

The Pyrenean Shepherd

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Background

Pyrenean Shepherds originated in the Pyrenees Mountains of France where they herded flocks. They are the smallest of the French herding dogs. In the 19th century some shepherds found work herding flocks in America and brought along a few Pyrenean Shepherds. It's believed they lent a helping hand in the development of the Australian Shepherd.

Pyrenean Shepherds were also used during World War I. They delivered messages, helped with guard duties, and worked as search and rescue dogs.

The Pyrenean Shepherd was recognized by the American Kennel Club in 2009.

Sizing up

- Weight: 15 to 35 lbs.
- Height: 15 to 20.5 inches
- Coat: Smooth-faced or rough-faced. The smooth-faced has short, fine hairs on the muzzle and feathering along the legs, tail, and belly. The rough-faced has long hair on the muzzle and the rest of the body. A rough-faced Pyrenean can also form cords along his backside.
- Color: Fawn, brindle, various shades of grey, black and sometimes blue
- Life expectancy: 12 to 16 years

What's the Pyrenean Shepherd like?

The Pyrenean Shepherd is extremely active and needs a lot of exercise to burn off all the energy he has. That being said, a big fenced-in yard is recommended. Be prepared for long walks and hikes. He loves to play fetch as long as you throw the ball far so he can run really far and fast to get it!

The Pyrenean Shepherd is always looking out for his

family so he will always be suspicious of strangers or anything that seems out of order. He's basically the king of the castle and doesn't much care for any other animals. He likes to be in charge. The Pyrenean Shepherd is great with kids as long as he's raised with them. Early training is very important with this breed, not because he's aggressive but because he's protective which isn't necessarily a bad thing. Early socialization can greatly reduce his guard dog instincts.

Grooming depends on the coat type. The smooth-faced type will need a good brushing a few times a month while a rough-faced type should be brushed weekly to prevent mats in the coat. If your dog's coat forms cords it's best to call your vet and ask for a recommendation as to the best way to take care of these.

Health

The Pyrenean Shepherd is generally a healthy dog but watch for any of the following:

- [Hip dysplasia](#)
- [Epilepsy](#)
- [Luxating patella](#)
- Patent ductus arteriosus (a heart condition)
- Progressive retinal atrophy (an eye disease)

Takeaway Points

- The Pyrenean Shepherd is not always ideal for a city life.
- The Pyrenean Shepherd isn't so friendly with other dogs, so be watchful at parks.
- The Pyrenean Shepherd is a great running and jogging companion.
- The Pyrenean Shepherd is very intelligent so early training is a must.

If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian -- they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.