

Is a Giant Schnauzer the Right Dog for You?

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ARE GIANT SCHNAUZERS GOOD WITH CHILDREN? This question should be reversed. Are your children good with dogs? No dog, Giant Schnauzer or otherwise, should be expected to put up with abusive treatment or teasing from children who have not been taught to treat animals with kindness. Even very young children can and must be taught respect for the family dog, or you can expect problems. All too often parents purchase a dog for the kids. They envision the kids taking care of the new puppy and everyone playing together happily. Puppies should never be bought for the children. At least one adult must accept the ultimate responsibility for the dog. One who really wants it and understands the care, training and love that the dog will need. Even a responsible teenager who asks for a dog should be reminded that teenagers usually leave home and leave their pets behind. Who will take care of the Giant Schnauzer then?

ARE GIANT SCHNAUZERS ROAMERS? Any dog who is not on a leash or in a fenced yard is a potential roamer, and possible troublemaker. Giant Schnauzers should be fenced at home or reliably trained for voice control, and you should be on the end of the leash when not at home. It is your responsibility to keep the dog safe from unfamiliar dangers (cars, trucks, garbage, irate neighbors) and to clean up after it. Many communities require leashes regardless of how well trained your dog may be.

DO GIANT SCHNAUZERS NEED GUARD DOG TRAINING? No. They do need obedience training and socializing if they are to be good companions. Heeling, coming when called, staying, not jumping on people, are all basic needs for a civilized dog. Giant Schnauzers are by nature territorial. They will usually instinctively guard what is theirs and warn you when a stranger is near. For most purposes this is enough. Being a guard dog means just that, guarding, and the deep bark and intense appearance of the typical Giant Schnauzer is enough to give a stranger pause. If further training is warranted it should be undertaken only with professional help and only with a dog of stable temperament.

DO GIANT SCHNAUZERS REQUIRE A LOT OF GROOMING? Not necessarily. They do need thorough brushing, cleaning, beard washing, nail clipping and the regular care any dog needs. If you consider showing the dog then you will either have to pay someone to properly groom and present your dog, or learn to do it yourself. (see the section on show grooming) If you groom a pet just to keep it looking nice and healthy you can easily learn to do it yourself. The correct hard-coated Giant Schnauzer is fairly easy to groom, as the furnishings (hair on legs) does not tend to mat or hold leaves and litter. (see the section on pet grooming)

DO GIANT SCHNAUZERS SHED? Of course they do. It is a popular misconception that people have that they don't shed. It is usually asked by someone who has allergies. According to experts it's not the hair that causes the problem anyway, it is the dander. The nonallergenic theory probably started with the popular Miniature Schnauzer. Most pet 'minis' are clipped, and with frequent grooming the dander is apparently less of a problem, and they are a lot smaller anyway.

But on any healthy dog hair will grow, mature and eventually fall out. On the rug. On your white pants. Anywhere it wants to. This sometimes means that the dog is not getting regular brushing, which helps to keep up with the shedding, or it could mean that the dog has finally 'blown its coat' and is really and truly 'shedding'. It is not quite the same look that a shepherd or collie type has where they look like they're molting and handfuls of hair comes out all over. When the loose hair of a blown coat comes out, however, the Giant Schnauzer can look moth-eaten. Our basic grooming instructions can explain it to you.

ARE GIANT SCHNAUZERS EASY TO HOUSEBREAK? Yes, when the owner exercises him regularly, frequently, until he is physically mature enough to control himself. Using a crate, feeding and walking on schedule and watching carefully for the dog's signals will hasten the process. Few dogs choose to sleep near their messes so confinement helps to get the message across. All it really takes is paying attention to them and their needs. After rough play or a long nap a pup is more likely to need 'to go.'

I HAVE ANOTHER DOG. WILL THE GIANT SCHNAUZER ACCEPT HIM? A new puppy will be submissive to almost any other dog that was there first. As the puppy grows up there might be a problem if there is a big difference in their sizes or if one is basically more aggressive. Most males tend to be aggressive toward another male, whether another GS or a male of another breed. Sometimes females are the same way, and a female in season may be intolerant of either sex. Mixed sexes otherwise usually get along, unless there are more than two and they gang up on somebody. Neutering and spaying will not necessarily improve matters if the dog's basic temperament or past experience has trained it to be aggressive. It is up to you to control them. Some combinations of dogs can mean disaster- someone could get seriously bitten, and you certainly don't want a dogfight so this situation should be carefully considered.