



Frequently Asked Questions About the Rottweiler

1. Are German Rottweilers larger?

No, German bred Rottweilers aren't any larger than Rottweilers bred in other countries. Though there are exceptions, where some dogs grow to be extra large, it is considered an undesirable trait in all Rottweiler Breed Standards. As the Rottweiler is a working breed, if the dog is too large it will be incapable of performing the duties required of it.

2. Are Rottweilers vicious?

There is seldom a truly vicious Rottweiler (or any dog for that matter), though there are some that are overly aggressive and territorial. In most cases this over-aggressive attitude can be attributed to poor breeding, improper or poor socialization, and/or mishandling/abuse. The typical and desired temperament is a calm, courageous, and confident manner. They are inherently aloof with strangers and have a reserved attitude in new situations. Rottweilers are naturally protective of family and property and they are independent thinkers from their days as a herding and droving dog, where they were often required to work on their own.

Rottweilers are a very dominant breed and have a high sense of superiority; thus pain or fear will not deter them once the instinct to retaliate is aroused. This is why, with a weak temperament and incorrect handling, they can become literally a "lethal weapon" or can be trained to become one. For this reason it is important to breed for a sound temperament as well as conformation. Any Rottweiler with an unsound temperament (i.e. shrinking away or becoming aggressive when someone goes to handle it) should be spayed or neutered to prevent passing this unacceptable temperament on to the offspring.

3. How big do Rottweilers get?

The Rottweiler is, ideally, a medium-large to large dog. The size for a male is 24-27 inches tall at the shoulders and weight between 95-110 pounds. Females should be 22-25 inches tall and 75-100 pounds.

The ideal size being the mid-range for both sexes.

4. Is it true that only the owner should handle a Rottweiler?

First off it should be stressed that the Rottweiler is not a breed for everyone. If you want a dog that "likes" everyone and will mindlessly obey all that is asked of it, then this is not the breed for you. It is somewhat of a difficult question to answer. The Rottweiler is naturally aloof with strangers, however if socialized and trained properly most Rottweilers will allow themselves to be examined or handled. To quote a reading, "The behavior of the Rottweiler in the show ring should be controlled, willing and adaptable, trained to submit to examination of the mouth, testicles etc. However, the Rottweiler is not expected to submit to excessive handling by strangers. An aloof or reserved dog should not be penalized as this reflects the accepted character of the breed, nor should an aggressive or belligerent attitude towards other dogs be faulted (though it should not be encouraged either). A judge shall excuse from the ring a shy Rottweiler, judged fundamentally shy if the dog refuses to stand for examination and shrinks from the judge. A dog shall also be excused if, in the opinion of the judge, it is menacing, threatening or showing signs that it may not be safely approached or examined by the judge in the normal manner. A dog shall be disqualified if, in the opinion of the judge, it attacks any person (including its handler) in the ring. This standard for temperament can be easily related to daily interactions with the owner or someone chosen by the owner to handle the dog (i.e. a vet) As mentioned in question #2, if an animal shrinks away or becomes aggressive when examined, the dog is not showing acceptable Rottweiler character and should be spayed or neutered (no matter how good the conformation) to prevent passing this unacceptable temperament to the offspring.

5. How much do Rottweilers eat?

The amount of food a Rottweiler eats will depend on age, activity level, if nursing or pregnant etc. It also will depend on the quality of food being fed. A better quality food (whether feeding a raw diet or kibble) may cost more initially but you won't have to feed as much as a lesser quality food to keep the dog at an ideal weight. Food amount can vary from 7-8 cups of dry kibble for a large active male in his most rapidly growing stage to as little as 1 cup of kibble for a mature female. The kibble can be substituted by making your own food (raw diet) or with treats. One thing that is important to remember is that you should never let your Rottweiler become overweight. Your veterinarian can help you determine if your dog is overweight or not.

6. What is a Rottweiler's life span?

If well bred, fed correctly, adequately exercised and maintained under proper veterinary care over their lifetime, a Rottweiler will live to be, on average, 9 to 11 years old.

7. What are common health and hereditary problems?

- a) **Hip Dysplasia** - a faulty formation of the femoral head (ball part of the hip) and the acetabulum (socket part of the hip).
- b) **Ruptured Anterior Cruciate Ligament** - in the rear end, in the stifle (knee joint) of the dog. Prime target because a Rottweiler's agility and bulk work against each other. It can occur over a period of time with gradual degenerative changes or by a blunt traumatic accident.
- c) **Eyes**
 - Entropion**-eyelid/eyelashes roll into the eye
 - Ectropion**-eyelid rolls outward - both cause irritation to the cornea and need to be surgically corrected
 - Cataracts**-an opacity of the lens or its capsule. This can be congenital (present at birth-not common) or juvenile (develops as dog matures - more common)
- d) **Parvovirus**-highly contagious virus, vomiting often with bloody diarrhea
- e) **Coronavirus**-highly contagious, similar to Parvovirus, also causes vomiting and diarrhea
- f) **Canine hypothyroidism**-a condition due to insufficient thyroid secretions
- g) **Von Willebrand's Disease**-inherited blood disorder
- h) **Acute Gastric Dilatation (Bloat)**-the stomach twists on its axis, trapping air, gas, and food and cutting off blood supply to the stomach and nearby organs. This, typically, causes the stomach and abdomen to distend.
- i) **Osteochondritis Dissecans**-a condition affecting a joint (most commonly the elbow) in which a fragment of cartilage and its underlying bone becomes detached from the articular surface. (having to do with the joint surface)
- j) **Subaortic Stenosis**- a heart defect that restricts blood flow.
- k) **Cryptorchidism**-failure of the testicles to descend.

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8. How much do Rottweilers cost?

The cost of a dog will vary. It can depend on whether the dog is considered pet stock or show quality. It may also depend on the type of guarantee that the breeder offers (though this isn't always the case as some kennels have such a large demand for their animals that some people take the chance and pay a high price without a guarantee. This brings up another consideration, the popularity of the kennel or the bloodlines they are using. You may see prices ranging from \$200-\$2000. These prices will also end up being higher if you decide to buy from the United States or another country as there will be money exchange, shipping, quarantine etc. Also keep in mind that the more you pay does not always guarantee a good quality, healthy dog. The buyer must realize that due to the popularity of the breed, there are unfortunately a fair number of unscrupulous breeders who breed dogs with no consideration of health or temperament and offer no guarantees, but ask a large sum for poorly bred dogs.

9. Do Rottweilers get along with children and other animals?

Rottweilers can get along very well with children and animals as long as they are properly socialized, or better yet, raised, with them. Proper socialization and training is the BIG KEY. One thing that can never be stressed enough is that children and dogs (no matter what the breed) should never be left unsupervised.

10. Should a Rottweiler be trained to attack?

First, let it be mentioned that there is a difference between attack training and protection training, such as Schutzhund. Attack training, better known as physical abuse and torture is where the dog will go after anyone, to harm them. Often, the handler must take caution, as these dogs are highly unpredictable. In such sports as Schutzhund, the dog learns obedience, tracking as well as protection. In protection the dog is firmly under the control of the handler. The dog goes on the "alert" when there is an aggressor threatening his master. If the aggressor continues to threaten, the dog may be sent to the aggressor. It does not always mean the aggressor is bitten. The dog can be sent and initially told to "bark and hold", where the dog sits in the aggressor's personal space barking, ready to take further action if necessary. However, the Rottweiler does not need to be taught to protect what they believe is theirs, as they have a naturally protective nature and this is all that the average person would require. If you do decide to work with your dog in protection training you must realize that you now have a dog whose protective instincts have been further heightened. In most cases it would take a command from you before the dog would do anything, but remember that this is a breed whose ancestors thought for themselves, so the dog may perceive a threat where you don't or may sense a threat sooner and take action themselves. You must be aware of your surroundings and your dog at all times.

11. When should I start training my Rottweiler?

Your Rottweiler's training should begin as soon as it arrives in your home. Small things like teaching it (a pup) to respond to its name, come when it's called, getting used to being handled, crate training, etc. should all be started as soon as possible. Once your puppy is up to date with all of its shots; you can start taking it out to be socialized. Your Rottweiler should be socialized with other animals and people of varying age groups and ethnic origins. This will hopefully ensure that your dog can and will enjoy the attention of everyone from small children to the elderly, with the proper training and supervision. This training could also include enrolling in puppy pre-school.

When your pup is about 6 months old it can be started in general obedience classes. As your dog becomes comfortable in each level of training you can continue onto higher levels of obedience if that is what you want to do. There are a few things to remember when the dog is young; a pup's attention span is short (like a child's) so keep the training sessions short but consistent. Secondly and most importantly, train in a positive manner. Make the time fun and reward the dog with food or praise. Hitting and physical or rough handling is not the way to train a Rottweiler (or any dog for that matter). A final note. At the very least your Rottweiler should have basic obedience so that you will have a well-behaved and well-adjusted dog that is a pleasure to have around.

12. Are Rottweilers born with tails?

Yes, Rottweilers are born with tails. Very rarely, a pup is born with no tail or a short one. Pups born with short tails usually still need to be docked as the tail is too long by breed standards. However, in some countries, especially several countries in Europe, including Germany, it is illegal to dock tails. If a Rottweiler's tail is docked they are disqualified from showing/breeding. We may now start seeing more Rottweilers in Canada with tails, as there are a fair number imported from Europe and some breeders in North America are choosing to leave tails on the puppies.

13. Should I pay more for a Rottweiler that has long hair, is a different colour or otherwise advertised as "rare"?

VERY DEFINITELY NOT! These "rare" animals are rare only because an unscrupulous breeder is trying to take advantage of a person's lack of knowledge on what is correct or incorrect in Rottweilers, with respect to the breed standard. For these rare dogs to come about, a recessive gene has managed to surface and has brought out a trait that is considered undesirable. This doesn't mean that the animal won't make a wonderful pet or that you can't do anything with it (i.e. obedience, therapy dog, etc.) but you will not be able to show and you should most definitely not pay extra for these dogs. If anything the price should be much less and any Rottweiler with these traits should be not bred. They should be spayed or neutered as soon as possible.

14. Do Rottweilers ever have their ears cropped?

Rottweilers never have their ears cropped unless it's for some medical reason. A Rottweiler always wears its ears naturally. If a Rottweiler's ears are situated and carried properly on its head, the ears will make a Rottweiler's skull appear broader, especially when he is alert.

15. Do Rottweilers come in any other colours than black with tan, rust or mahogany markings?

Generally speaking, no, Rottweilers do not come in any other colour. If you see or hear of a purebred Rottweiler that is a different colour then, again, a recessive gene has surfaced and it is considered unacceptable. As recently as 1901, Rottweilers were accepted in other colours though "black with russet or yellowish markings" was still preferred. As breed standards were developed, the now familiar black with rust or mahogany markings was established as the desired colour. Only an unscrupulous breeder would breed dogs, or continue to breed dogs that produced anything other than the desired black and tan, rust or mahogany markings. As mentioned in #13, any dog that deviates from this standard should be spayed or neutered.

16. How much exercise do Rottweilers require?

Exercise requirements will vary with each individual dog. Age, sex and temperament will decide the amount of exercise needed. As a larger, intelligent dog that was bred to work, regular and organized exercise is important for the dog's mental as well as physical health.

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17. What size yard does a Rottweiler need?

Obviously, a large, fenced yard would be the most ideal, but Rottweilers have been known to get on fairly well in apartments and other small areas as long as they get frequent and regular exercise. Even with a large yard, your Rottweiler will most definitely appreciate being taken out and let off leash (as long as you have good verbal control over your dog) for a "good run" now and again. A Rottweiler should never be chained outside and ignored. They are social animals that need and enjoy spending time with their "people".

18. How difficult are Rottweilers to train?

Rottweilers are very intelligent dogs and with the correct type of training (no rough/physical handling), do very well. As with most animals and people, much depends on the individual dog. One may learn something faster than another may and no two dogs can be trained in exactly the same manner. Rottweilers are known to be highly trainable and willing to please. If you wish to go to higher levels of training, look for pups whose bloodlines have several generations of dogs with working titles. This doesn't always guarantee that you will get a dog that is easier to train, but it increases your chances somewhat.

19. What is better for the first time owner, a male or a female? Which is easier to train?

This is actually a difficult question to answer. If you have done any reading on Rottweilers, you will have likely read that a female is the best to start with for a first time owner, and some breeders agree. The thought behind it is that a female is generally smaller and supposedly less energetic and less dominant than a male. Females are also (supposedly) easier to train as they are, less stubborn and strong-willed than a male. This is where a responsible, caring breeder comes in. Through discussions and/or meetings with you, a breeder will try to match a pup to your lifestyle and with what you would like to accomplish with it.

20. How much grooming do Rottweilers require?

Because of the Rottweiler's hard, short coat, grooming is fairly simple. Daily or twice weekly sessions are a good idea to remove dirt and dead hair from the coat to keep it looking healthy. All that is generally needed is a curry comb or metal dog comb and a brush. They do require more frequent grooming while they are going through their shedding periods, twice a year. An occasional bath using a gentle dog (not human) shampoo could be thrown in for good measure. As part of a grooming session, nails, ears, eyes and teeth should all be checked. If done regularly, gently and right from the start (as a puppy), you will have no problems when going to the vet or when your dog is bigger and stronger.

21. What do I look for in a breeder?

Whether you are looking for a companion or a show dog, you want to try to find the very best litter you can. Attend dog shows and other such functions to meet breeders and see some of their dogs. You want a breeder that you feel comfortable talking to, as they will likely be your primary source information. The more experience the breeder has, the more information they can pass on to you.

You want a breeder who is honest about their bloodlines and any potential faults. You also want to look for a breeder who has their breeding stock checked at the very minimum for good hips (OVC, OFA or equivalent). Additional tests are also encouraged to test the eyes (CERF), elbows checked against dysplasia, and heart, especially for Subaortic Stenosis etc... Ask the breeder if they are a member of a Code of Ethics (COE) Club? (and ask for a copy of the COE they follow). Also ask what they have accomplished with their dogs. Conformation and working titles provide information on the character of the dogs. It also tells you about the degree of commitment the breeder has to the Rottweiler breed. A championship title or show points indicates that someone else other than the breeder believes that the dog conforms to the Rottweiler standard in beauty, with no disqualifying faults. A working title documents traits of dependability, self-confidence, sound temperament, a desire to please and above all trainability.

Information provided courtesy of:
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