

SCHELMISCH GSD

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GSD Traits

A well-bred German Shepherd Dog is an outstanding companion pet that needs to have a purpose in his or her life. Since they are naturally highly protective, they do need to be regularly and routinely socialized, starting from a very early age. Despite their somewhat ferocious reputation, most German Shepherd Dogs, at least once socialized, are very calm, dependable dogs that are more likely to think through a problem than react with aggression.

Poorly socialized or un-socialized German Shepherd Dogs can be very dog aggressive and are often associated with attacks on other dogs, especially between male dogs. This is more a factor of socialization and poor ownership rather than a negative comment on the breed. In some research on dog aggression the GSD is also the breed most reported in conjunction with dog bites on humans, however this type of aggression may be a result of protecting property, at least to some degree.

While socialization is important for this breed at an early age, they are very fast learners and do tend to generalize well. In other words, if they are socialized with a house cat and get along well, the German Shepherd Dog is intelligent enough to understand they are supposed to leave other cats alone as well

The GSD is one breed of dog that bonds strongly with his or her family. Unlike some dogs the German Shepherd can bond with more than one person, and they tend to be very accepting of family members and friends of the family once they are introduced. The GSD, like many of the larger breeds of dogs, tends to bond very well with children and to be highly protective of younger children. They are patient, calm and affectionate with kids, without the rambunctious behaviour of some of the other large breeds. Like any dog they do need to be socialized with children from an early age to ensure that they understand children and are comfortable with kid's attention and noise.

Intelligence in training makes these dogs very easy to work with. Many owners report that the dogs will almost train themselves when it comes to house training and learning specific words and common commands. On dog intelligence tests the GSD tends to rank in the top ten, often in the top three. They are also very much a dominant breed, however with a human leader that is the alpha in the family there is usually no competition or battle of the wills after the initial testing phase is over.

The GSD is a very active dog and while not hyperactive they do need routine, fairly intensive exercise every day. Unlike some of the smaller herding dogs they don't need hours and hours of exercise, however a good 30-minute brisk walk, jog or run combined with some obedience work twice a day is a great level of exercise for the breed. They also love longer walks, but really don't do well with shorter, smaller exercise times.

Another key temperament or personality trait of the GSD is that they need to feel they have something important to do in the family. This often includes the guarding role they take on, much as they did as flock guardians and herders in the past. Patrolling the yard and barking when strangers approach is a typical job that a GSD will take on to help out. Most are not problem barkers unless they are bored, not getting enough exercise or are poorly trained. They are also great at fetching, obedience work, Schutzhund/IPO competitions, agility, freestyle dancing, Frisbee and working as therapy dogs. Basically, there are very few types of events or competitions that a GSD cannot compete in; however, they are rarely used in actual herding events, despite their not-too-distant history.

While a GSD may not be a hyperactive dog, they love to do whatever the family is doing. They crave being with people and although they can be outside dogs in most climates they would much rather be indoors with the family. Once trained to be in the house the German Shepherd Dog will typically find a place, he or she can keep a watchful eye on everyone and simply relax and watch what is going on. Some may be more aloof and rather weary of strangers while others will be very outgoing and friendly, once you have given the dog the signal that all is OK.

The GSD is one dog that seems to be able to read a person's emotion and will respond in kind. Perhaps this is why these dogs are often used as assistance dogs, therapy dogs or guide dogs, since they do have the ability to be playful, loving or very serious, depending on what is needed of them. Early training, lots of interaction with other people, animals and new places will ensure that your GSD puppy will develop into a friendly, loyal and very intelligent companion and working pet.

Please remember that the life expectancy of a healthy German Shepherd is currently 10 to 13 years.