

# The Borzoi

## Tori Houle, Lifestyle Contributor and Junior Editor

Tori has more than 2 years of experience in the pet health industry and is junior editor of IDEXX's Pet Health Network team.

### Background

Borzoi were developed in Russia during the 1600s and were favored by Russian aristocracy for hundreds of years. They're the result of cross breeding between the Arabian Greyhound and thick coated Russian breeds. The first standard for Borzoi was written in 1650 and has undergone very few changes in the time since then.

Hunting was taken very seriously in Russia through the 1800s. Often times hunting events involved a grand ceremony attended by the most influential of sorts. Hundreds of Borzoi may have been on hand to hunt rabbit or more commonly wolf. The Borzoi generally worked in teams. They could attack a wolf from two different sides and pin them to the ground until the hunter arrived to either finish the kill or set the animal free.

Borzoi were rarely let out of Russia and so were nearly made extinct during the Russian revolution. During that time they were killed on mass because of their association with the aristocracy. By the 1940s there were sparse pockets of Borzoi in America, England and Russia, but they were dwindling fast. Constantin Esmont convinced the Russian government that Borzoi were a vital breed and so a government regulated breeding program was started to save the Borzoi.

In America the Borzoi was officially recognized as a breed in 1891. They're numbers have remained modest and they are often seen as a celebrity glamour dog.

### Sizing up

- Weight: 55 to 120 lbs.
- Height: 26 to 28 inches
- Coat: Long silky coat
- Color: Most any color
- Life expectancy: 10 to 13 years

## What's the Borzoi like?

Borzoi are instinctually hunters but are actually a relatively low energy dog preferring a good sprint to a marathon. They will require at least a walk every day but are more inclined to become couch potatoes than other dogs might be. Still, they won't hesitate to chase smaller animals, even small dogs, and hold them by the neck until you arrive to pry them off. Fences and leashes are definitely a good idea for this breed.

Around strangers Borzoi might be reluctant to approach but shouldn't ever be aggressive. They're not going to make good guard dogs although they may alert you to a newcomer's presence. Kids might also make Borzoi nervous unless they've known them since birth.

Training Borzoi can be challenging but their difficult reputation is overstated. With the proper motivation a Borzoi can compete in agility training and obey commands with ease. What they don't like are repetitive tasks or harsh words.

Borzoi will require frequent grooming: as much as three times per week. They can shed heavily at times.

### Health

You should be on the lookout for any of the following conditions in the Borzoi:

- Gastric torsion
- [Cardiomyopathy](#)
- Cardiac arrhythmia
- Progressive retinal atrophy
- [Wobbler syndrome](#)
- Heart disease
- [Hypothyroidism](#)
- [Cataracts](#)

### Takeaway Points

- Borzoi are challenging but rewarding to train.
- Borzoi are hunters by nature.
- Borzoi don't need as much exercise as other hunting dogs.

*If you have any questions or concerns, you should*

## The Borzoi

*always visit or call your veterinarian -- they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.*