

Dachshund (Smooth-Haired)



Dachshunds have been used for a variety of jobs over many years and the different demands made on the breed have resulted in six varieties, dependent on size and coat type. The larger version can weigh as much as 12 kilograms (26 pounds) while the miniatures should weigh ideally 4.5 kilograms (10 pounds) and certainly no more than 5 kilograms (11 pounds). Each size splits into Smooth-haired, Longhaired and Wirehaired. There are differences in minor points but basically the six are one and the same breed. Similarly some consider that their temperaments vary, but this is probably no more than can be found in most other breeds between individuals.

Colours vary tremendously; the standard states that all colours are allowed with the exception that white is only permitted in a small patch on the chest, but this is not desirable. In dapples, white is allowed but it must be even all over. The Smooth varieties have dense, short coats, while the Longs show a soft texture with straight or slightly wavy hairs. The Wires should have short, straight, harsh hair with a dense undercoat, with bearded chin and bushy eyebrows. All in all, a marvellous selection of attractive and sporting dogs.

The Dachshund is a fairly long and low dog, but still compact and with enough length of leg to move freely as befits his purpose in life entering badger sets or rabbit warrens. Such a task requires tremendous courage and extremely powerful jaws, a point that is obvious when one compares the muzzle length with that of many larger breeds. The feet are permitted to incline slightly outwards to enable the hound to dig freely, but this must not be exaggerated.

The forearm is permitted to incline slightly outward to enable the dog to dig freely, but this must not be exaggerated to such an extent that the legs become bowed inward. The length of the back and the character of the discs between the vertebrae of the spine have a tendency to allow a weakening in the area, and it is therefore important that the loin should be short and strong, and that individuals should not be allowed to become obese. The breed's ability to eat anything placed in front of it should never be pandered to.

Temperamentally all six varieties can give a good account of themselves as guards of property and their relatively low stature should never give anyone the idea that they will be easy meat for the criminally inclined. With their families and friends they make wonderful companions, but firmness is needed in their early training as they can be notably independent.

Germany is the breed's home country where sizes are separated not by weight but by chest circumference, the divisions being based on what size of hole they could enter when going to ground.

What about Health Issues?

You may be aware that some breeds of dog (and crossbreeds too) can be susceptible to inherited disease. Of course you want to be sure that the puppy you choose is as healthy as possible, and you would like to know that it has not inherited any undesirable disease-causing genes from its parents. There is some help in that DNA tests for diseases in purebred dogs are available for some conditions in some breeds, but there are not very many such tests just yet! There are also, however, a number of clinical veterinary screening schemes that dog breeders can use to increase the probability of producing healthy puppies.

Details of the various screening schemes, both veterinary and DNA, that are available to breeders in the UK can be found on the Kennel Club's website at:

www.thekennelclub.org.uk/doghealth

Puppy buyers should be aware that, at present, the application of various health screening results to breeding programmes is not always straightforward, and breeders may make choices for various reasons. A responsible breeder though, will always be willing to discuss relevant health issues with you. Breed clubs are often useful sources of breed-specific information.

And what health screening is relevant for the Dachshund (Smooth-Haired)?

There are not currently any veterinary screening schemes or DNA tests for disease relevant to this breed under the Accredited Breeder Scheme, however you should still ask breeders and refer to breed clubs about health issues in the breed.