

## Should You Sleep With Your Dog?

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There's a moment of truth for every dog owner. It's the end of the evening and you're ready to go to bed. Rover is sitting and looking at you with those big brown eyes, head cocked to the side, cuter than any animal has a right to be. Do you let Bowser sleep with you?

There's no right or wrong answer to this question. The real question is ? is letting Fifi sleep in your bed right for you? And truthful answers to a few questions will let you reach the right decision for you and your dog.

First: Pixie is an adorable, 15-pound Mastiff puppy. But will there even be room for both of you in bed when she's a full-grown, 120 pound dog? Her legs don't bend the way yours do ? picture her, as an adult, taking the space of a five-foot square. Possibly not the best choice for a sleeping companion in your twin bed.

Next: Does Bruiser snore? Or shed? Or drool? Much as you may love him, there are times when he's been rolling in something that you really may not want on your sheets. And giving a dog a bath every night before bed-time isn't really a viable evening ritual.

Third: A dog's normal body temperature is somewhere around 102 degrees Fahrenheit. Which can be warm, wonderful and cozy on a cold winter night ? especially when you're trying to keep that thermostat low and the energy bills under control. It actually sounds delightfully snuggly this time of year. But picture those same 102 degrees in August. Will you really be able to look at that shaggy face and say ?Not tonight, dear, it's too hot out!?' Muttly isn't going to understand and may think he's done something wrong.

There are trainers out there who claim that dogs should never sleep with you, that it undermines your authority as the leader of your family ?pack.?' The most important concepts in training are patience, decisiveness, and consistency. Decide what the rules are for your dog. Stick to them. As long as Sparky knows what's expected, she's happy.

Yes, Trinket would probably prefer to sleep in bed with you. He may even decide that your pillow is the best place to be, with the blanket pulled up to his chin. But he doesn't get to decide that. You do. If it's what you want, it's what you and Duke should do. If it's not, teach your dog where his bed is and reward him for staying in it. Be strong. The more work you put into training Hooch now, the longer you'll be able to enjoy your well-trained dog.

### Short note about the author

Hope Saidel is the co-owner of [www.GollyGear.com](http://www.GollyGear.com), a bricks-and-mortar and online small dog shop featuring fun, affordable and practical products for small dogs. She has trained and competed in Obedience with small dogs for over a decade and is on the Board of Directors of the North Shore Dog Training Club.

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