



IS THE GERMAN SHEPHERD THE RIGHT DOG FOR YOU

Deciding what kind of dog to get is as important as deciding whether to get a dog in the first place. The AKC recognizes over 160 different breeds of dog, and each of these breeds has its own unique temperament, appearance, activity level and set of needs. You should do some serious and careful research to determine which breed of dog is right for you and your family. Here are some things to consider:

Temperament

You're going to be living with this dog for a long time, so you need to make sure he has a personality you can live with. Do you want a dog that is active, or subdued? A dog that is easily trained, or strong-willed? A dog that is friendly to everyone he meets, or one that is loyal to family but aloof toward strangers? A dog that needs a lot of attention from family members, and lots of activity to prevent him from becoming bored and destructive, or a dog that is content to be left alone for periods of time during the day?

Size

All little puppies are adorable, of course, but they grow quickly-and some of them grow a lot. Find out how large-in height and weight-that cute puppy will become before you bring him home. Remember that larger dogs require more food and space-is your yard or living room big enough to meet his needs? And keep in mind that some little dogs still need lots of room to run around and burn off energy.

Coat/Grooming Needs

All dogs need to be groomed regularly to stay healthy and clean; most dogs will shed. But some dogs shed profusely all year round; some shed in clumps for a few weeks; some dogs shed only a little bit. Long-coated dogs are beautiful to look at, but require a lot of effort to stay that way. Short-coated dogs are easier to care for, but may still shed, and may require protection in cold or wet weather. Dogs with fancy trims may need professional grooming. Decide how much dog hair you're willing to put up with, and how much time and energy you can afford, when you're deciding which breed is right for you.

Male or Female

In general, there is no significant difference in temperament between male and female dogs. If you are getting a dog for a pet, you will want to have your dog spayed or neutered, which will eliminate most minor differences anyway. If you plan to show or breed your dog, you must be vigilant about preventing unwanted breedings by keeping your intact male safely confined to your house or yard, and by keeping your intact female away from other dogs when she comes into heat twice yearly.

Puppy or Adult

The advantage of getting a puppy-aside from its irresistible cuteness-is that you can raise it by yourself from the beginning, and participate in its training and socialization every step of the way. The disadvantage is that training a puppy requires a great deal of time and patience. Busy families should keep in mind that puppies cannot be left alone for more than a few hours at a time. They need plenty of trips outside, frequent meals, and lots of interaction with people. Adult dogs-whether purchased directly from a breeder or adopted from a rescue group-can be ideal for people who want a dog with fewer needs. Mature dogs tend to be calmer; some are already house-trained and know some basic obedience.

Health

Some breeds may be prone to hereditary diseases or conditions. Many breeds can be screened for certain conditions, such as hip or eye problems; this certification should be available to you when you go to look at a puppy. Being educated about the health considerations of your chosen breed can help you to avoid or alleviate future problems.