

What Size Dog is Best for Me?

Posted by Jennifer on February 4th, 2013



Deciding what size of dog is best for you can be a complex decision. But a little investigation and thought can go a long way in helping you make the right choice! We're here today to help you with some questions to ask yourself, and to dispel the most common myth about what size of dog will be happy and a good fit for your home. ~ ~ When I was an adoptions counselor at an animal shelter, potential adopters would often tell me, "I'm looking for a small dog." Much more rarely would someone say, "I'm looking for a big dog." Talking to shelter and rescue staff and rescue volunteers at many other adoption agencies, I learned there too, bigger dogs were much harder to adopt out. Size, of course, is only one factor that an enlightened adopter considers when looking at pets to adopt. Here are some questions to ask yourself about your future dog's size.

1. How much weight can you lift?

If your dog was ever injured and needed to be carried to the car or taxi to get to a vet office, could you pick them up, or get them onto a sheet and enlist a neighbor to help you carry them?

2. How strong are you?

Even very well-trained dogs can sometimes get excited and yank on their leash, like if a cat or squirrel darts across their path! You should be strong enough to be able to hold on to the leash, for the safety of your dog – and the squirrel!

3. Do you rent or have association rules?

Some landlords or homeowner's associations have weight restrictions. Bigger dogs will limit your rental possibilities, just like multiple pets and certain breeds. What is your living situation now, and what will it likely be for the rest of your new dog's life?

4. How much dog can you afford?

Bigger dogs do eat more food! So do more active, younger, and still growing puppies. Supplies for a bigger dog (collars, leashes, harnesses, beds, coats) are more expensive too.

5. How much space do you have?

This is our Myth buster! Bigger dogs don't need much more "space" than a smaller dog – well, except when sharing your bed or couch! Energy level is a much more accurate indicator as to how much "space" a dog needs in a yard and inside their home for running and playing. My friend has a Great Dane who happily lives in a "small" town home. He has his own couch and goes for three short daily walks, and with his mellow energy level, is very content. Her neighbor has a Jack Russell mix who is bouncing off the walls and requires hours at the dog park daily to be happy in the same size home! Energy is not only determined by breed of course — age is an important factor.