

Dogs

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There are cat people and dog people, and I'm a dog person. Dogs have so many qualities that I can relate to. They're pack animals, which means, like most humans, they thrive as part of a group. They're very interested in their human companions. (Some of us think of ourselves as owners.) They want to please us. They're loyal and playful and just fun to be around because, unlike people, they aren't preoccupied with things that don't have to do with the present moment. There is so much variety in dogs too. There's a breed to please just about everybody from the toy dog group that includes such cuties as the Chihuahua and Maltese all the way to the Irish Wolf Hound and Great Danes. Whether your dog is tiny or huge, it'll need lots of love and attention. Training and socialization are important parts of having a healthy, happy dog. Of course grooming, exercise, and regular visits to the vet are important too. Some dog owners actually have to brush their dogs' teeth because the dogs, for whatever reason, don't enjoy chewing on bones. What chewing on bones does is clean the plaque off from a dog's teeth. So, if your little dog doesn't do this, brushing teeth is essential to avoid plaque build up because plaque build up not only leads to decayed teeth, it also fosters gum disease, and if untreated can lead to other serious health problems with vital organs because bacteria and infections will spread from the unhealthy mouth to other parts of the body. Did you know that some dogs, such as Bearded Collies, will laze around inside all day, appearing to be low energy dogs, but the minute you get them outside, they're dynamos that keep going like the Energizer Bunny. This works well for someone who, for example, has a home office and wants their dogs quiet inside, but who likes to go outside and play with their dogs for breaks in their sedentary routine. Pit Bulls were bred to be fighting dogs. Why anyone would want to own one is beyond me. But they are very popular, and some people say that cases we've read about in the news where pit bulls have gotten loose and mauled children in the neighborhood, or where they've just unexpectedly attacked and killed one of their owners, are due to bad training and mistreatment, not to the dog's inherent qualities. But why take the risk? Especially when you live with or near children? In any case, whatever dog a person chooses as a companion, the dog is going to need training and daily care, the main components of responsible dog ownership.