

## Popular Dogs: Australian Shepherds

**Raising an Australian Shepherd involves patience, time and commitment. It doesn't come easy and requires a few golden rules.**

*Cal Orey*

### Your Aussie's Animosity

Australian Shepherds have a herding instinct that can influence their protective nature. "Some Aussies are friendly with everyone, but as a breed they tend to be cautious and reserved around strangers," says Bethurum. "Because of these tendencies, it is vital that the first-time Aussie owner realizes the need to socialize and train their new friend."

If your pets start trouble with people or other pets, you can try a time-out, which can help discipline an aggressive pet. Time-outs should last only five to 10 minutes. Strother suggests these dos and don'ts: Do use a consistent verbalization, such as "No!"

Do physically leave the time-out area so the pet can't hear or see you.

Do praise your pet when you release it from the time-out.

Don't ever hit or strike your pet.

Don't leave the time-out pet alone for a long time-after 10 minutes it's doubtful your dog will remember what the time-out is for.

Don't hold a grudge after a time-out. Your pet is learning with you. Teach Your "Children" Well

Adding an Aussie to a family with little ones is often about good timing. While Aussies can be wonderful kids' dogs, "it's best if they are raised [along] with children," says Bethurum. However, an infant and a new Aussie puppy can lead to problems. Why? Simultaneously bringing a baby and a new Australian Shepherd into your home can turn any home topsy-turvy.

"In many instances a new puppy does not receive the proper socialization and training during this period of time," Newbury points out. A good time to add an Aussie to your family is when things have settled down and a consistent routine has been set. Here are three basic rules provided by Newbury to keep your kids and your Aussie happy: Never leave the children and dog unattended.

Teach children to always ask permission before petting a strange dog.

Be aware of the Australian Shepherd's dominance potential. All dogs are pack animals and the Aussie is no exception. Dogs tend to consider children in the home as low on their pack-rating scale. One breeder claims that her Aussie dutifully herds her children while playing in the front yard so they don't wander off! This behavior can be dangerous. Share Fun and Games One of the most common reasons that Australian Shepherds are put up for adoption is because the dog is too energetic.

Translation: Aussies just wanna have fun. If your Aussie jumps up on people, barks when left alone in the backyard and jumps the fence, the dog may have pent-up energy and is looking for action. The solution: Australian Shepherds are high-energy dogs. This means they love to be on the go. Go ahead-take your dog on errands, to the dog park, for a run or swim. Aussies are active dogs and love to share fun and games-with you.

### Groom Your Aussie's Growing Glory

Aussies, like other double-coated breeds, shed. This means if you or a family member have allergies or can't stand the sight of doggie hair on clothes and furniture-this dog is not for you. Aussies lose a great deal of their under coat-especially in the summer. "You will need to brush your dog more during this period of time," says Bethurum, "to help this hair shed out and not mat." Also, if you don't want fur-lined furniture, say so from the start and be consistent in your commands to keep the dog off your furniture. Otherwise, the dog is confused and family disputes may occur.

### Spend Extra Time With Your Aussie

Remember, "Aussie pups are generally a higher energy type of pup and are not well-suited for apartment life or confinement to a small area for hours at a time," says Bethurum. To control pesky behavior, maintain good muscle tone and have a well-adjusted Australian Shepherd, you must be a dedicated hands-on owner-this means quantity and quality time for your pooch.

If you socialize, train, exercise and include your Aussie in your life indoors and outdoors-adding an Aussie to your family will be easy. Your new canine family member will become a joy, you'll hear its nickname "wiggle butt" (this tailless breed wiggles its behind when happy) in your household, and you'll know in your heart and soul that your lovable Australian Shepherd and beloved family are happy campers.