



# TOPLINE GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG CLUB

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## Is the German Shepherd Dog Right for You?

**Average Weight:** 75-95 lbs      **Height:** male: 24-26, female: 22-24 inches      **Life Expectancy:** 11-13 years

The **German Shepherd Dog** is nothing short of highly gifted—it's intelligence is the envy of most of the dog world as it is able to perform virtually any task asked of it including guide dog, search & rescue, tracking, watchdog, police work, drug & bomb sniffing, & of course herding. Highly intelligent, obedient, easy to train, protective, brave, & fiercely loyal are just some of the words used to describe this breed. Although high intelligence is often a sought after trait in a dog, it is not always a desirable one. Prospective owners of a German Shepherd need to be willing to put in the extra effort to physically & mentally stimulate their new family member as they require extensive attention and exercise. Here are a few things you must consider before deciding if this amazing breed will be a good addition to your family.

**Indiscriminate Breeding.** Due to the immense versatility & popularity of the breed, German Shepherd Dogs are a dime a dozen, & most are bred & offered for sale by people who don't have the slightest idea of how to breed good-tempered dogs. Be sure to conduct extensive research about breeders before you purchase a dog to ensure they are reputable and conscientious and that they offer guarantees. Please STAY AWAY from breeders advertising "giant" or "oversized" German Shepherds. **This breed was intended to be MEDIUM-sized, athletic and agile—it's frame and joints are not designed to handle 120+ pounds.**

**Physical Stimulation.** German Shepherds are highly active and require strenuous exercise. If you simply desire a family pet and do not have the time or inclination to regularly involve your dog in physically demanding activities such as running, hiking, biking, or swimming, this is not the breed for you! **The German Shepherd Dog is not recommended for a novice, apathetic, or sedentary owner.**

**Mental Stimulation.** **German Shepherds are a working breed that require intensive and extensive obedience training.** They need regular opportunities to utilize their intelligence & engage in interesting activities, otherwise they become rambunctious & bored - which is often expressed through destructive chewing. Bored German Shepherds can make a shambles of your house & yard. This breed is happiest when given a job or task which means they must be involved in "extra-curricular" activities such as advanced obedience training, Schutzhund, tracking, herding, agility, or similar canine activities. It is important that owners do not overlook the fact that German Shepherds are keen to work for their handler & simply being companions in the home is insufficient.

**Attention.** German Shepherd Dogs tend to be affectionate and thrive on human interaction with their family. **This breed does not like to be left alone for extended periods of time.**

**Socialization.** German Shepherds have innate protective instincts toward strangers. Without careful socialization, they may become suspicious of people, which could lead to **aggressive** biting or go in the opposite direction & become fearful of strangers which can lead to **defensive** biting. **German Shepherds require routine opportunities for socialization & interaction with strangers to prevent possible social anxiety disorders.**

**Heavy Shedding.** German Shepherds shed once a year—for 365 days. In other words, they shed constantly. **They require daily brushing to minimize loose hair.** You'll find hair & fur all over your clothing, upholstery, carpeting, under your furniture, on your countertops—even in your food. Frequent vacuuming will become a way of life so make sure you're REALLY up for it.

**Animal Aggression.** Some German Shepherds develop dominant or aggressive behavior toward other dogs, particularly of the same gender. **If anything goes wrong in the breeding, socializing, training, handling, or management of this breed, it is capable of seriously injuring or killing other animals.** Dog fights are devastating to witness & they pose a physical threat and may cause legal problems for those involved.

**Health Issues.** Improper breeding has led to hereditary diseases such as hip/elbow dysplasia, (be sure both parents are elbow/hip certified at least OFA good) blood disorders, digestive problems, epilepsy, chronic eczema, keratitis (inflammation of the cornea), & dwarfism.

**Legal Liabilities.** German Shepherds have been the target of "banning" in certain areas and refusal of homeowners insurance policies. **Today, the legal liabilities of owning any breed that appears intimidating & has a history as a guard dog requires that you think seriously about the decision to own a German Shepherd.** People are quick to sue if such a dog exhibits behavior that is even remotely questionable.