

Fuel Up Your German Pointer and Go

How to feed your high-energy dog.

By Karla S. Rugh, D.V.M., Ph.D.

Your German Pointer needs proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals for optimal growth and health. Proteins are used for the growth and repair of muscles, bones and other body tissues. They're also used to produce antibodies, enzymes and hormones. Carbohydrates are metabolized into glucose, the body's principal energy source. Fats are used for energy when glucose is unavailable. They're also important for hormone production, nervous system function and vitamin transport. Vitamins and minerals participate in muscle and nerve function, bone growth, healing, metabolism and fluid balance.

Charlie Blackburn, D.V.M., of Edgerton, Wisconsin, a small-animal veterinarian and a German Shorthaired Pointer breeder, emphasizes the breed's requirement for high-energy nutrition. The most important thing to know about German Shorthaired Pointers is that they are a high-energy breed. You must provide them with the appropriate energy requirements for the job they are expected to do, says Dr. Blackburn, who is also a field-trial judge, and north central section director of the German Shorthaired Pointer Club of America (GSPCA). For instance, during the field-trial training and participation season, our dogs are on a high-energy ration. I believe that fat calories are the best source of energy versus carbohydrate calories, so they are on a 20-percent fat diet during that time.

Your German Pointer also needs an unlimited supply of fresh, clean water. The body can't store water, and its means for conserving it are limited. How much water does your German Pointer need? At least 1 ounce of water per pound of body weight each day, even in cold weather. Hot weather or vigorous exercise can double or even triple that requirement.