

## Are you a German Shepherd Dog person?

### Find out if this noble breed is for you.

Can you think of a breed more noble or courageous than the German Shepherd? Today's Shepherd remains a confident and fearless protector, loyal, devoted and willing to protect at any cost. Since the breed rose to prominence in the 1900s, the Shepherd has excelled in every area available to canine service. Protection dog, law-enforcement partner, drug and bomb detector, search-and-rescue hero, guide and assistance dog, hearing dog—there is no breed better suited to working day after day, under extreme conditions and with more heart. No breed has sacrificed its life for its human partners more often. However, such versatility does not necessarily make the GSD the best choice for the average family. Despite all of the sterling qualities that make the Shepherd a brilliant service animal, prospective owners must be aware that this is an extremely intelligent dog who takes his work very seriously. He is family-oriented and needs to be a part of his human family in both spirit and activity. He cannot be relegated to the back yard and left to his own devices. Given plenty of exercise and mega-doses of human contact, he will thrive. If neglected or unexercised, he will be bored and destructive. This is not a happy prospect with a breed as powerful as the German Shepherd. The Shepherd's unswerving devotion to his master does not mean that he automatically understands the rules of acceptable behavior. He still requires training, firm yet gentle and consistent handling by a master who is able to command the dog's respect. Confident breeds like German Shepherds require a strong leader or they will intuitively sense any weakness and assume a dominant role. Conversely, they are remarkably gentle and tolerant of children if both child and dog are properly trained and socialized together at an early age. Shepherds take their child-care duties seriously! German Shepherds also have long excelled in all areas of canine competition. In the absence of the opportunity to work, they thrive on sports such as obedience, agility, herding, tracking and Schutzhund, which provide ideal outlets for the breed's instincts and natural proclivity for dog/owner teamwork. Shepherds are also magnificent show dogs and never fail to draw an admiring crowd. The Shepherd carries a thick double coat that he sheds profusely twice a year and a little bit all year long. Brushing and more brushing is a part of daily life, and Shepherd owners learn to be tolerant of dog hair on furniture and clothing. If you fancy a fur-free household, consider getting a stuffed animal instead.