

Is An Australian Cattle Dog Puppy The Right Choice For Me And My Family?

The Australian Cattle Dog is a poor choice for young children and apartment living. She is a very dominant dog who needs hours of physical exercise a day and loves to chew. She can become very destructive if she gets bored. She was bred to herd cattle and may try to herd other pets, dogs and even the children in the household if given a chance. They can also be a bit nippy with kids or when annoyed. There are always exceptions to the rule and these characteristics of the breed are generalizations. She basically needs a large safe enclosure or a farm for exercise.

The Australian Cattle Dog is considered a one or two person dog and is suspicious of strangers. They can be very aggressive with other dogs partly because of dominance issues. Some of these dogs have their tails cropped, especially if they are to work with swine.

*Approximate Adult Size. The Australian Cattle Dog male can be 18 to 20 inches at the withers (highest point of the shoulder) and the female can range from 17 to 19 inches at the withers. Either sex can range in weight from 30 to 50 pounds.

*Special Health Considerations. The Australian Cattle Dog is relatively healthy but there are a some serious genetic problems to be concerned about. Canine hip dysplasia (genetic based looseness in the hip joint that can lead to arthritis pain and lameness) is a serious one. Some have deafness problems and others can be prone to juvenile cataracts or progressive retinal atrophy. There are also hypothyroidism (sluggish thyroid gland which can result in weight), glaucoma, skin lesions, liver abnormalities and osteochondritis.

*Grooming. The Australian Cattle Dog has a short coat that sheds seasonally. Baths should be infrequent and firm bristle brushing is needed weekly or so. Her teeth should be brushed at least twice a week with toothpaste and toothbrush designed for dogs. Brushing removes the accumulation of plaque and tartar which can cause cavities (rarely) and periodontal disease. Dog periodontal disease can lead to pain, loss of teeth, bad breath and other serious disease.

*Life Span. With proper nutrition, medical care and housing, she can live from 12 to 15 years.

*History. The Australian Cattle Dog was developed in Australia around 1830 by stockmen needing a sturdy dog that could work hard and stand the rigors of an extreme environment. There is controversy as to which dogs actually make up the base stock of this breed. The Dingo (native wild dog to Australia), the Dalmatian, the Australian Kelpie, the Bull Terrier, the Blue Italian Greyhound, the Rough Haired Scotch Collie, the Blue Merle Collie, the Old English Sheepdog, and the Smithfield are some of the dogs that probably make up this breed.

*Category: Working herding group.

*Registries: AKC, ACR, APRI, CKC, NZKC, NKC, ANKC, CKC, KCGB, FCI

*Category: Herding group, working dog.

*Terms To Describe The Breed: Loyal, protective, alert, trustworthy, muscular, agility, strength, athletic,

*SPECIAL GOOD POINTS

Very intelligent.

Excellent guard dog.

High energy breed.

Great working stock dog.

*SPECIAL BAD POINTS

Very serious chewers.

Often a one person dog.

They need serious exercise.

Can be difficult if they want to be.

Very dominant.

Can be very destructive if bored.

Can challenge their owner for supremacy.

*Other Names Known By: Blue Heeler, Red Heeler, Queensland Heeler

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About the Author

Mitch Endick is a short article writer for the popular pet site: <http://www.petpages.com>. He provides informative advice on all pets including dogs, puppies, cats, fish, reptiles, birds, ferrets, rabbits, mice and even pet bugs. Petpages.com also has an extensive pet classified ads section.