

Searching for an Active Dog

Prospective owner wants the right breed to compete in agility, obedience, and conformation.

By Allan Reznik

Q. I am currently looking for a breed for agility, obedience and conformation. I need a dog that will be good with my other dogs (Dachshunds), is relatively easy to groom (shedding is not an issue), is friendly, smart, athletic and would enjoy lots of exercise. Size is not an issue, as long as the dog would be careful around my little Dachsies.

I have a very large house that sits on almost two acres. I live in a suburban area, with lots of nice hills to take hikes in and exercise the dogs. The weather is temperate. Everyone in the family is over 14. I was thinking about a Golden Retriever, Shetland Sheepdog, or Papillon. Do you have any suggestions? What do you think about another Dachshund? My current Dachshunds are not stars in agility, although they love being trained and running through the course. Thank you.

A. All three breeds you mentioned are friendly, smart, athletic and enjoy exercise (although "lots" of exercise on two acres in the case of the Papillon, a Toy breed, might need to be adjusted). All three tend to be very successful in agility, too.

My one concern is that you want to participate in conformation as well, and are looking for a breed that is "relatively easy to groom." Goldens and Shelties are high-maintenance breeds when it comes to the show ring — and Papillons aren't too far behind. Competition is stiff in all three breeds, so a properly groomed and presented specimen is a must.

You might also want to consider a Whippet or a Smooth Fox Terrier. Both breeds love exercise but can also settle down and make wonderful housedogs. There will be shedding but you won't have the scissoring and fussing to contend with if you decide to also show.

I hope your two acres of property are securely fenced. I assume they are if you own Dachshunds, which are scenthounds, diggers and master escape artists.