

So...You Want A Beagle?

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Beagles are wonderful dogs. They appeal to millions of families for several reasons:

- They are medium-sized dogs
- They are short-haired, and although they **do shed**, their coats are relatively low-maintenance.
- They are great as a family dog; good with children and other pets.

Despite the qualities listed above, beagles are not for everyone. Please refer to the list below.

1. **I want a dog that will jog next to me and play and chase a frisbee off lead without running away. *DO NOT GET A BEAGLE***

Beagles are scent hounds and that makes them liable to chase off after a scent at any time! Often called 'stubborn', it may really be more their 'persistence' or 'single-mindedness' that keeps them from being easily-trained...and from coming when called. We recommend that beagles not be let off-lead outside unless in an area that is completely fenced. They are programmed to chase prey and will do so if given the opportunity. In addition, most beagles really don't like water and are not normally swimmers. If you want a retriever, get a Golden!

2. **I want a dog that is easy to train and lives to obey me. *DO NOT GET A BEAGLE***

Beagles can be stubborn and often do things on their terms. This single-mindedness usually keeps them out of the obedience winner's circle. The standard choke chain, jerk-and-release method does not work well with beagles. A positive reinforcement method (i.e. clicker training) works wonders because food or other desired items are used as praise. Of course, with appropriate training and time, beagles can be well-behaved.

3. **I want a dog I can train if I'm willing to put some time and effort into the training. *CONSIDER A BEAGLE***

As stated above, beagles can be difficult to train, but it certainly can be done. Beagles do well at agility competitions. They run, jump, and crawl with the best of them. Have you heard of the Beagle Brigade? They are beagles used by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to sniff out illegal animal and plant products being brought into this country. Since sniffing is something beagles like to do, they're good at it!

4. **I want a pup that is easy to housetrain. *YOU MAY NOT WANT A BEAGLE***

While adult beagles are easier to housetrain than beagle pups, they still can be slow to pick up the concept. Beagle pups are sometimes difficult to housetrain because of their single-mindedness and their extremely powerful noses. It is very difficult to remove the smell of urine from a carpet to the point where the beagle pup cannot smell it. The pup, if it smells urine, will continue to return to that spot.

5. **I want a pup that can be housetrained. *CONSIDER A BEAGLE***

Again, beagles are not necessarily the easiest dogs to housetrain, but they are well suited to crate training, and that may be one of the best forms/ways of house training. We'll be happy to give you some tips and advice on crate training your dog.

6. **I want a dog that will play with my kids and me. *CONSIDER A BEAGLE***

Beagles are energetic by nature. Beagles generally love children. They are a hearty hunting breed that, for hundreds of years, have spent hours following prey. They are ready, willing, and able to play with you and/or your children in a controlled area (like a fenced-in back yard). And they're good at devising games for your entertainment like "keep the ball away from Mom/Dad".

7. **I want a dog that is quiet and unassuming. *DO NOT GET A BEAGLE***

Beagles can be VERY vocal and are rarely wallflowers! They may bay loudly when they catch a scent while on a walk or in the backyard. They often bay when playing with other dogs! They also can bay when you're not home. This trait causes the most problems for people who share walls with others, i.e., townhouse and apartment dwellers. Most beagles are quite gregarious, outgoing, and playful. If you're looking for a dog that lies quietly at your feet while you're entertaining, a beagle, at least a young one, is not for you!

8. **I want a dog that is lively and confident. *CONSIDER A BEAGLE***

Welcome to a beagle's world: These guys and gals are generally busy exploring their world (even if they just smelled it an hour ago). They'll investigate anything and everything. They'll bring you their "finds" with tail wagging and butt swinging.

9. **I want a dog that doesn't get in trouble in the house. *YOU MIGHT NOT WANT A BEAGLE***

Most adult beagles can be left out during the day while you are at work...however you need to keep certain things in mind. First, if there is a trash can to explore, they will find it! Also, beagles are notorious counter-surfers...meaning you can't leave food unattended! Also, beagles are not the kind of dog who eats until they're full. They eat until they explode! You cannot free-feed a beagle!

10. **I want a dog that can be left at home while I'm at work or out of the house. *YOU MIGHT WANT A BEAGLE***

In this day and age most families are gone from their homes, to work or school, almost every day. Beagles (or any dog for that matter) are safer and happier if they are crate trained. This is a new concept to some folks, but we highly recommend you do crate train any dog you may be considering. Beagles are generally quite adaptable and can be crate trained as easily as any breed. We would be happy to discuss the merits of crate training with you.

11. I want a guard dog. *YOU MIGHT NOT WANT A BEAGLE*

As we've stated before, beagles are scent hounds, used for hunting. While they have very musical voices, it's unlikely they would "scare" a potential intruder. You (and your neighbors) might know someone was breaking into your home, but the burglar would be as likely to be licked to death as attacked by your beagle. This quality makes them great pets, but not aggressive guard dogs.

12. I want a dog that enjoys the company of people and other dogs. *CONSIDER A BEAGLE*

Beagles are natural pack animals and love to hang out with people, other dogs, and other beagles. Keep in mind, though, that twice as many beagles mean twice as much trouble and twice as much love!