

All About Whippets

So you're thinking about a dog - perhaps someone has told you about whippets, or you've seen one and wonder what it would be like to own one of these beautiful, elegant, energetic dogs.



You've come to the right place!

Here you can learn more about the breed - both the standard, and the 'unspoken' characteristics that you may not be aware of. You'll also find out the advantages of living with whippets - and adopting through Whippet Rescue.

- **Is a Whippet the Dog for You?**
This page has a generic description of whippets along with other "real life" characteristics of the breed that can help you determine if the whippet is the right type of dog for your home and life-style.
- **Living With Whippets**
The advantages - and reality - of sharing your home and life with a whippet.
- **Whippet Rescue**
Often, the best way to find a whippet is through Whippet Rescue. Here you'll find answers to typical questions about rescued whippets. You'll also find an application, and learn how Whippet Rescue works.



Is a Whippet the Dog for You?

You can check the AKC site for the specific information about the breed standard and general characteristics of the breed. There you will find descriptions such as:

"A medium size sight hound giving the appearance of elegance and fitness, denoting great speed, power and balance without coarseness. A true sporting hound that covers a maximum of distance with a minimum of lost motion."

and

"Whippets are the fastest domestic animals of their size. They can reach speeds of 35 miles per hour. But they are also quiet and well-behaved in the house. They are smart, loving, hardly little dogs who can live in the city. "



What they don't tell you...

While all of these general characteristics are true, there are also some other typical whippet characteristics that are worth noting...and that you might not find in a simple breed description.

If all, or most of the following points strike you as strange, keep in mind that these are the typical things that cause a normal whippet to be diagnosed with "separation anxiety," medicated, then finally turned over to whippet rescue.



- **Whippets need company**

Very few are able to spend an entire working day alone in crate, home, or apartment. The best situation for a whippet is in a home where someone is at home all or most of the day. Whippets can also do well with another dog - preferably another whippet. If you work outside the home all day and plan on leaving your dog alone- a whippet is not a good dog for you.

- **Whippets and their "special person"**

Whippets usually form a close bond with one person in the home. This doesn't mean that they don't love everyone - they do - they just form a special attachment to one person. They will follow this special person everywhere - the bathroom, the shower, the kitchen, etc. - and look lovingly at them all the while. Some find this behavior charming, others find it clingy and "needy." If you don't want a shadow and/or a bony 20 to 30 pound lap dog, a whippet is not a good choice for you.

- **Whippets and window coverings**

Whippets are sight hounds. If you leave them alone in the house, they will try to find you - usually by trying to look out of a window. They will claw away drapes, blinds (both horizontal and vertical) and do an amazing amount of damage just to look out of a window. One of our whippets even escaped from its cage at the Vet's office and trashed their windows during the night. I have only left a whippet alone in the house once - and the damage he did in 40 minutes was nothing short of astonishing. If you do not have a safe yard or special place (such as a crate) to leave your dog when you must be away from the home, a whippet is definitely not the dog for you.

- **Whippets and a "safe" yard**

Whippets are very athletic dogs - even though they can closely resemble couch potatoes for most of the day. A whippet can easily jump 5 to 6 feet...from a standing position. Although they are not generally "diggers," a well-motivated whippet can slip under a fence, hop over a 5-foot fence, and even climb a lattice fence. All it takes is a cat or a plastic bag blowing in the wind - and your whippet will be highly motivated to chase it. If you don't have a secure yard - do not even think about leaving your whippet alone outside.

- **Whippets and exercise**

Whippets need exercise *every* day. It doesn't have to be a one hour marathon session - a nice 20-minute walk will do. If you have a large yard, they will usually amuse themselves. If you have a small yard, they may well destroy the yard as they charge at high speed through your carefully landscaped patio...unless you walk them and/or can take them to a place to free run.

Most whippets are mannerly on the leash. They clearly take a delight in walking and exploring. You don't have to run - a normal walk is sufficient. Do not try lashing them to a bicycle or vehicle - whippets are sprinters, not marathon runners - you can easily over-tax or injure your dog before realizing it.

If you are fortunate enough to have access to a large open or fenced area letting your whippet "free run" is a real treat. Whippets love to run, spin, chase one another...and anything else they happen to stir up. Before you let your whippet off of its lead, be sure that it will come to you - by calling and with hand signals since they can quickly run out of ear-shot. Also make sure that there are absolutely no roads anywhere near. Tragically, many whippets are killed by cars as they single mindedly chase after a squirrel - or plastic bag.

Living With Whippets

If you have a safe yard, someone home for all or most of the day and you would like to share your life with a very affectionate and loving dog...a whippet is an excellent choice.

Here are the benefits of owning a whippet...

- **You will never be alone**
Whippets love their family - and special person. They will follow you, stay with you and be a very charming, gentle companion. If you don't feel well, you will have a warm and comforting snuggler nearby...usually under the covers.
- **Whippets are an "easy-care" pet**
As dogs go, whippets are quite clean. They don't usually like to get dirty - or wet. They are free from the usual "doggy" odor and they don't shed very much. Grooming is as simple as a quick rub down with a rubber mit or damp cloth. If they don't wear down their nails naturally, you will have to plan on clipping them regularly.
- **Whippets are quiet**
Whippets are not "barkers." This isn't to say that some whippets aren't protective of their homes - but they just won't bark and carry on when someone comes to the door. In general, though, whippets are not considered to be good "watch dogs."
- **Whippets are fun to walk**
If you like to walk, a whippet is an ideal companion. They love going for "walkies" and will gently remind you when it's time to go. If you like attention, you will really enjoy walking your whippet. People have literally stopped in the middle of the street to ask me what type of dog I have or to simply say that my dogs are beautiful. Whippets are great "ice breakers." Children and adults are drawn to them - and fortunately, most whippets love to be fussed over.



Whippet Rescue

There are many excellent whippet breeders in the local area. However, if you would like to make a big difference in the life of a dog, please consider adopting from Whippet Rescue. Here are some answers to typical questions about rescued whippets...



- **How did this beautiful dog end up in Whippet Rescue?**

Many dogs in Whippet Rescue end up there because the people who bought them knew nothing about whippets or sight hounds. People purchased the dog because it was beautiful to look at. They didn't realize that whippets can't be left alone, or that they can be highly destructive if kept indoors all day. They just fell in love with the dog's appearance.

- **This dog has been through several homes - why?**

Don't be alarmed if the potential adoptee has been through several homes. As you now know, whippets need a special type of home. One of our whippets went through five homes before we adopted him - yet he is the most well-behaved, loving dog we have ever had. To this day, we can't figure out how anyone could have given him up.

- **This whippet is six (or older). Will he adapt?**

Not only will the whippet likely adapt, he or she will also be grateful, and more likely than not, already house-broken. Whippets tend to mature a bit later than other breeds, so a 6-year old whippet still has plenty of energy for walking, racing, and playing with the kids. Keep in mind that the average lifespan of a whippet is between 12 and 14 years with 16 not being unusual.

- **What if things don't work out?**

If the whippet you adopt does not fit into your family or is causing problems, contact Whippet Rescue and we will take it back. However, we will want to know why things didn't work out. Don't feel that you are "on trial" it's just that we need to know about the dog's behavior and reactions to certain situation so that we can find a successful "forever home." For example, a whippet may not fit in a boisterous home with young children, but may do very well with an older couple.

How Whippet Rescue Works

If you are interested in adopting from Whippet Rescue, please download, fill out, and send in the following form.

- Rescue Form (Acrobat PDF format)

A Whippet Rescue representative will then contact you for a phone interview. Don't feel as though they are "testing" you. Whippet Rescue simply wants to make sure that you are aware of the characteristics of the breed and have the right type of home for a whippet. There's nothing sadder than an adopted whippet ending up back in rescue because the home was unsuitable.

Upon approval, you will be "on the notification list." When a whippet comes into whippet rescue, you will receive information about it. If you are interested, contact the Kennel to set up an appointment. Whippets are adopted out on a "first come, first serve" basis.

