

Dachshund Dog Characteristics

Learn the defining characteristics and personality of the dachshund dog.

Excerpts from Comprehensive Owner's Guide: Dachshund

The Dachshund is, quite simply, the “right dog” for many people. Small in size, even the largest Standard Dachshund weighs only about 30 pounds. Easy to maintain in good physical condition, the Dachshund doesn't require long runs over many acres. Possessing a friendly, companionable personality, the Dachshund charms his way into the hearts of all who get to know him.

Though he can be rather stubborn at times, his behavior easily can be modified by a wise owner who quickly changes the subject and gets the dog to focus on some new activity. In other words, the owner refuses to recognize the dog's obstinacy and thereby prevents a repetition of the undesirable behavior. Physical rough handling only makes an even-tempered Dachshund become aggressive.

The fact that Dachshunds love people, especially children and the elderly, endears them to the general population. Indeed, Dachshunds are among the most popular breeds of dog in the USA, Germany and Britain. Although the original purpose of hunting is no longer the main reason to breed Dachshunds, they possess so many other desirable qualities that they will retain their popular status for many years to come. However, for the few Dachshund owners who are interested in preserving that hunting trait, there are Dachshund field trials. In America, trials were instituted in 1935. These competitions judge the dogs' ability and style in finding and retrieving game such as rabbits. The dogs must possess good noses (to smell the prey), courage to pursue the prey, keenness for the hunt, perseverance and willingness to get the job done.

All Dachshunds, regardless of variety or size, compete together in field trials. At a trial, a Dachshund is a Dachshund. There are, however, various stakes or classes for dogs of different ages and experience. Once a dog earns a field trial champion title, he enters the Dachshund history book of distinction and his progeny are much sought after. The rules for field trials, obedience and agility competitions, and breed conformation classes, are spelled out in detail by both breed clubs and kennel clubs. In order to produce dogs that will achieve success in competition, whether conformation or performance events, breeders must understand the criteria set forth in their breed's standard as well as the abilities that the dogs must possess.

Dachshunds are odorless and exceptionally clean dogs. The Miniature is mature by 12 months of age, while the Standard may not be fully mature until he reaches 18 months of age. Dachshunds are exceptionally long-lived dogs, with many living until 12 to 14 years of age. Regardless of size or variety, the Dachshund is easily maintained and managed, thus making it a most desirable companion.

WHO MAKES AN IDEAL DACHSHUND OWNER?

The ideal Dachshund owner is a person who enjoys life with his dog and also enjoys the company of other people. Dachshunds are very social dogs, though they are often particularly devoted to one owner. The Dachshund is always interested in doing enjoyable things within its own physical capabilities. Therefore, the person who will derive the most pleasure from owning and living with a Dachshund is a gregarious individual who chooses activities that can include his dog. Playing with the dog indoors and out, the owner finds fetch games of particular interest to Dachshunds. Participating in obedience and agility competitions is most rewarding for owner and dog alike. Visiting the park and taking reasonable walks are also much enjoyed by your little companion. Of course, snuggling beneath the covers on a cold, rainy day is always at the top of any Dachshund's list of favorite things to do. Thus, an individual who enjoys a lazy afternoon with a good book and a Dachshund also makes an ideal owner.

Finally, because of the Dachshund's intelligence and versatility, the ideal owner is a person who has time to spend and interests to share with his dog. Dachshunds do not like being left alone for long periods of time and then, once the owner comes home, being ignored even more of the time. Dachshunds do best when they're mentally stimulated and made to feel appreciated and like members of the family.

BREED VERSATILITY

I'd like you now to meet two Dachshunds I know. Both are very much loved by their families and both are happy dogs, yet they have very different lifestyles.

“Whiskers” is a one-year-old neutered male. He's a Longhaired Standard, black and tan in color. By nature he's a quiet

dog who loves children and family friends. He's typically "Dachshund stubborn," yet easily trained because he enjoys learning new things and doing things with his owners. Whiskers gets on well with other dogs and particularly loves a four-year-old female mixed-breed who shares his home. He also does well with other household residents, such as the two cats and two hamsters. When asked what was the best thing about Whiskers, the owners responded quickly, "He's very mellow—like us!"

Now meet "Tootsie." She's a Smooth Miniature, red in color, who was deserted by her owners at three-and-a-half years of age. Fortunately for Tootsie, she was rescued by a lady who enjoyed dog obedience competition and had always wanted to own a Dachshund. Tootsie began obedience training and soon amassed a list of obedience wins that would impress even the toughest judge, quickly earning her title. Then she began agility training and fell in love with the sport. Today, at ten years of age, Tootsie has earned four agility titles in two organizations. The list of Tootsie's accomplishments is almost bigger than she is!

At home, Tootsie sleeps in owner Sunny Simpson's bed under the covers (a place familiar to many Dachshunds). Although Tootsie was never socialized with children when she was a young puppy, she tolerates them as long as her owner supervises the encounters. She does, however, love having guests visit their home and is an excellent ambassador for all Dachshunds. Her owner reports that, having lived with Tootsie for seven years, she would never be without a Dachshund. "They are even better than I thought they'd be!" she claims.

Despite the differences in lifestyle between Whiskers and Tootsie, both dogs are welladjusted and cherished members of their human families. These two dogs serve as examples of how versatile the Dachshund can be as he makes his life with humans and brings his owners great pleasure and comfort.

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