

Managing a Higher Energy Dog
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When most people think of a high maintenance dog, they often think only of grooming needs. However, dogs with a lot of energy are also high maintenance – they require more time commitments. What in general does the dog owner need to know regarding energy levels and dogs?

Size, breed classification in a registry and build are not indicative of energy level.

Some of the highest energy and hardest to maintain dogs are small. Some of the easier to manage energy level dogs are quite large. A dog grouped as non-sporting or companion does not mean it is low energy. A fast looking dog may not have the energy to run all day and wear out quicker. A dog that is blocky looking may have a lot of stamina to work all day. Look at breed history. Breeds bred to remain in motion all day or for hours each day are going to require a lot of effort.

Proper exercise is not shoving your dog or dogs in the back yard all day. Chances are your dog will develop a host of undesired behaviors (hyperactivity, digging, excessive barking, escaping, nervousness, destructive behaviors, etc.) in attempts to meet his needs. Every year humans give up thousands of moderate to high-energy dogs. Dogs of all energy levels need some form of human led exercise **every day**. Human led exercise means **you** are the one initiating and leading the program: walking, playing, formal training, sports, etc. An adequate walk or play session is one where the dog comes in and lies down. A dog looking for more needs his exercise levels adjusted. Energy needs will vary throughout the life of a dog: what was good for a younger pup will be different from the same dog at age five and again at age twelve.

Here is a quick guide I have developed over the years of working with higher to high-energy dogs in my own life and with those of clients to help the dog owner gauge what may need to be done **daily** to keep their dog happy and sane in regards to exercise. Note, each dog is an individual and even within the same breed, needs will vary dog to dog.

Lower Energy Dogs – less than an hour of human led exercise a day

Moderate Energy Dogs – one to two hours of human led exercise a day

Higher Energy Dogs – up to three hours (or more) of human led exercise a day

High Energy Dogs – **minimum** of three hours of human led exercise a day

Before getting your dog or when looking at undesired behaviors your dog is developing, first look at the energy needs of the dog. Can you meet them every day for up to fifteen or more years? Are you currently meeting the needs? The more exercise a dog requires, the higher maintenance he is!