

Life With German Shepherds!

We have lived with Shepherds continuously for over 30 years, through many different family situations, first as a young couple, with no children, then as our family started to grow, so did our kennel. We now live with 10-15 German Shepherds, managed by ourselves, and our daughters. We have made many friends who share a genuine love for this breed's wonderful nature.

One of the most important thing the German Shepherd needs from its owner is simply time. German Shepherds are an active breed of dog. It is important to remember that German Shepherds were bred for the purpose of working, and that working energy-level still remains, although they do not always perform the work they were bred to do. Obedience training is a great way to exercise the German Shepherd's mind. Many GSD owners who take their dogs to beginner obedience continue on into activities such as agility, or herding. It is an excellent way to keep both you and your dog challenged. German Shepherds enjoy being outdoors, doing activities like walking, jogging, hiking, swimming, or simply following you around while you cut the grass...(as our dogs do). German Shepherds crave their owner's affection, and love to just BE with them. You must be prepared to be followed around, 24 hrs a day, 7 days per week, and feel pangs of guilt as you leave the house while your Shepherd watches you from the living room window. Many Shepherd owners report their dogs act as "hall monitors" during the night, checking from room to room, just to make sure everyone is accounted for.

The size of the German Shepherd, and activity level he requires does not make it a very suitable dog for apartment life. Homes, with good sized, fenced yards are most appropriate. A nearby park is ideal. Careful boundary training must be done for homes where fencing is not possible.

German Shepherds are a great breed with children. But socialization is a necessary step when raising any breed of dog, to have a dog who accepts both adults and children. Dogs should never be left unsupervised with young children. We socialize our young pups by taking them to local minor sports games, like baseball, or soccer games. There are usually many children, and adults at these events who would love to pet and play with a young puppy. Socialization with other dogs is also a necessary thing for German Shepherds. No dog can be expected to respond well to strange dogs if they have never interacted with another dog. Obedience training classes are often a great way to introduce your German Shepherd to other dogs in a controlled environment. Leash-free dog parks are not advisable for taking young, inexperienced dogs. Bad experiences in puppyhood can leave

permanent scars on a dog's attitude towards strange dogs in adulthood.

The German Shepherd breed, like many popular breeds, has suffered from irresponsible breeding, from those seeking to profit from the breed, rather than improve it. Consequently, there are a few deep-running health issues that must be considered when researching the German Shepherd dog. Hip and/or Elbow Dysplasia can still occur, in even the best planned litters. A German Shepherd owner must be prepared for this possibility when considering the breed. Hip and Elbow Dysplasia has both genetic, and environmental causes. The Shepherd must receive the right amount of exercise: too much at too young an age can cause joint damage, too little can cause obesity. Young puppies should not be allowed to climb stairs, or jump from elevated positions, such as decks.

Gastric Tortion, or "Bloat" is a health issue which can occur in any large, deep-bodied breed of dog. Tortion is the twisting of the stomach, which traps gases and stomach contents, resulting in the bloating of the abdomen, causing extreme pain and eventual death. It is essential that veterinary assistance be sought immediately. It is advisable for German Shepherd owners to have a "Bloat" emergency plan, and keep their veterinarian, and emergency vet's phone numbers in a easily found location. Time is essential when dealing with a case of bloat. There is no real definite cause of bloat. Exercise after eating is commonly thought to be a factor, so it is a wise idea to rest your dog immediately after a meal. Other German Shepherd health issues can include Pancreatic Enzyme Insufficiency, digestive issues, Pannus and Degenerative Myelopathy (DM)

Finally, one of the most important reasons people purchase their new family member from an experienced breeder, is the lifetime support the breeder provides. Our commitment to your dog does not end when you leave our front door with your new puppy. We are always here to answer any questions, or concerns, and we love receiving updates and photos and visits! Enjoy your new puppy!