

## **Breed Profile: German Shorthaired Pointer**

Written for veterinary office use

The German Shorthaired Pointer is a friendly and active dog breed that is an excellent, skilled bird dog as well as a fine family pet. The breed was developed during the 19th century as an intelligent and versatile dog that could manage most terrains, including forests, fields, and water. They grow to a height of around 17" to around 21" at the shoulder and an average weight of 35 to 50 lbs. According to the American Kennel Club, German Shorthaired Pointers are the 11th most popular dog breed, characterizing them as "friendly, smart, and willing to please." Here is some important information for people considering the breed as a pet:

- Though they have a short coat, the breed is still inclined to shed fairly heavily. They require frequent grooming and brushing as well as having their nails kept short to avoid cracking and splitting.
- As an energetic dog, they require a digestible, nutritious diet. You and your veterinarian should come up with a feeding plan that takes into account the age, amount of exercise your dog gets, and your schedule. There is no perfect food-- feed a high quality diet that results in a healthy hair coat, well-formed stool, and the absence of flatulence.
- German Shorthaired Pointers are intelligent dogs that are readily trainable. They become attached to their families and generally do very well with children.
- The breed needs to be outside and active in order to burn off energy and avoid unwanted behaviors. They enjoy running, swimming, and dog sports (frisbee, for example) both as physical activities and ways to bond with their humans.
- They do best with positive training and a lot of affection
- They love to play with and fetch balls, sticks, and other play toys or generally carrying anything in their mouth.
- They love water and love to swim.
- They generally get along well with other dogs, but are probably likely to chase any resident cats.

## **Breed Health**

GSP are normally a healthy breed, but like all breeds they may be susceptible to certain conditions as a result of genetic predisposition. Of particular concern are hip dysplasia and congenital heart issues. Again, most of the breed is relatively healthy with an average lifespan of 11-13 years.

Like any breed, they require regular veterinary exams and vaccinations as well as heartworm preventatives to remain healthy. Recommended vaccines include rabies, DHLPP (distemper and leptospirosis), and Lyme if they will be in rural or forested areas.

If your Shorthaired Pointer goes swimming, you should clean their ears afterward with a regular canine ear cleaner and some cotton to help avoid ear infections, which the breed is prone to.

## **Is the German Shorthaired Pointer Right For You?**

Although the GSP is a friendly, intelligent, and active breed, they are not for everyone. Before deciding on this breed, take the following into account:

- They are not recommended for first time dog owners because they are not an 'easy' breed. They require a great deal of exercise, attention, and training in order to successfully be a member of the family. If you've never had a hunting breed before, you should consider another breed as your first dog.
- They are strong for their size, making it difficult to control or restrain them if they see something they want to chase. Since they are bred as hunting dogs, they will chase pretty much anything that runs, moves, flits, or flees, so they need to be leashed at all times unless you are in a large open area free of hazards.
- They are not good city dogs, despite being medium-sized. Again, because of their energetic nature they are not going to be happy with one or two daily

walks. They require your time and energy in order to work them out. If forced to sit around at home they will become bored and destructive.

- They will not give up when there is something that they want and because they can jump as high as six feet, they are excellent counter surfers. This means any dangerous items, such as raw meat, knives, chocolate, baked goods, and medications must be kept off of counters and in secure, inaccessible places.

In addition, if you plan to acquire your German Shorthaired Pointer from a breeder, be sure to check them out as well as taking a tour of their facilities. Reputable breeders are happy to show people around their grounds. In addition, good breeders will genetically test their breeding stock to help reduce the likelihood of congenital illness in their puppies. Keep in mind that there are also breed rescues that can help you find a GSP that may need a new home because of poorly prepared or neglectful owners.

If you have an active lifestyle and the time to devote to their care, a German Shorthaired Pointer may be just the lifelong buddy you are seeking.