise levels which in turn promotes decreased stress, and most importantly, a source of companionship. Mainly if you live alone, pets counter loneliness and help you continue to focus on what's going on around you. And when no one else is around, and you need someone to talk to, that pet seems to know and is there to listen. While it may seem counter-intuitive that when you are responsible for your pet's health and wellbeing, that same care is reciprocated and is improving your health: mind, body, and spirit.

Pets support us by giving us their loyalty, companionship, love, affection, and many physical and mental benefits. They can make our lives feel fuller and happier than ever, teaching us and making us more content and better without even knowing it. The love of an animal is unconditional, so I think pets are a great addition to every household, especially if you are in law school.