

## Popular Dogs: Doberman Pinschers

**Ideal Doberman temperament is steady, confident and outgoing. The Doberman should be reserved with strangers, but willing to accept almost anyone.**

*Audrey Pavia*

Finding Good Temperament Dobermans were originally bred to be guard dogs, and although properly bred and socialized Dobermans are not the vicious animals their popular image suggests, they are inclined to be protective of their human family and family's property. If you are looking for a Doberman to add to your family, it's important to do your homework beforehand to make sure you get a dog that has the correct Doberman temperament.

If your new Dobe is a puppy, you must properly socialize it to make sure your new companion learns how to behave. This is true of any breed, but it is especially important with a breed like the Doberman that has an inborn instinct to be protective.

"The Doberman Pinscher Club of America administers a test to adult dogs called a Working Aptitude Certificate (WAC), says Hewitt. Ask the breeder you are considering if any of the dogs in your prospective puppy's pedigree acquired this certificate. Also, obedience-titled dogs or licensed therapy dogs make good parents for a puppy you are considering. If possible, visit the puppy's parents and check out their temperament.

Hewitt also points out that you should look at how the puppy is handled by the breeder before you buy. "Look at the environment the pup is being raised in," she says. "Find out what the pup's exposed to, and what has been done to build its confidence and strength."

Perform a temperament test on any puppy you are considering. This test evaluates the puppy's basic natural disposition and can be done by you or the breeder. Never adopt an overly shy or timid puppy; Doberman puppies should be outgoing, friendly and happy. They should exhibit little sensitivity to different tactile surfaces and noises; they should maintain good eye contact and be willing to explore unknown areas. Puppies are more prone to being scared (fear is often shown by raising their hackles), but they should not show fear in reaction to non-threatening, familiar stimuli.

Once you take your puppy home, it's important to provide it with as much socialization as possible. "One of the most important factors in ensuring and developing good behavior and temperament is proper socialization," says Briley. "Your puppy needs to see, hear, smell and touch as much in its environment as it possibly can so that it can become accustomed to public life.

"Puppies should be handled, cuddled, stroked and loved from day one," continues Briley. As a puppy gets older, it should be placed on different surfaces, such as newspaper, carpet, concrete, gravel and any others you can think of. It must be taught to walk on a lead in different places. Walk it around the block, then to the end of the street. Expose it to the sounds of garbage trucks and school buses. Bring your pup with you in the car to supermarkets and all the other places you visit during your day. Allow other people to touch your puppy so it learns to trust people.

Briley stresses that it's important to always provide your Doberman with companionship to keep it happy and in good spirits. Dobs are people dogs and do not do well when they are not with their owners. Every Dobe needs to be shown love every day of its life. No Doberman should be confined as a backyard dog where it experiences little love or attention. This is not what a Doberman is all about.