





you with a less healthy and less beautiful dog in the end.

## Training

Akbash Dogs are very pack-oriented and will take well to training, provided that you adapt your training style to the personality type of the dog. All dogs come in two basic personality variants--submissive and dominant--but with Akbash Dogs, the split between these is much more pronounced, and successful training will depend on a successful assessment of your Akbash Dog early in its life. Training submissive dogs is easier, and requires only the basics of dog training in order to be successful: consistent commands, a focus on positive rewards for good behavior rather than strict, negative correction for bad behavior, and of course patience. Training dominant dogs, however, requires you to do more than this. A dominant Akbash Dog is a herding dog, and naturally assumes a dominant role in his "pack" of herding animals. If you don't assert your dominance--and maintain it, despite the dominant Akbash Dog's frequent challenges to authority--then you'll be unable to control or trust your Akbash Dog. So stricter measures need to be taken with Akbash Dogs, and you shouldn't be afraid of using some light negative measures to correct for bad or authority-challenging behavior. Control over the feeding of your dog--refusing to feed your Akbash Dog until he or she performs commands appropriately--may seem harsh, but is one of the most effective ways to ensure that the dog views you as its master rather than as a potential rival in the pack hierarchy. A stern tone of voice is also useful, and a willingness to physically restrain the dog from performing anti-social or destructive acts is necessary in order to quickly correct for this kind of behavior. The dogs should be restrained until they show signs of submission--rolling over to show their stomach, for example, or licking/begging behaviors. It's important to start this heavy training early in the dog's life simply for practical reasons--while it's easy to physically restrain a twenty-pound Akbash puppy, it's much more difficult to restrain a hundred-pound mature dog. The earlier you eliminate problematic behaviors, then the easier you'll have it when it comes to aggressive behavior in later life. The period of time between six months and a year in your Akbash puppy's life are critical ones for training, and will probably require the most effort on your part in order to ensure good behavior as an adult dog. Akbash Dogs shouldn't be left unattended with children or other animals during this time, as their natural rebelliousness and challenging disposition could lead to serious problems with discipline or extremely unwanted behavior. In order to ensure that the Akbash knows that he or she is lower in the pack hierarchy, make sure to keep a short metaphorical leash on your dog during this crucial period of time. If you do your work adequately early on, then your Akbash Dog will be all right for the most part as an adult. Periodic challenges to the pack authority will still occur, however, and you need to be aware of these and willing to combat these as soon as they happen in order to ensure that the work you put into early training isn't compromised by later lapses in authority.

## Activity and Exercise

Despite the musculature and size of this dog, the Akbash Dog is not very active. This makes sense when viewed in the context of the breed's intended purpose: Akbash Dogs were expected to travel slowly and carefully with a flock when it was on the move, and to lie quietly with the flock when it was at rest to better protect it from predators. Because of these genetic tendencies, the breed today is likely to prefer lounging to rambunctious activity--no doubt a plus to some owners who are concerned about providing adequate excitement for this large and unwieldy-looking dog. But the Akbash Dog does have the capacity for high-energy exercising, and will require this kind of activity on a regular basis in order to stay healthy and happy. A fenced yard is the best way to give your Akbash Dog this kind of exercise, and the dogs should be allowed about two hours every day of free play in their enclosure. By "fenced yard" we don't mean a typical suburban backyard: in order to run and play adequately, an Akbash Dog will usually require at least half an acre of open space. Leash exercise (daily walks or runs) is less important for the Akbash Dog than for many other breeds, and should only be relied on when the Akbash's other play and exercise environments are temporarily unavailable (if the fence is being repaired, say.) The Akbash Dog's proud disposition will tend to make it less active when on the leash, and although he or she will no doubt appreciate the exercise, he or she will get less out of it than they would in an open play environment.