



So You Want An Old English Sheepdog...

There are some things you should know about the breed. They are large, boisterous and fun loving. They do not shed, have no oil in their coat so do not have “doggie” odor. On the downside, because their coats have no oil they do not repel water. So when a bobtail gets wet you have to dry it. They have a two layer coat that will matt up if not brushed and dried. They must be brushed from the skin out at least once a week – regardless of coat length.

People with pools or who do boating keep their animals in short haircuts in case of falling into the water.

Some are swimmers and most are not. There are a few OES who are excellent hunters as there some retrieving breeds in their history

Before you purchase a puppy please do think of rescue. These are adult animals, spayed or neutered, housebroken with all shots up to date. For various reasons these animals need new homes and they are wonderful additions to any household. Their cost is minimal compared to the expense and effort involved in raising a puppy. OES rescue is nationally linked and the members can give you information [online](#) or by phone.

However you REALLY want a baby. That’s fine. But here are some guidelines for first time purchasers of OES.

Do not go to a pet store! These animals come from the puppy mills and have serious problems both of health and temperament. There are stories of great animals being purchased this way but the horror stories outweigh them by a wide margin. Purchasing a puppy this way also encourages more breeding by the millers. So just say no.

You may locate a breeder on the net, from recommendations from a Vet or from seeing animals in the park etc and asking the owners where they purchased them.

There are questions to ask any breeder to weed out the “ back yard “ breeders.

1. Are the pups’ parents OFA’d ? This means BOTH parents’ hips AND hearts have been checked and the results sent to the Orthopedic Foundation For Animals.

2. Have the parents’ eyes been cerf’d ? Some lines of OES have juvenile cataracts and this test determines whether the parents are free from that disease. The results are filed at Purdue University.

What is the health and hip guarantee offered by the breeder? For instance I unconditionally guarantee pups for two years for health and hips.

3. How long has the breeder been involved in the breed? Ask for references of people who have pups.

Does the breeder require a return agreement? This is done so that if something in your life changes and you can no longer keep the animal it is returned to the breeder.

4. Does he/she show dogs, have Champion lines, do rescue, belong to the National Sheepdog Club and any local clubs?

What is their involvement besides breeding?

5. Price. You get what you pay for. A bargain usually turns out not to be one.

You have done your homework and have a healthy pup from a reputable breeder.

SHOTS

Your pup should have had at least two sets of shots and worming when you take it home. Your breeder should supply records of this and also include a schedule for future inoculations and Vet visits.

Until shots are completed stay away from parks, beaches etc. The most serious dog diseases of parvo, distemper etc are transmitted in the air.

SUPPLIES

Your breeder should discuss with you the various items needed to keep up your pet.

I also include a catalogue so people can see the items I'm discussing although the chain pet stores are cheaper than catalogue shopping. The catalogue is for reference.

Most basic is the large suitcase crate which can be folded up to be moved. This is the pup's home from now on. I suggest you buy the largest available and you can block it off with tupperware plastic sweater boxes etc until he needs all the room. The pet stores also sell cage dividers. It is also a good idea to get two crates so one is in your bedroom and one is in the area where all the action happens. Maybe this is the kitchen, family room or whatever that is where the crate should be. You put an old non slip rug in the crate -one that can be washed. No newspapers or fancy beds.

You need nail clippers, the cheap Resco kind is fine. Next is doggie toothbrush and paste, a 14 inch rolled nylon collar, a greyhound comb ,and a pin brush without knobs on the end. You need a flex lead for taking walks.

You need non tip food and water bowls. We favor the pail style for water and hang it by a double spring clip in the crate. The advantage to this is they cannot tip it or play in it so the beard stays cleaner, and the floor drier. In fact I keep one next to the refrigerator and add ice all day for fresh snacking.

We use a rug under it for spills.

FEEDING

Your breeder should indicate what brand of food and how often to feed. Remember a puppy is a funnel. Every time you feed something comes out. So 15 minutes after meals out they go. You don't praise or play with the pup until he performs. This is a naturally clean breed and will learn quickly.

This is why you have a crate near your bed. If the pup is just whining you tap the crate and say – there there you're okay or something soothing. HOWEVER if he is agitated or circling it is time to go outside. Even if it 2 am and snowing.

Do not leave chewies, rawhides etc in the crate as they will cause digestion with the inevitable result.

POTTY TRAINING

Feeding time gives you a head start with this. Also take the pup out first thing, in the morning, when he awakens from a nap and of course last thing at night. Never beat a pup or rub its nose in the mistake.

Dedicate an area of your yard to be the bathroom and, gross as it sounds, leave one poop until the next outing. This encourages production as it were.

Don't use potty training mats or newspaper or the newest wrinkle doggie litter boxes.

TRAINING

I encourage all owners to go to class. Having a trainer come to your home is an excellent idea also.

There are many good books and videos available including those by Barbara Woodhouse. She is an English lady who has some funny sayings, but is a wonderful trainer. Her Books are [No Bad Dogs and No More Bad Dogs](#). Also you should have [How To Raise A Puppy You Can Live With](#) by Rutherford and Neil. This is a paperback. It tells you what is going on week by week with you puppy so can hopefully stay one chapter ahead of him. The Old English standard book is [The Old English Sheepdog](#) by Joan Mac Donald Brearley.

CONGRATULATIONS and best wishes for a lifetime of love and companionship with your Old English Sheepdog

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