

Selecting a Great Dane

Finding the right Great Dane starts with finding a reputable breeder and research.

The Search For That Perfect Dog

Contacting a reputable Great Dane breeder may require some work and research on your part. Depending on your location, finding a puppy or adult may be either relatively easy or somewhat difficult. A good way to start is by contacting Great Dane or all-breed clubs near your home. You can also contact the AKC and ask for a list of Great Dane breeders in your area. Another good place to search for reputable Great Dane contacts is a dog show. Acquire a list of shows and make plans to attend. Many reputable breeders and Great Dane experts can be found at dog shows. If you introduce yourself politely, and express your sincere interest in the breed, most Great Dane fanciers will be happy to spend the time answering your questions concerning the breed. If you have the time, watch the Great Danes being exhibited at the show. A tremendous amount can be learned by watching a large class of Great Danes being judged. Take notes. Learn to develop an eye for the breed, and mark down the types of dogs you think you may be interested in. Then, after the exhibiting is complete, introduce yourself to the handlers and people associated with the dogs that caught your eye.

Pet or Show Dog?

Once you have made some reliable contacts, you should make plans to visit some Great Dane kennels. You should decide what type of dog you are looking for, and what you intend to do with him. Are you interested in competing in the show ring or possibly obedience? Or, are you simply looking for a Great Dane that is healthy and has an excellent temperament and pedigree? Make sure to inform the Great Dane breeders you visit of your intentions. This will help them select a puppy or dog that is just right for you and your family.

Keep in mind that a reputable Great Dane breeder will be well versed in what to look for in choosing a new puppy or adult. Take his advice. The breeder will know how his own bloodline develops, and should be willing and able to point out both the good and bad points of his individual line. You should ask to see the sire and dam of the litter if they are on the kennel's premises. Do the puppies' parents look healthy and happy? Are the puppies outgoing and do they appear well cared for?

The price of a Great Dane will vary from breeder to breeder and region to region. Obviously, a potential show puppy will cost more than a pet. Frequently, many people will ask what the difference is between choosing a bitch or a dog, and if the price for each varies. In Great Danes, bitches are usually more gentle in temperament and are a bit more loving. Obviously, if you decide to purchase a bitch, you will have to deal with the fact that she will likely come into season twice a year. This can be a major inconvenience if you have male dogs on your property that have not been neutered. Of course, the breeder should require you to spay or neuter the pup if it is not a potential show or breeding dog. The male Great Dane will be considerably larger than the female and will often appeal to those individuals looking for a dog with bigger bone and mass. The price for both sexes is about the same. Great Danes have such large litters that the value for each sex remains fairly stable. If you decide to purchase a harlequincolored dog, expect to pay more because the color is rarer than some others.

How Much Exercise is Enough?

The Great Dane is a powerful working dog that was originally bred to hunt large wild game hundreds of years ago. By today's requirements and expectations, the breed doesn't need as much exercise as its size might suggest. In fact, the Great Dane does not require any more exercise than a regular-sized dog. If you have the time to take him on some long daily walks, or for a brief run in a field or park, that should suffice. As long as your Great Dane gets to stretch his long, sturdy legs daily, he will receive the necessary exercise requirements. Combining a good feeding program and exercise will ensure a healthy, attractive dog. Remember never to overdo exercise with a developing puppy, as strenuous exercise can have long-lasting adverse effects on a puppy's growing ligaments and bones.

[Next page >](#)

[Characteristics of the Great Dane](#)
[The Great Dane Health Concerns](#)

Excerpt from Comprehensive Owner's Guide: Great Dane