



Caring For A Large Dog: 5 Things You Should Know

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Large dogs — boxers, greyhounds, poodles and Weimaraners, just to name a few — can come with large personalities. If you already have one, you probably know that these dogs don't quite understand just how big they are — for instance, many large breeds are convinced they're perfectly lap-sized. But if you're thinking about getting a large-breed dog for the first time, here are some unique considerations to keep in mind.

Puppyhood Looks A Little Different

While it's true that many small- and medium-breed dogs are considered adults at the one-year mark, large-breed puppies can continue to grow for months after that. Because their bodies are bigger, they need more time to grow. Most large-breed dogs reach adulthood between ages 18-24 months, as opposed to smaller breeds, which usually reach adulthood between ages 9-12 months.

During this time, it's important to make sure your large-breed puppy gets the proper nutrition. Large- and giant-breed dogs need to eat diets with the proper balance of calcium

and phosphorus to help ensure they grow at the right pace. Be sure to look for a quality pet food formulated for large-size dogs, like [NUTRO™ NATURAL CHOICE™ Large Breed Puppy Dry Dog Food, Chicken & Brown Rice Recipe](#).

Exercise Is Everything

Many large-breed dogs were bred for a specific purpose, like hunting, herding or guarding. Knowing the history of your dog's breed and what function they were bred to serve can help you decide how much exercise they will need.

Just be careful with large-breed puppies — you don't want to risk injury through overly vigorous exercise. Check with your vet before taking your puppy out on neighborhood jogs or other strenuous activities.



Training Is Crucial, Too

Smaller dogs are often less intimidating than larger dogs — and they can't jump as high when guests come over or when they want to reach something on the counter. Due to the size of large breeds, owners need to be especially disciplined with training. Teaching your dog basic commands and manners isn't just beneficial — it's imperative. Be sure to keep things fun with lots of rewards and positive reinforcement.

Keep An Eye Out For Health Issues

Some larger-breed dogs are more prone to certain health issues. Be sure to do your research, or consult a vet if you prefer, but don't let that stop you from getting a larger-breed dog. We like to think the bigger the dog, the bigger their heart.

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Sure, owning a dog comes with a lot of responsibilities: There are rainy-day walks, early-morning wake-ups and sleep-interrupting zoomies. But having a dog also comes with tons of benefits — and probably the most important of those is the positive impact on your mental health. Several studies have shown that dogs can reduce stress, anxiety, depression and loneliness. Keep reading to learn about the benefits of being a dog owner — and how you can make sure your dog benefits from your relationship, too.

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