



All About the **Shih Tzu**

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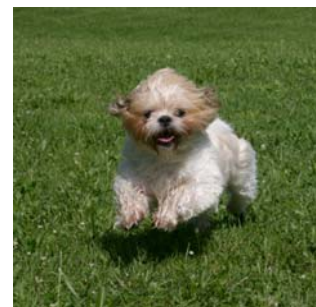


The Shih Tzu

About the Shih Tzu

A delightful little dog, the Shih Tzu was first recognized by the AKC in the late 60s. Originating first in Tibet in the sixteenth century, the dog was eventually brought to China where it was protected as a high-commodity and kept from being traded. The Shih Tzu is a very popular breed in dog shows, as well as in many homes today.

Average Weight	9-16 pounds	Temperament	Alert and playful, yet sometimes impatient and cranky.
Average Height	11 inches	Good with Children?	Yes. Older children are best.
Coat	Long, double coat.	Health Concerns	Spinal disc disease; some respiratory problems.



- [Toys for Your Shih Tzu](#)
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Shih Tzu Characteristics

The Shih Tzu has a very carefree and cheerful disposition. Their coat has two layers and looks the most elegant when the hair is kept long. The hair around the face grows in an upward direction, revealing their bright, dark eyes. The thick, long-haired tail curls over towards the back in a fountain-like appearance. You might expect that this breed would shed their long hair, yet shedding is very minimal, and dander is nonexistent, making them an excellent breed for owners who suffer from allergies.

One of the most familiar characteristics of this breed is the lower teeth that are set out further than the top. Shih Tzu's will do better inside, particularly during the warmer months, since they are fairly sensitive to the heat.

Selecting Your Shih Tzu Puppy

A Few Words About Adoption

The Shih Tzu breed has many times been a popular breed with older owners, which can often lead to the dogs being found in animal shelters after their owner, has passed on. Others have been turned in due to their temperament with small children. Nonetheless, this breed can make a wonderful companion for the right owner. Try and obtain as much information as possible on the dog's history when you are adopting. This can be very helpful in understanding certain behaviors, health issues, and even fears that the dog might have.

In addition to animal shelters, there are also rescue facilities that are dedicated to the Shih Tzu breed. These organizations can be located by searching on the Internet, or talking with a local veterinarian.



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A Few Words About Breeders

Obtaining your Shih Tzu from a reputable breeder can also be a great choice, particularly if you are planning to show your dog in the future, or become a breeder. Breeders can provide you with lots of helpful information about Shih Tzus, including possible health concerns, family history, and the various breed characteristics and requirements. Shih Tzu breeders can be found by going to the AKC website, searching your local newspaper classifieds, or even obtaining referrals from other owners or vets. Be sure to ask breeders questions about their dogs, years in business, if the parents of the puppies will be onsite, and what kind of health guarantees and records will be provided. Your best breeders will have several questions for you as well, such as where the puppy will live (inside or outside), other pets you might have, and how much time you will be able to spend with your new Shih Tzu.

Whichever route you chose to go, both adoption and working with a breeder can have great results. Take time to research and understand the needs and commitment of the Shih Tzu breed.

How to Choose your Shih Tzu

If you are selecting a new puppy, it can be to your advantage to select from a full litter that hasn't been picked over already. While all puppies are cute and fun, they all come with their own personalities, sizes, and colorings. If you are choosing your new Shih Tzu as an adult, possibly from a rescue or adoption facility, there are some things that you may want to watch for:

- Clean, healthy coat. Might not be long, since some cut them short.
- Clean teeth (can be a problem for this breed)
- Proper weight/size. This breed can easily become overweight, which can cause much strain on their short legs and back.

If you are planning to show your dog competitively, it is best to visit the AKC website and review the specific breed requirements for Shih Tzus. They can provide you with many of the color specifications and other details to watch for.

Bringing Your Shi Tzu Home

Since the Shih Tzu is a rather small breed, they will fit in most houses and apartments quite nicely; however, that is not to say that they will go unnoticed. As puppies, they will be very curious, active, and playful, causing them to get into things and chew. It is best to prepare your home beforehand to save yourself from having to replace valuable items. Your new pet will also need some of the following basic items:

- Pet food
- Crate (for sleeping and while you are away)
- Grooming supplies (bristle brush, shampoo)
- Collar/leash
- Various chew toys
- Treats

After your new Shih Tzu comes home, you will probably discover other helpful items from your local pet store or online. Beds, outfits, and additional toys are just some of the few. Have fun and enjoy your new pet.



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

- [Crate](#)
- [Crate Pad](#)
- [Dog Bed](#)
- [Food Dish](#)
- [Squeaky Toy](#)
- [Dry Food](#)
- [Collar](#)
- [Lead](#)
- [Puppy Pads](#)
- [Chew Toy](#)
- [Shampoo](#)
- [Brush](#)
- [Toothbrush](#)
- [Nail Trimmer](#)

EXPERT TIP

Selecting a Crate

A dog should be able to stand and turn around inside a closed crate. If you have a Shih Tzu puppy, consider the average height and weight of an adult Shih Tzu and choose a crate based on those specifications. The average size of an adult Shih Tzu is 9 lbs and 11 inches tall. Choose a sturdy steel or plastic crate for medium sized breeds such as the Shih Tzu.

[Click here to see our crates.](#)

The Shih Tzu Pup

Puppies can require a lot of patience and constant attention, and Shih Tzus are no exception. Start training them early to build a solid foundation for a happy relationship in the future. Some Shih Tzus can be difficult to housebreak, and will require a little more persistence. Regular grooming habits will be helpful early on as well, getting the puppy familiar with the routine. Because of dental issues with the breed, it is also advisable that you make them comfortable with teeth cleaning as well.

The Shih Tzu Adult

Shih Tzus do not need a lot of exercise, yet they can tend to be a rather lazy breed and will gain weight quickly. Keep a close eye on their diet and adjust accordingly. If their coat is kept long, they will need to be brushed daily. Many owners will find it useful to pull back the top hair and tie it up, keeping it out of the eyes and food. If you are unable to keep up the coat on a regular basis, it might be easier to have the dog trimmed.

The Shih Tzu Senior

As your Shih Tzu ages, their temperament can sometimes become a concern, especially around other pets and small children. They have been known to snap at youngsters who interrupt their nap, or are a little too close to their food. Daily walks are encouraged to help keep their weight down. The Shih Tzu can live for 15 or more years.

Medical Considerations

Some Shih Tzu breeds are prone to certain ear, eye, and respiratory problems. Back problems, specifically spinal disc disease, are also a concern for the breed.



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- [Decorative Dog Treat Jar](#)
- [Decorative Coffee Mug](#)
- [Dog Training Guide](#)
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Items to suit your senior Shih Tzu

- [Vitamins](#)
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- [Orthopedic Bed](#)
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Popular Products for Your Shih Tzu

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- [Safety Coated Dog Gate](#)
- [Gourmet Cut Canned Dog Food](#)
- [Translucent Placemat](#)
- [Lipiderm Canine](#)
- [PetSafe Bark Control Collar](#)
- [Pooper Scooper](#)
- [Dental Dog Treats](#)
- [Bull Sticks](#)
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