

**1. Be sure you can legally own a Mini Pig where you live.**

Research the laws in your county, town and state to ensure that owning such an animal is even legal. Too many people miss this step, and end up finding themselves in court for the right to keep their teacup pet, even though it clearly violates local zoning laws. All it takes is one nosy neighbor to report you and notify authorities of your unauthorized "livestock."

**2. Be aware of how pig Mini pigs really get**

Most mini pigs will reach over 60lbs and 15-20" in height. Similar to the size of an Old English Bulldog. Short and Stocky

**3. Be aware of how long Mini pigs live.**

Mini pigs can live up to 15 years old so they are a commitment of your time and life for the next 15 possible years.

**4. Have your Mini pig Spayed or Neutered.**

With these animals, not spaying or neutering isn't really an option. Especially with males, you're asking for trouble once your pig reaches maturity. A male will stink, become aggressive, grow dangerous tusks, destroy your house and just generally become impossible to handle. I sell all my piglets spayed and neutered.

**5. You can train a Mini pig like you would train a dog.**

One of the great things about pigs is their high intelligence level. Pigs are very smart, at least as smart as dogs, and that means they have a similar capacity for training. Take a positive-reinforcement approach to training your teacup piglet, using treats as rewards for tasks and tricks performed correctly.

**6. You should exercise a Mini pig similar to what you would a dog.**

Thinking of your teacup pigs as similar to a dog is a good basic plan. They're about as big as a dog, they're as smart as dogs, you can train one like a dog and you should exercise them like dogs. In other words, take them for daily walks so they get the exercise they need, as well as the opportunity to eliminate outside.

**7. Give your Mini pig a blanket.**

Mini pigs love blankets. Lots of them. They want to dig under them and sleep wrapped up in them and build blanket forts all day long. Pigs are born to root, and blankets provide an outlet for that instinct inside your home. And we're not talking about just one security blanket. Have blankets ready anywhere your pig likes to hang out: in its crate or playpen, on the couch, a favorite corner somewhere, even in the car.

### **8. Give your Mini pig a Kiddie pool.**

Pigs need plenty of water, not just for drinking, but also for playing in. A children's pool is the one item other than blankets that no teacup-pig owner should be without. Wading in a pool of water will help your pig regulate its body temperature when it's hot outside. It's also important to know that your pig will probably splash water from the pool onto the ground to make mud it can roll in. This of course is totally natural behavior for a pig, so before you adopt one, be sure you're prepared to wash mud off of it almost constantly.

### **9. Taking your mini pig home – What to do once you get your pig home?**

Most of the time, future mini pig parents cannot wait to tote their little piggy around like a puppy. Be forewarned that your pig will have absolutely no desire to be cuddled in your arms for the first day, second day, often third day, etc. It takes a lot of time and trust for the pig to accept being picked up. Some equate a pig's squealing when picked up to torture and bullying; others simply say you must do it enough for them to get over it. Whatever the case and whichever way you choose to proceed, be patient and give it some time.

Make sure you have a special area reserved for your mini pig. That can be an area of five feet by five feet or an area as small as a child's pack n' play. The bigger is NOT the better as that leaves more room for accidents. Make sure you have a sturdy gate that your mini pig cannot open with its strong snout. They can get past most simple gates (and create a mess of a lifetime when you think he's safely contained) so make sure it's a strong one!

However big the space is, put a good rooting pet bed on one side of the space with plenty of blankets for warmth, rooting and security in the bed. Make sure the pig can get in and out of the litter box. At first, a ferret litter box will do. I have found it easiest and cleanest to get a value pack of WeeWee pads to put in the box, not any sort of litter that can be scattered about.

Also make sure the piglet always has access to a non slip pet bowl like of fresh water.

### **10. Potty training – Where does a mini pig go to the bathroom?**

Potty training to go outside is very possible. In fact, most pigs prefer to defecate outside and urinate inside, though they will do both if necessary. Pigs are very flexible but prefer the same spot and will designate a spot for each in the outside area.

Just like a puppy, you need patience and persistence. You must expect and allow for accidents since pigs cannot hold their bladders until they are about ten months old.

Make sure you set up a routine to take your pig outside first thing in the morning, right after breakfast and then every two or three hours after. He may not always go but you want to give him the option, just as a puppy.

Most pigs will need to go overnight until they can hold their bladder a little longer. Even if you are determined that your pig only go potty outside, you should still provide a litter box inside for overnight.

Rewarding your pig for going potty is often considered unwise. They will learn to manipulate and even trick you into thinking they are going just to get a reward and come inside and pee all over your carpet. On the flip side, sometimes a small reward is necessary to teach your pig to go to the bathroom outside or in their designated area so just be aware that it will inevitably come with some potential trickery on the pig's part later on.

Do not use normal cat litter for a box. Use a pine litter instead.

### **11. Feeding – What should I feed my mini pig?**

Keep in mind that a pig should get  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of food per 25 pounds of weight. So your little mini should get  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of food total in a day, split into two portions:  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup in the morning and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup in the evening. Small treats are okay, especially in the beginning and for training purposes, but they should be limited to one cheerio or a quarter of a grape, etc. Green leafy vegetables such as spinach or kale are great snacks during the day. They should also be able to graze when possible, though keep in mind that this means more water consumption and therefore will need to urinate more often.

Do not overfeed (or underfeed) your pig!

### **12. Socialization – How do I socialize my mini pig?**

**It is essential that you socialize your piglet from the start. Always choose a breeder that promotes socialization and contact but the job continues (or rather begins again) when arriving at your home. You need to be patient. Your pig WILL NOT be like a puppy where puppies come up to you, are friendly, or hold still while you pick them up. (As a breeder I do the essential steps of handling the piglets so the adjustment into the new home with brand new people takes 1-3 weeks instead of 3-6 months)**

For the first day, let your pig get accustomed to being in his new space. Don't give him free reign. Keep him in his small area and go in and sit with him. Do not try to force him to do anything. Sit and let him explore around you. Once he seems a little more comfortable, offer him a treat. This should be one of his food pellets since most pigs will not know what to do with a cheerio in the beginning. They soon learn, don't worry! Once he takes the pellet from you, praise him but don't try to reach out to him as this may scare him away and negate any progress.

Each day, try a little more contact. If your pig is getting skittish or scared, back off a little. You want your pig to be comfortable but you also need to establish contact so your pig understands the concept of being a social pet. This process might continue for a few days or even a couple of weeks. Try to spend as much time as possible with your pig so that he gets more and more comfortable.

If you have other pets, do the introduction slowly and behind gates so the animals can see each other but not touch each other. Do this for a few days with no contact beyond the gates. Remember that pigs are prey animals and will most likely be frightened. Do not stress your piglet. Let your pig show you the way by allowing him to initiate more interaction. Cats are usually pretty easy since they will come on their own time. Dogs might be more frightening to pigs so be patient. Never leave your pig alone with another animal, even if they appear fine. A little squeal might rouse a playful dog and even a playful pawing could result badly.

### **13. Maintenance – How hard is it to maintain a mini pig?**

Maintaining a pig is very easy. They are hearty and do not require much health care. They are prone to mites and mange if exposed to other pigs, so look for any scratching or ear batting as well as any dry spots. This is easily fixed with a shot of Ivermectin. This can be administered by a vet or by you, if you are comfortable. It can even be given orally though make sure the dosage is correct. All piglets get mites and will have a shot of Ivermectin before they leave my farm.

You should brush your pig daily with a soft dog brush so they enjoy it. They will come to like this “massage.” Give him treats in the beginning so he learns this is nothing painful. Brushing will help with skin care and stimulate blood flow to help him have a shinier coat. If your pig has dry skin, you can use a small amount of Johnson’s Creamy Baby Oil every day.

Bathing should not be done more than once a month since this will dry out your pig’s skin. He also does not need more than that, if an indoor pet. Pigs will not enjoy the bath so make it quick and efficient. Put a non-slip mat in the tub (or a baby tub) and fill the tub with warm water and a tablespoon or two of baby oil. Sponge bathe him with the water and speak gently to him. Do not get water in his eyes or ears.

A vet should see your pig once a year, unless you have any concerns in which case you should bring him in.

### **14. Pigs are Hypoallergenic.**

Pigs make great alternatives for people allergic to dogs or cats because they are hypoallergenic. They make wonderful pets for people allergic to pet hair because pigs do not shed like most dogs and cats.

### **15. Putting a Harness on for the first time.**

Most pigs will squeal and squeal like the harness is a death trap but if you just calmly talk to your pig and give them treats along the way soon they will learn to ignore the scary harness. Once they are friends with their harness now you can start to teach them to walk. The easiest way is to lure your pig forward with a treat and each time they take a few steps praise them and give them the treat. Before you know it your pig will be walking next to you like a dog.

Any questions please contact us for advice or search online for answers.