

Are you ready for an Aussie?

Australian Shepherds...

... are first and foremost herding dogs. The traits and skills that make them excellent herding dogs are often interpreted as bad habits that can cause people to give them up. As working dogs, they need a job to do. That could be helping with yard chores, bringing in the newspaper, pulling your groceries into the house in a cart, making therapy visits to local hospitals and retirement homes, etc.

... are NOT everyone's friend, unlike most Labs and Golden Retrievers. Some Aussies are extremely outgoing and friendly, but generally speaking, Aussies are reserved with strangers.

... are NOT a non-shedding breed! Aussies shed year round and typically blow their coats twice a year, so vacuuming twice a week is common.

... are NOT maintenance free. Regular brushing is necessary to keep their coats free of mats. The hair between the feet and nails are also trimmed on a regular basis.

... require firm, consistent discipline. Aussies definitely need training. In the inexperienced home, they may decide to take control. Aussies need a confident, assertive owner who is not afraid to be in charge.

... require daily exercise. This breed has energy and needs adequate daily exercise.

... may bark. Their strong guarding instinct can cause some to feel it is their job to warn their people of any dangers, real or imagined. Some may bark with enthusiasm or when they're bored.

... are highly intelligent. This intelligence requires adequate mental stimulation or Aussies may resort to inappropriate activities such as chewing, digging up your yard, or worse.

... need early socialization with people, dogs, and different environments. The breed standard calls for Aussies to be reserved with strangers. Their guarding instinct can make them overly protective of their family. A puppy without adequate socialization may develop behavior issues such as fear of strangers or even fear aggression.

... love to be with their family. Aussies will follow you from room to room, even to the bathroom. They are not a breed that enjoys being left alone in the back yard. Aussies are affectionately referred to as "Velcro" dogs due to their strong need to be with their humans.

From Aussie Rescue and Placement Helpline, Inc. (ARPH)