



Australian Cattle Dogs

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Introduction

Also known as the Australian Heeler, Halls Heeler, Queensland Heeler, and Blue Heeler, the Australian Cattle Dog is unique with its extraordinary ability to master a herd of cattle. This precise breed was introduced in the 19th century and is believed to have been formed using the Smooth-Coated Collie, Dingo, Dalmatian, Australian Keipe, and Bull Terrier. Giving credit to its name, the Australian Cattle dog gained popularity in Australia by helping boost the beef industry. In the 80's, the AKC finally recognized the Cattle Dog. This one-of-a-kind pet is sure to please any farmer or rancher.

General Characteristics

Standing 17-20 inches in height and weighing between 35-50 lbs., the Australian Cattle dog is a solid, medium sized dog with a body that is slightly longer than it is high. Its coat is double layered with a straight, medium-course weather resistant topcoat, and a soft, dense undercoat. An array of markings is seen in this breed. Australian Cattle dogs with masks are either referred to as single or double-masked. A single-mask dog will have a red or black patch over one eye, and a double-mask dog will have a red or black patch of both eyes. An Australian Cattle dog with a mask is considered "plain-faced." The two basic colors are blue and red speckled. Many Australian Cattle Dogs sport a "Bently" mark, otherwise known as a trickle of white hair down the middle of the forehead.

Its dark, oval eyes, stiff, pointed ears, strong jaw line that exhibits scissor-like teeth, and well-built body expresses domination and power. These dogs have a special devotion to fulfilling their duties. They work, think, and play hard and are alert, intelligent, and courageous. In addition to herd dogs, they make excellent watchdogs due to their loyal and protective behavior. Although they can be raised with children and behave properly, it is not recommended due to instinctual biting habits. These dogs require an enormous amount of energy and do not deal well with the confinement of being chained. They have an average life expectancy of 12-15 years. The longest living canine is actually an Australian Cattle who lived to be 29 years old. The average litter size is between 1 and 7 pups.

Selecting a Method: Adoption or Breeder

There are several ways of obtaining your perfect canine friend. Adoption is one of them. One of the benefits of adopting is the amount of money you will save. Purchasing a pet from a reputable breeder is often expensive and frequently requires a waiting period. Another benefit is that you will be preserving the welfare of a wonderful creature. The downfall of adopting is you may not find exactly what you're looking for. There are often limited choices when searching for an Australian Cattle dog to adopt. Normally, they are full-grown and often do not come with background information. Coincidentally, you may not be fully satisfied.

Purchasing an Australian Cattle from a breeder is another option. You will likely pay more than if you were to adopt, but you will have access to background information such as health history, bloodline, and characteristics.



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A health guarantee and registration papers are usually included with purchase price. When you pick up your pet, you will have the opportunity to see the type of environment he or she was raised in. The downfall is that many breeders are selective of who they choose, and you may have to go through a screening process and waiting period.

Regardless of which method you choose, there are several resources to aid in your search. If adopting, try your local humane society or animal rescue shelter. If you decide to go with a breeder, try to find a reputable one by visiting dog shows and talking to exhibitors and judges. You can find both adoption agencies and breeders by searching the Internet, looking at bulletin boards, in newspapers, or by talking to veterinarians or other dog lovers.

Selecting Your Australian Cattle

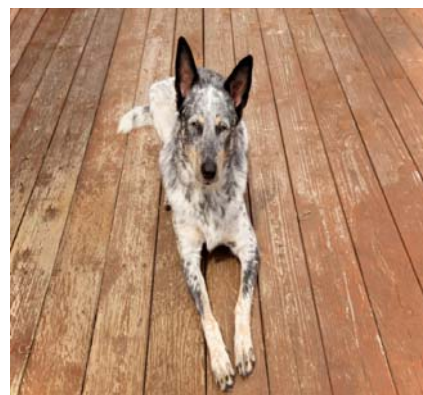
Before seeking out your new pet, there are some factors you should consider and questions you want to have answered. The first question to ask yourself is whether you want a specific breed. Does sex, age, color, show quality, or health condition matter? What kind of lifestyle do you have? Are you active? What is your schedule? What type of personality do you have? Are there certain characteristics that you would like your pet to have? How do you plan to use the dog? Based on that information, you will be able to determine if adoption or a breeder is right for you.

When choosing your Australian Cattle, pay close attention to the appearance of the animal. Does it seem to be in good physical and mental condition? Is the canine clean and well groomed? What type of environment is the animal living in? Has the dog had all of the required vaccinations, screening, and worming sessions that are recommended, and does the owner have supporting documentation? Has the canine seen a veterinarian, and if so, who? Is there a return policy or a guarantee health contract? Look at the parents of the canine and note their condition. Quiz the breeder on knowledge of the Australian Cattle dog and ask how long they have been breeding or how long they have owned the dog? It also helps to take a list of questions with you.

Your Australian Cattle: From Birth to Senior

Raising a well-behaved and healthy Australian Cattle dog requires love, attention, and positive reinforcement. These early years are crucial times and demand a clean, stable, and welcoming environment. Puppies require a lot of attention from birth through the first year. At birth, they are white and gradually obtain their color as they age. During the first three weeks of life, they are totally cared for by the mother. She will provide them with nourishment and will keep them clean and tidy. The atmosphere should be warm and cozy and the puppy's nails should be kept short to prevent injury and discomfort. It is the pet owner's responsibility to make sure that the puppies are adequately cared for by their mother. Puppies should visit the veterinarian within 5 days of birth.

Within the first 4 weeks, the eyes will open, teeth will erupt, and hearing and smell develop. Puppies will start gaining independence between their 5th and 6th week. During this time, you should start weaning them from breast milk, and establish a regular potty schedule. Gradually separate mother from pup during the day, and replace the liquid diet with an approved commercial dog food made specifically for puppies.



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The average pup needs to be fed between 3-5 times per day. A puppy is ready to be introduced to a new home between his 8th and 12th week of life.

The first year requires frequent trips to the veterinarian. During the first 16 weeks, they will need a series of vaccinations. Be sure that your pet is parasite free, has been checked for worms, and that his body temperature is within normal levels. Check with your veterinarian for a complete and accurate schedule that fits the requirements of your state and your dog.

Around 6 months, your dog will begin puberty. He/she may behave differently and forget concepts that he/she has already learned. This can last up to 6 weeks. During this time, be patient and reinforce what you have already taught him/her. For the first few years, your canine will go through many different stages and will develop a unique personality. He/she will go through periods of chewing, biting, challenging and dominant behavior, and sexual behavior if not spayed or neutered.

You may notice physical, mental, and emotional changes in your pet as it ages. These changes may be attributed to medical reasons, age, and stresses from health and environment.

- Behavioral – Your pet may become more temperamental with age and less tolerant of children. He/She may exhibit anxiety or a sudden fear of something.
- Elimination Pattern – Urination frequency increases, and incontinence may occur.
- Sleeping Pattern – He/She may become restless or lethargic.
- Skin, Hair, and Nails– His/Her skin may become thin, dry, take longer to heal, and become less resilient. Their hair may thin, turn gray or white, and become dull. Nails may become thin and brittle and crack or chip.
- Decreased Organ Function – The heart, lungs, liver, and kidneys start to dysfunction.
- Endocrine Changes – Glandular functions increase and decrease hormone levels.
- Muscular System Changes – Muscle mass deteriorates over time.
- Dental Problems – They become more prone to oral diseases and tooth decay.
- Impaired or Loss of Vision and Hearing
- Metabolism Slows
- Weakened Immune System
- Decreased Activity Level
- Dehydration

Australian Cattle Dogs are prone to certain health conditions such as deafness, hip and elbow Dysplasia, Progressive Retinal Atrophy, and cataracts. Be conscious of illness-related symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, incontinence, runny nose and eyes, altered sleep patterns, loss or increase of appetite, rapid weight loss or gain, unusual stool, blood in urine, cloudy eyes, skin discoloration, wounds that won't heal, loss of balance, persistent scratching, unusual discharge, coughing or sneezing, and behavioral changes. It is vital that you seek immediate medical attention if your dog experiences any of these symptoms. Do not attempt to self-treat.

It is important to always be observant and attentive to the changing needs of your pet.



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You'll need these basics before your Australian Cattle Dog comes home. Click the items below to go to CheapPetStore.com to find the best prices for online pet supplies.

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EXPERT TIP

Selecting a Crate

A dog should be able to stand and turn around inside a closed crate. If you have an Australian Cattle Dog puppy, consider the average height and weight of an adult Terrier and choose a crate based on those specifications. .

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It is important to always be observant and attentive to the changing needs of your pet. In order to optimize your dog's health, keep it active and provide it with a well balanced diet consisting of an approved commercial dog food that is high in proteins, healthy treats, and supplements for deficiencies. Take your canine in for routine checkups and maintain good grooming habits. Keep the environment safe and clean and provide your dog with stimulating toys, teething bones, exercise, and activities

Caring For a Australian Cattle Dog

The coat of an Australian Cattle consists of two protective layers that need very little grooming. It only requires periodic brushing and occasional baths. More frequent grooming sessions may be required during the shedding months. When brushing, use a bristle brush and extend the bristles to the skin to promote blood circulation and to remove dead skin. A protein coat conditioner can also be used to add shine and resistance.

Nails should be kept short by trimming regularly. It is important to keep your dogs ears clean by using a mineral oil soaked swab or q-tip. These dogs are prone to eye disorders so keep eyes healthy by removing mucous and debris immediately and paying close attention to any abnormalities. Maintain oral hygiene by brushing teeth and gums regularly with dog approved toothpaste and special teething biscuits made to remove plaque and tarter.

Exercise is an especially important component to this dog's lifestyle. The owner needs to be an active part of his or hers life and be committed to a physical fitness schedule. Stimulation is necessary and is achieved by allowing your canine to participate in new and exciting activities, teaching him new tricks, designating him jobs to do, and playing fun and exciting sports.

Keep your canine safe by providing a dog friendly environment. Keep loose wires hidden and hazardous items out of reach. Sterilize toys often and keep your home clean and free of clutter. Toxic plants and materials need to be placed in an unreachable location. This dog is relatively mischievous indoors and should not be confined to an apartment or small space. A large fenced in yard is recommended for exercise and play. Post watchdog signs to warn others of entering uninvited and never let your dog roam around freely.

Now That You Are A Pet Owner

Being a pet owner is a rewarding experience. Over the years, you will build a strong relationship with your dog and he or she will become part of your family. If you treat your American Water Spaniel with love and respect you will build a trusting and devoted friendship that will bring you laughter and joy. The memories you and your Australian Cattle dog share will touch your heart and last a lifetime. Just remember to always look out for the best interest of your new companion and to be a responsible pet owner.



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