

Just a little note on adopting a 'kennel dog'

When adopting a dog that has been in a kennel environment for a prolonged period of time, please keep in mind that the animal is not used to a home environment... yet. You need to give them some time. They need at least a week to get used to being around you and the family; a minimum of two weeks to adequately adjust to other pets and at least a month to get used to your home and its rules. The dog will start to show you who he/she really is, it's amazing to watch them open up. There isn't much in life that is as rewarding and you won't be sorry. But just like kids, they need time to settle in. It doesn't happen overnight. Be patient and you will be rewarded with a dog that always remembers that you saved them and gave them a home.

10 Things to Know Before Adopting a Siberian Husky

by Anne Woods, Demand Media

Huskies are energetic and affectionate.

Siberian huskies make excellent companions for people who understand and meet their unique needs. With a lifespan of 12 to 15 years, a husky can be a valuable member of your family for a long time.

Living Conditions

If you live in an apartment, you might want to wait to adopt a Siberian husky unless you can give the dog plenty of exercise. A house with a large, fenced yard is best for this breed, as long as you don't care about your lawn or garden -- these dogs dig.

Exercise

Siberian huskies have a ton of energy, need daily exercise and can make great workout buddies. If you don't have a large yard where the dog can run, figure on walking or jogging with him every day, but go easy during warm weather.

Preparing the Yard

Before you adopt a Siberian husky, thoroughly escape-proof your yard, because this breed likes to roam and explore. You should have a fence that's at least six feet high, solidly built, with wire or concrete barriers below the fence to prevent the dog from digging out.

Preventing Escape

Never let a Siberian husky off-leash at the park or during a walk, because she's likely to run away. This doesn't mean she's disloyal or dislikes you; the breed simply enjoys exploring and roaming around. If you adopt a husky, get her microchipped at the vet, and make sure she always wears a tag with her name, your name and your contact information.

Optimal Climate

Siberian huskies do well in cool climates but can become uncomfortable and even dangerously ill in heat. If you live somewhere hot, provide plenty of shade outside and have effective air-conditioning inside. During the summer, you may need to exercise your dog early in the morning or late in the evening, or find ways to challenge his body and mind indoors.

Shedding

Because of their thick fur, Siberian huskies can shed a lot, especially in warm climates and seasons. Twice a year, they spend a week or more shedding very heavily. Plan on vacuuming frequently, brushing your dog at least daily and sharing your home with clumps of fur.

Leadership

Siberian huskies have been bred to work with a leader. You need to be that leader, or else the dog will take over. Training and obedience classes can help you establish a hierarchy with you and your partner at the top. If you can't provide consistency and clarity in your leadership, a Siberian husky probably isn't the dog for you.

Other Pets

Siberian huskies have such strong predatory instincts that smaller pets -- such as cats, birds, rabbits and ferrets -- often aren't safe sharing a home with them. Huskies can get along well with dogs of other breeds, but it varies by individual.

Temperament

Siberian huskies are friendly, playful, intelligent and easily bored. If you and your partner are away from home for more than eight hours a day, you might do better with a different breed, because huskies can be destructive and overly hyper when they don't get enough activity. They might also howl if they feel neglected. Because they're so friendly and rarely bark, they're not good guard dogs.

Credit: <http://www.dogbreedinfo.com/siberianhuskyfaq.htm>

1. *Can I play Frisbee in the park with my Siberian Husky?*

Definitely NOT!

Wandering Star

Siberian Huskies should never be trusted off-lead. They will run and they won't come back when you call them. Don't be fooled into thinking that you can train them to stay in your yard. The many people who have tried and no longer have their dogs can attest to the risk associated with this impossible task.

2. *How should I fence in my yard for my Husky?*

Houdini Lives

Siberians are escape artists. Siberians need a SECURELY fenced-in yard if you want to let them off a leash.

Define SECURELY...

Over: They can jump or climb most fenced-in areas. Six feet is the recommended height. If your dog is a climber, you may need a roof for your 'kennel'.

Under: They will also very easily dig out underneath the fence, so it is recommended that if the fence is not placed upon concrete then something should be buried along the perimeter of the fence in order to properly contain them.

Through: Leaving them in a yard or kennel unattended for great lengths is not appropriate for this breed as they are highly intelligent and they WILL find a way out. If the fence is made of a weak gauge of chain link that isn't securely attached, they can push the fence up or chew through it. This can also occur with wood.

No other alternatives: tying your dog up is NEVER an option.

Underground or 'invisible' fences are also not effective for this breed. These dogs learn very quickly that with a good running start, they can get past the range of the fence. Additionally, their thick fur interferes with the effectiveness of the collars.

3. *Is it true that Siberians dig holes and shed?*

Yes.

Green Thumb

They instinctively dig and will leave large holes, even trenches, throughout your yard.

Kirby vs. Hoover

Do you own a good vacuum? Twice a year, Siberians do what is referred to as "blowing coat" where they lose their bottom layer of fur, or undercoat. It is a mess! It generally takes at least a week, sometimes more, for all of the fur to leave the coat. You could brush the dog from sunup until sundown and the fur would still be coming out. This is not an exaggeration. When a Siberian is not "blowing coat," the amount of shedding is minimal to moderate, depending on the climate.

4. *Are Siberians high energy dogs?*

Yes and No. Each dog is an individual and energy levels vary, but as a general rule, they do have lots of energy. If you do not give them enough mental and physical exercise they will become hyperactive.

High Voltage

This is a high energy breed, especially for the first two years of life. They are not usually suited for people who won't provide any exercise opportunities for the dog or leave them in a crate for long periods of time. Crate training is recommended both for the safety of your home, but also for the safety of the puppy; however, if your work schedule has you away from the house for much more than 8 hours a day, you will come home to a very anxious puppy!

5. *Will my Siberian listen to me?*

Who's the Boss?

Because the Siberian is a pack animal, it will establish a hierarchy, or 'pecking order' for dominance. Puppy kindergarten classes and general obedience classes are highly recommended for proper socialization and training. Consistency with training is extremely important or a Siberian will walk all over you. Siberians should be outgoing and friendly. Proper socialization and training should help to ensure that your puppy or dog learns manners. People who have owned a Siberian are typically familiar with the saying, "Being Owned by a Siberian."

6. *Will my Siberian get along with other dogs or my cat?*

Snack Time

This breed has a high predatory instinct and will hunt cats, birds and other smaller animals. Sometimes, when a Siberian is raised with a cat, owners have had success with this integration; however, in most cases when an older Siberian is introduced to a home with a cat, the Siberian cannot be trusted.

Every dog is different, so it is difficult to generalize concerning their adaptability with other dogs. Their ability to get along with other dogs, as with any breed of dog, also stems back to their level of dominance and 'status' within the hierarchy.

7. *Are Siberians good with children?*

Yes, Siberians are good with children; however, as with any breed, they must be taught to respect children and view them as being 'above' themselves in their hierarchy or pecking order. Children, in turn must be taught the correct way to interact with a dog. NO TEASING. NO CLIMBING ON DOGS. NO ROUGH PLAY. Small children should NEVER BE LEFT ALONE WITH ANY ANIMAL.

8. Do Siberians make good watchdogs?

No, Siberians are social and outgoing. They do not bark much, although they will howl.

9. Do Siberians eat a lot?

Siberians are generally very easy-keepers and do not require much food. They were bred for sprint-racing and traveling long distances as working dogs using little food. But they do need a balanced diet and decent food.

Siberian Huskies are not a dog for everyone. You may have been drawn to the breed after hearing about how great they are with children, how intelligent they are, what terrific jogging partners they make, or their lack of 'dog smell'. All of these things are true and are great benefits of the breed but it is important to understand the true nature and temperament of the husky before making your decision. elke@nordicrescue.co.za Owning a husky is unlike owning many other breeds, huskies are a free spirited dog, we will explain what this means a bit later on.

If you are a well-adjusted, assertive, happy and active person with a good family situation you may be a perfect Siberian husky owner.

Siberian cleanliness

Despite their shedding Siberians are an exceptionally clean dog, they take great pride in their coat and strive to keep it clean (this doesn't mean they won't go splashing around in puddles of mud though). Siberians do not have the 'doggy odour' that is typical of many breeds – and can be considered a low allergy dog (we will explain this later on however it is important to know that this does not mean they are a 'hypoallergenic' dog – allergies are caused by dander and not by the fur). Huskies are clean eaters as well, rarely making a mess when they eat and keeping their feeding area clean.

Climate

Siberian Huskies appreciate cold climates, often found curled up in the yard with the wind blowing around them at full force. Climate is an important consideration; the South African climate is quite different to their ancient origins in the snow covered Siberia.

Most people naturally associate huskies with the cold; they are built to withstand extreme cold and also extreme heat, due to their unique double coats. Both extreme hot and cold take longer to penetrate the skin so they are very adept at surviving comfortably in both. You can certainly keep a Siberian in South Africa but will need to take extra care and precautions during the hot summer.

Attention

Siberians are a very independent dog; this does not mean they like to be left alone though. Siberians crave human attention and touch, they enjoy making their own decisions and this is where their independence (and stubbornness) comes from. The more time you spend with your Siberian the happier he/she will be. Don't consider getting a husky if you will be away from home for long hours every day, it's not fair. This does not mean it is not possible, but means that you will need to put in some extra planning. For example the first weeks at a new home for an adopted dog can be trying and take its toll on the dog and your family – make sure a family member is able to spend plenty of time with them, perhaps take some well-deserved holidays or share the responsibility around.

Another dog is a great way to keep a husky occupied; being pack animals they also enjoy the company of other dogs.

Exercise

Siberians need lots of exercise every day, they are extremely active dogs and instinctually they love to run! If you want a husky you need to be willing to provide a high level of activity to keep him/her happy and healthy. Regular jogging, walking and even swimming are all great daily activities. It is important to note that exercise for a husky is not just about the physical requirements but also their mental requirements. Huskies are extremely intelligent dogs and love to be challenged, stimulating their minds can be difficult sometimes and later we will look at some fun activities for everyone.

Containment

Siberians are curious by nature and it is important that your husky is fenced in well. Siberian Huskies have strong muscular hind legs and can jump to extraordinary heights from a sitting position. It is generally regarded that a fence 6" high will suitably contain a husky. 'Good neighbour' style fences with no horizontal rails are



good so there is nothing the Husky can use to climb up the panel. Digging is a favourite pastime for huskies as it is for many dogs, it is important to stop any attempts to dig below fences. Concrete retaining blocks buried slightly into the soil under the fence line can be a good way to deter an escape attempt. If you are remodelling the garden anytime soon laying some wire down approximately 20-30cm's will also help stop any attempts.

