

Selecting a Dog by Group

By knowing a breed's AKC Group, you can determine basic traits that may or may not appeal to you.

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Q. What is the relevance of the AKC Groups when I am looking for a dog?

A. Predictability in size, temperament, coat grooming and exercise are some of the advantages you have with a purebred dog. You may not have a duckpond in your backyard but your Golden Retriever will, in all likelihood, be drawn to the water, just as his parents, grandparents and great-grandparents were.

By determining your activity level, you can decide if a rugged, outdoorsy Sporting Dog or Hound is for you, or if you'd be happier with a smaller, laidback Toy breed bred to cuddle and be the companion of royalty. Many of the terrier breeds are apartment size but be wary if your menagerie includes rabbits, guinea pigs and hamsters. Terriers have a high prey drive and may not make a distinction between your pet rodents and the wild variety their ancestors were bred to dispatch. For large dogs, sighthounds are pretty mellow and laidback, but they won't obey your commands in a robot-like fashion, and elegantly coated breeds like the Afghan Hound need dedicated, devoted grooming on a regular basis.

By knowing what the breeds in various Groups or families were historically bred to do, you can determine lots of basic traits that either appeal to you or not. That will help you compile a short list of suitable breeds for your family and home.