



Breed Profile: Great Dane

If you own a Great Dane, you already know that they are strong and elegant. Modern Great Danes probably originated in the Middle Ages, and by the 1300s were regarded as unrivaled hunting dogs and imposing estate guardians. It isn't just for their stature, then, that they have been dubbed the "king of dogs." Great Danes came to the United States in the late 1800s and almost immediately gained recognition from the AKC; today they continue to rank the organizations top 25 most popular dog breeds. Let's take a closer look at the characteristics that make your dog distinctly a Great Dane.

Attitude and Behavior

Great Danes are loyal and protective companions. They are playful, gentle and generally good with children, but because of their size may be clumsy. As with all large, powerful breeds, owners should use discretion when leaving children and dogs unsupervised. Great Danes also tend to be sociable with other pets and strangers, but some individual dogs have been reported to be aggressive with strange dogs.

Great Danes are intelligent and learn quickly, but they can be stubborn and sensitive. They do best when paired with an owner who can provide good control and leadership. Reward-based training is usually effective.

Exercise and Nutrition

Great Danes generally maintain a reasonable weight, but less active dogs can tend towards obesity. Weight can be monitored with this simple test: you should be able to feel the ribs, but they should not be noticeable by sight. If you can't feel them at all, your Great Dane may have packed on a few extra pounds. Feed a balanced diet, as recommended by your veterinarian, and adjust calories and exercise if needed.

Great Danes make calm and alert housedogs, as long as their exercise needs are met. A long walk or short jog will usually do the trick, coupled with plenty of play time. Their imposing size makes the Great Dane an excellent choice for a watchdog, but they should not be depended on as a protection breed. However, their gentle and loving disposition makes them excellent family companions.

Great Dane Basics

Height: At least 28"
Weight: 110-180 pounds
Life Span: 8-10 years
Jogging Partner: ★★
Children's Dog: ★★
Grooming: ★
Barking: ★
Ease of Training: ★★★

Common Medical Conditions

Wobbler's Syndrome
Hip Dysplasia
Hypothyroidism
Patellar Luxation
Gastric Dilation & Volvulus
Cardiomyopathy

Your Dog's Development

By the end of his second year, your dog will reach his full physical maturity and his skeleton will be fully developed. However, hip dysplasia and some other genetic disorders cannot be ruled out until your dog is at least 2 years of age, so breeding at this age is not recommended.