

Are You an English Springer Spaniel Person?

Find out if this loving breed is for you.

The decision to buy a puppy is a momentous one for your entire family. Its also a very weighty decision that can spell disaster if you fail to choose the right breed of dog. If you're thinking spaniel thoughts and are considering the English Springer, be sure that you understand the characteristics of the breed before you bring one home.

Springers are true people-lovers who consider family, friends and strangers as potential playmates. Just nod your head and he'll be ready for a game, a training session, a walk outdoors, just about whatever you're up for! If you're looking for a guard dog, however, this happy, friendly fellow does not fit that description.

Springers are natural athletes and, as such, they require a great deal of daily exercise and activity. Yet despite their love of high-energy outdoor fun and games, they live best indoors with their people and will languish if they are isolated from the humans that they love. Do they chew? Sure, all puppies chew. While not voracious chewers like Golden or Labrador Retrievers, Springers are still sporting dogs who love to retrieve game. All dogs that are bred to carry things in their mouths will have a tendency throughout their lives to chew whatever they can get their mouths on, so your shoes, socks and table legs are all potential victims. A wise owner can minimize the damage and encourage appropriate chewing behavior by providing appropriate chew toys and teaching the Springer from the outset what he may and may not chew. Puppy owners who fail to dog-proof their homes or supervise their puppies tell horror stories about the impossible things that their Springers have chewed or consumed. If you are not willing to train your pup or supervise him, be prepared to face the consequences. Damage to your home or belongings will be the least of your worries if your dog injures himself or swallows something toxic.

Springers are great with children and quickly will become best friends with your kids and their friends. They are medium-sized dogs and not difficult to handle, but they are still exuberant as puppies (and adults!), so both the dog and the children should be supervised whenever they are spending time together to prevent mishaps due to normal Springer enthusiasm. Most Springers are also canine-friendly and get along well with other dogs and most four-legged family pets.

Are you prepared for dog hair? Springers have dense double coats that drop a little hair all year long. If dog hair on your furniture will drive you nuts, consider a breed with a different kind of coat.