

No Yard Means No Sporting Dog

A couple should consider yard-space needs for certain breeds.

By Allan Reznik

Q. My boyfriend and I live in a townhouse in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. We have no backyard. We run a few times a week and also enjoy hiking and long walks. However, being in this area we still have winter where our exercising is then relegated indoors. Could you please suggest a few dog breeds that would fit our lifestyle?

We don't really care about the size of the dog, we would prefer to avoid tiny and toy breeds though and would like it to have short hair.

A. With your not having a backyard, I would suggest staying away from the breeds in the Sporting Group. The German Shorthaired Pointer, Weimaraner and Vizsla are all high-octane dogs that need to burn off energy. On cold or icy days when you are inclined to take a break from hiking and long walks, these breeds will still crave exercise.

Greyhounds will appreciate joining you on hikes but can cope with a few short walks a day in inclement weather. A Bullmastiff is another breed to consider; this is not a jogging partner but will enjoy long walks and is one of the larger breeds that adapts very well to urban living. A Doberman Pinscher is another large, active, smooth-coated dog that does well in the city.

In all cases, I would recommend an adult rather than a boisterous puppy that will be a challenge to housetrain without having a fenced yard at your disposal.