

CHOOSING THE RIGHT DOG

Choosing the right dog for you (and your family), whether a purebred or a mixed breed, is one of the most important decisions you can make when deciding to add a dog to your family. A dog is a commitment for the life of the dog and as such, the decision should not be made on impulse, but rather after careful thought.

Don't rush the process of selecting your new puppy or dog. Understanding the dog's needs and matching them to your own requirements leads to a happy relationship for both of you.

Asking yourself these questions can help with your choice:

- 🐾 Why do you want a dog?
- 🐾 How much time can you spend exercising, training and grooming?
- 🐾 Do you want an active pet or a couch potato?
- 🐾 Do you have children?
- 🐾 Do you live in an apartment, in town or in a rural area?
- 🐾 Are you a first-time dog owner?
- 🐾 Can you *afford* a dog? Not just the initial cost, but food, supplies and veterinary care must be considered.

Following is a list of books and websites to aid you with your research.

- 🐾 [The Right Dog For You](#), by D. Tortura
- 🐾 [The Perfect Match](#) or [Choosing a Dog for Dummies](#), both by C. Walkowicz
- 🐾 [Your Purebred Puppy](#), 2nd Ed. by M. Welton [Mutts America's Dogs](#), by B. Kilcommons & M. Capuzzo
- 🐾 <http://www.akc.org>
- 🐾 <http://www.purina.com>
- 🐾 <http://www.choosingthepperfectdog.net>
- 🐾 <http://www.canismajor.com/dog>

Different breeds have different characteristics. While it is impossible to completely predict what a certain breed will be like, understanding the general characteristics of the various dog groups can aid in the selection process.



SPORTING GROUP

Sporting dogs were developed to search for and retrieve game birds and waterfowl; a few hunt small mammals.

General characteristics: high energy, friendly, tractable, focused, fun loving, non-territorial and low protection, a desire to please, not dominant.

Members of this Group include Pointers, Labrador Retrievers, Irish Setters and Cocker Spaniels.



HOUND GROUP

The Hound Group includes both SCENT-HOUNDS, which track their prey by air or ground scent, and SIGHT-HOUNDS, which sight and chase a fleeing animal.

General characteristics: excellent senses, independent, non-territorial, not dominant. Scent-hounds are adaptable, accepting, bold, and social with other dogs and people but may see cats and other small animals as prey. Sight-hounds are the swiftest canines, quiet, placid and aloof.

Members of this Group are very diverse and include Beagles, Afghans, Greyhounds, and Dachshunds.



WORKING GROUP

These dogs were bred to guard flocks, patrol estates, pull loads and sleds, aid fishermen, and rescue people.

General characteristics: alert, loyal, courageous, hardy, confident, territorial, protective, persistent and dominant. They take their jobs seriously and are more content with work. Their size and strength alone make many working dogs unsuitable as pets for the average family.

These dogs must be properly trained.

Some of the members of this Group are Doberman Pinschers, Great Danes, Siberian Huskies and Mastiffs.



TERRIER GROUP

Terriers were bred to hunt and kill vermin. They typically have little tolerance for other animals, including other dogs.

General characteristics: feisty, busy, energetic, confident, curious, courageous, tenacious, dominant, many retain strong prey instinct.

Some of the members of this Group include Cairn Terriers, Airedales, Parson Russell Terriers (Jack Russell) and various Bull Terriers.



TOY GROUP

Toy breeds were bred and kept as companions and still fulfill that roll. Personalities vary widely. They are excellent companions for the elderly, but families with young children may be better suited to a larger breed.

General characteristics: playful, loving, cuddly, spunky, devoted to owners; some are timid; must be house pets; most have desire to please; some are vocal.

Some of the members this Group include the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Toy Poodle, Chihuahua, Pug, Pekinese and Papillon.



NON-SPORTING GROUP

Dogs were once classified as Sporting, so when these breeds came along, they were dubbed Non-Sporting. Because they were developed for so many reasons, dogs in this group have varying instincts and don't share characteristics.

Some of the members of this Group include Bulldogs, Poodles (not Toy), Dalmatians, Chow Chows and Chinese Shar Peis.



HERDING GROUP

Herding dogs were originally bred for instinct and decision-making capabilities in herding livestock.

General characteristics: confident, courageous, active, problem-solvers, strong chase instinct, loyal, territorial, protective instinct and independent thinking.

Some of the members of this Group include German Shepherds, Collies, Australian Shepherds and Corgis.



ALL AMERICAN DOGS

All-American Dogs, once called "mutts" are not an AKC "Group", but rather a mixture of breeds in those groups. All-American Dogs are the original dog, the dog who befriended humankind, the dog from whom all the current breeds were developed.

In 2009 the AKC changed the rules governing entries in Agility and Obedience/Rally Trials to allow All-American Dogs to compete. All-American Dogs must be registered in the Canine Partners Program. Check the AKC website for more information (www.akc.org/caninepartners)

If an All-American Dog is your desire, learn about the groups or breeds from which the parents came. This will give you some idea of what characteristics to expect from the mix.

WHERE TO GET YOUR DOG?

If you have decided on a purebred dog, find a reputable breeder. Ask questions about health and guarantees, their experience in the breed, their reasons for breeding, and ask to see the parents and the environment in which the puppies are raised. It is advisable not to buy from pet stores because they often purchase their puppies from puppy mills noted for their unsanitary conditions and poor breeding. Also beware of backyard breeders where the animals may be of inferior quality. Check with breed rescue or your local animal shelter.

If you are looking for an All American Dog, please adopt one from your local animal shelter. You will save a life and help ease the pet over-population. At the same time you will be reducing the demand for purebred dogs, which creates so many poorly bred dogs doomed to short, sickly, unhappy lives.

WHAT'S NEXT?

After you have your puppy or dog, give him the best possible start you can by enrolling in an obedience class. Training not only makes your dog easier to live with, but also creates a lasting bond between you and your dog.

Clarion Canine Obedience Club offers classes in Puppy Kindergarten and Beginner Obedience to the public. All of our classes take a positive approach to training. Our instructors are members who have proven their ability in AKC obedience competition.

Puppy Kindergarten classes focus on socialization, basic commands such as sit, down, stand, come and walking on lead, problem-solving techniques and basics of grooming.

Beginner Obedience classes focus on basic home obedience by strengthening the basic commands and teaching the more formal heel command.

For more information about our classes go to click on "PUBLIC CLASSES" on the navigation bar.