

Did You Pick The Right Animal For Your Family When You Look At Energy Levels?

Dogs, just like people, have unique personalities and energy levels (mentally & physically) and it can affect the way your dog responds to you. Dogs that have a lot more energy than their humans often don't get enough exercise. This is why it's very important to know your energy level, understand how to determine the dog/pet's energy level and then to choose the right fit for your family.

Mental energy refers to mood or state of mind. Are they anxious or calm? It can also refer to their ability or willingness to engage in cognitive activities.

Physical energy can refer more to their athletic ability, stamina, endurance etc.

Dogtime.com shares how high-energy dogs are those who are always ready and waiting for action. Originally bred to perform a canine job of some sort, such as retrieving game for hunters or herding livestock, they have the stamina to put in a full workday. Low-energy dogs on the other hand are the canine equivalent of a human couch potato, content to doze the day away.

Why are Energy Levels Important?

Many animals surrendered to shelters by their owners are surrendered because of "behavioral issues". This can be barking, jumping, chewing everything, digging holes, aggression and more. Studies show that when you look into that behavior, it is actually what experts would consider normal behavior for animals whose needs are not met by the owners.

Most failed adoptions are based only on "I like that dog" instead of the important factor of whether this animal will fit with your family's lifestyle and energy levels and whether you are a good placement for that particular animal. Other factors like lifestyle, size, resources etc. are also important, but if you can't meet the needs of a high-energy pet, then the pet will suffer and you will be left frustrated. This in turn can negatively affect their behavior too.

This doesn't mean that you can't adopt a high energy dog, but for your own and their benefit, it is better to choose the right fit. If you are however willing to put in the work, then go for it! If you have picked the "wrong" fit, there is still hope and you can also get help from professional and ethical behaviorists/trainers.

Levels of Energy:

Low-Energy Dogs (Level 1 Energy Level)– These dogs do not run around a lot and they can make good companions for inactive people. These couch potatoes may require less exercise than athletic dogs and they're usually content just snuggling next to you during the day. These types of dogs usually don't have impressive athletic skills and are not as keen on learning advanced tricks or skills. Untrained low-energy dogs may wag their tails and come up to you, but they're unlikely to jump up much against you. This type of energy level can include dogs that go to people and other dogs, but don't try to play vigorously or for long periods at a time.

Low Energy Dogs Are Good For: First Time Dog Owners, Homes With Children Who Have Been Taught To Respect A Dog's Space, Seniors & Inactive Adults.

Suitable To Live In: Apartments, condos, single family homes in the suburbs, city or rural areas.

How to spot a low-energy dog: Untrained low-energy dogs may wag their tails and come up to you, but they're usually not the type to incessantly jump. Look for the dog who interacts with people and other dogs but does not engage in sustained, vigorous play. When considering a dog who seems to be low energy, first make sure that you rule out sickness or a recent change in the dog's environment as the cause of his calmness. That way when you get home you won't be in for any surprises, like finding out that the dog is actually a little Energizer bunny! Dogs that appear calm at an adoption event might be well behaved medium energy dogs NOT low energy dogs.

Medium-Energy Dogs (Level 2) – These types of energy-level dogs are great companions for a casual run, 30-45 minute walk or play in a dog park. They usually are good at a lot of things and do well with hands-on training or teaching. These dogs are what you would refer to as “mellow” in general, however, they can have bursts of energy. Most people will do very well with a medium-energy dog. When you meet such a dog there might be some jumping up against you and casual play or socializing, but they will calm down relatively naturally after about 10 minutes or so without you having to encourage them too much to calm down. Medium energy dogs will highly benefit from group training classes.

Medium Energy Dogs Are Good For: First time dog owners who are committed to attending a group training class, homes With children who have been taught to respect a dog'sSpace, active adults.

Suitable To Live In: Apartments, condos, single family homes in the suburbs, city or rural areas.

How to spot a medium-energy dog: When you first meet an untrained level two dog, you are likely to encounter some jumping. Don't be turned off by this, as a dog who jumps or seems a bit pushy is simply a dog who wants to interact with you. Medium-energy dogs typically enjoy socializing and playing casual or even sustained games of chase with other dogs. They may also have occasional periods of barking or racing around the house, but they'll calm down fairly naturally after five to 10 minutes without a ton of encouragement from you.

High-Energy Dogs: Level Three

High-Energy Dogs – These ones are what we would describe as busy-bodies. Their tails wag at a hundred mph. They are always ready to go day or night, especially without regular exercise.

They tend to be the most teachable, fast learners and usually have great athletic skills. These dogs need a lot of mental stimulation and physical exercise. If you are not keen on exercise, then this type of dog is not for you. When you meet such a dog, they are usually super excited (there are other reasons for this too) and will jump up and down and will insist you to play with them.

Without regular exercise (45 minute plus power walks/runs several times a day), high-energy dogs are always raring to go; they can play all day and night. Generally speaking, the more energy a dog has, the more teachable he is. You'd be shocked by what some level three dogs can learn: riding bikes, walking on their front paws, and leaping off docks without fear, to name a few. However, you've got to dedicate a lot of time to making sure these dogs get plenty of mental and physical exercise—if you don't, all that pent-up energy can lead to destructive behaviors, and training can become very challenging. High-energy dogs are typically best for a person who has the time and motivation to commit to some serious training in a group or private class.

High Energy Dogs Are Good For: Experienced dog owners who are committed to attending a group/private training class, homes with children over 12 who have been taught to respect a dog's space, active adults.

Suitable To Live In: Apartments & condos (only if the adopter can provide enough mental stimulation and exercise), single family homes in the suburbs, city or rural areas.

How to spot a high-energy dog: Look for the dog who runs up to you and jumps like crazy or insists that you play tug-of-war or fetch by constantly bringing you a toy. These dogs usually have a tail that wags at a hundred miles an hour. They may stare at you enthusiastically as though they're saying, "Let's play!" They seem to never tire and will engage with you as long as you're willing. Put a lot of thought into whether or not a level three dog is right for you, as they are generally the highest maintenance of all dogs.

Examples Of Dog Breeds VS. Level of Energy

Low-energy dog breeds

Some of the most popular lower energy breeds include the Basset Hound, Bulldog, Dachshund, French Bulldog, Pekingese, Pug, Shih Tzu, and Yorkshire Terrier.

Medium-energy dog breeds

Some of the most popular medium-energy dog breeds are the Bloodhound, Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Chihuahua, Dachshund, Maltese, Pitbulls, Labrador Retrievers, Scottish Terrier and Toy Poodle.

High-energy dog breeds

Notable choices for high-energy dog breeds include the Airedale Terrier, Australian Shepherd, Border Collie, Dalmatian, Boxers, Irish Setter, Rhodesian Ridgeback, Jack Russell, Husky, Pointers, and Weimaraner.

Note that this is not an extensive list.

How to tell what Energy Level a Dog has?

Cesar Millan shares 5 ways to help determine a dog's energy levels. Some factors that can affect energy levels include age, diet, health, breed, training, their human's energy levels, the energy of other animals and more. You have to look at a combination of factors and not just at one aspect though in context.

The breed – Their breed or mix can give you an idea of whether they might lean toward higher or lower energy. What they were bred for originally plays a role.

Try to see the dog in different circumstances – Every dog is different depending on where they are, who they're with, and whether they've just come back from a long walk or have been locked in a house all day.

Go for a walk – The walk is one way to judge a potential dog's energy. Are they pulling and jumping or strolling along? Do they tire quickly or seem like they could go forever?

Try playtime – Find out what kind of games the dog likes to play. If not overly interested in games/toys, they are likely on the lower energy side.

Watch interactions with other dogs – Is your potential dog the one that tries to engage in play with every other dog, racing from group to group, or do they prefer to watch from the sidelines, engaging only a few dogs for a polite greeting and sniff, and not much more?

Most important of all, trust the advice from our adoption coordinator and the foster. They know the dogs and will guide you to finding the dog with the right energy level for your family.