

Akbash Dog Breed

Ratings :

Ease of Training

7/10

Intelligence

7/10

Shedding

5/10

Watchdog

8/10

Guard Dog

6/10

Popularity

2/10

Size

8/10

Agility

7/10

Good with Kids

10/10

Attributes

Life Expectancy

10-11 years

Litter Size

7 puppies

Group

Not AKC Recognized

Color

White

Hair Length

Long, Short

Shedding

Moderate Shed

Size

Male Height: 30-34 in - **Male Weight:** 90-130 lbs

(40-60 kg) - **Female Height:** 28-32 in (71-81

cm) - **Female Weight:** 90-130 lbs (40-60 kg) -

Required Living Area

Akbash Dogs were most likely bred in wide open areas, and those same wide open areas are still their ideal living environment. The dogs will not do well in urban apartments or suburban houses, and will become listless and dispirited if kept indoors for too long a time. When kept in rural or sparsely-populated suburban areas, they should be given a large fenced area for exercise.

Breed Details

Overview

The Akbash Dog is a powerful, large dog with a noble bearing and a distinctive white, feathered coat. Two varieties of the dog exist: a medium-haired variant with a flat, sleek coat, and a long-haired variant (bred for colder environments) with a heavy, wavy coat and a feathery "ruff" around its neck. The dogs have blunt, largish skulls with V-shaped ears, long tails, and gentle brown eyes. Long-haired Akbash Dogs are better for colder environments, while short-haired Akbash Dogs will

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be fine in warmer weather.

History

The Akbash Dog is most likely one of the older breeds still existing today, and much of its history remains mysterious. The Akbash Dog's white coat (which gives the breed its name, "akbash" meaning "white head" in Turkish) implies to some scholars that the dog was bred to blend in with its flocks, making it seem less threatening and making it easier for the dog to catch predators--the white Akbash would be less visible from a distance, making predators less likely to use their cunning in order to sneak members of the flock away from under the dog's long nose. This theory is backed up by the Akbash's sister breed, the Karabash ("black head"), which is commonly used for flocking and herding in areas where an all-black coloration would serve the same camouflaging purposes. Despite the longevity, proud temperament, and striking appearance of the breed, it has yet to find popular acceptance in dog breeding circles. The United Kennel Club formally recognized the Akbash Dog as a breed in 1999, but many other kennel clubs worldwide have thus far remained on the fence. Due to the breed's growing popularity in North America, Akbash Dogs International has formed as a rival kennel organization to ensure genetic regularity over the breed for dog owners outside of the breed's native Turkey.

Character

The Akbash Dog is a proud beast, bred to be the undisputed leader of his or her pack of flocking animals. This is no doubt a good quality in a flock guard, since it ensures instant obedience on the part of the flock and a much easier time of protecting the dog's charges from predators. But it can be an extremely challenging quality when it comes to training an Akbash, or simply for using it as a family companion dog. The Akbash Dog does well under human authority when that authority is clear and decisive, but when the Akbash's masters show signs of inconsistency or weakness, the Akbash is quick to challenge for pack supremacy. This holds true even after the Akbash is adequately trained during its puppy years--challenges for dominance happen throughout the dog's life, and although the dog is content to remain in a lower position in the hierarchy for a long time, he or she isn't content to remain in that lower position when a higher position--your position--becomes available. So consistency in training and handling is always required of any successful Akbash Dog owner. The Akbash Dog, being essentially a herding animal, does very well with other animals. Any aggressive behavior on the part of the other animal will usually be put down quickly (and non-violently) by the Akbash Dog, and non-aggressive behavior will be tolerated. Other aggressive dogs (or other aggressive Akbash Dogs) are the most problematic in this department, and naturally submissive dogs--including the submissive personality variant of the Akbash Dog--will make the best companions for this breed. Akbash Dogs have a strong bonding instinct with other animals, and the earlier an Akbash Dog is exposed to another animal, the more likely it is to form a protective bond. The Akbash Dog also does well with children, usually thinking of them naturally as members of the flock to be protected. Because of the breed's obsession with pack hierarchy, however, children should not be allowed too much contact with the Akbash Dog during crucial periods in the dog's development--most importantly from six to twelve months, but to a lesser extent for the first two years of its life. The Akbash Dog spends much of this period of time "acting out", constantly challenging pack authority, and children can become the unwitting targets of this dominant behavior. Although this doesn't usually mean potential harm to your children, it can mean an erosion of the Akbash Dog's vital training, and should thus be avoided. Akbash Dogs are not the most energetic dogs in the world as a rule, being bred to spend most of their time resting and guarding their flocks. But they are capable of exuberant behavior on occasion (particularly in early developmental years), and they do need regular exercise in order to keep them healthy and happy. An Akbash Dog who's kept indoors for too long typically becomes listless and dispirited, eliminating much of the quiet charm of the breed. As a herding dog, the Akbash Dog thrives on the presence and companionship of humans. Although it can function for moderate periods of time alone--being bred to act independently as a flock guard without much human intervention--it will always do better with other "pack members" as constant companions, and can't be left alone for too long without human contact. Dogs behave destructively when they feel themselves abandoned, and with such a potent destructive force as the hundred-plus pound Akbash Dog, it's important to keep that destructive behavior to a minimum whenever possible by ensuring adequate contact with your dog.

Health Care

Frequent brushing is required to keep shedding to a minimum. Bathing should only be done when absolutely necessary using a mild shampoo to protect the weather resistant coat. Dry shampoo will suffice. Known health problems for the Akbash breed include hip dysplasia and OCD.

Grooming

Because the Akbash Dog was bred as a flocking/herding dog, meant to spend most of its time outdoors with its charges, its coat has developed to the point where it requires little maintenance. The hard outer coat will usually not mat or tangle, but a weekly brushing in order to remove those mats or tangles that do occur isn't a bad idea. Brushing will also alleviate shedding to some extent, which can be a problem with this breed--particularly in its longer-coated variety. Whichever coat variety your dog sports, however, you'll still have to deal with periodic shedding of the insulating undercoat, usually twice a year during seasonal changes in the weather of your region. Bathing your Akbash Dog is challenging (and usually unnecessary), but in the event of extreme problems with cleanliness (heavy mud, muck, or other unsavory problems that the dog can't easily clean him or herself), you can rely on an outdoor bath and shampoo. This shouldn't be done regularly, however, since shampooing and water can sometimes damage the protective qualities of the Akbash Dog's coat, leaving

Training

Activity and Exercise

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