



The **Rough Collie** has a long standing reputation as one of the most beautiful of dog breeds. Though many people may have a mental picture of the Rough Collie as looking like Lassie, or Lassie coloured, the Collie is actually bred in two different coat types – The Rough and the Smooth, and three different colour variations, Sable/White, Tri Colour and Blue Merle, and all add to the breed's great beauty and appeal.

The Collie is a relatively healthy breed, but that is not the only reason why they make the perfect pet to share your life with. A Collie is happy to run in the woods with its family, walk on a lead with them in town, or herd a gaggle of geese on the farm and can adapt to living in towns or the countryside. Collies bond easily with their families whether they are acquired as puppies or as older dogs. They are joyfully affectionate and playful, with a great sense of fun.

Collies have a well developed sense of home that revolves around the family, in fact, the breed is well known for its intuitive awareness of family activities, to the point where the Collie often senses what is going to happen before it actually does. The dog can recognize things like the step of a family member at a distance or the unique sound of an individual vehicle. even the approaching time when a family member is due home.

The breed's sensitive nature descends from its herding heritage, making the Collie a wonderful housemate, ever watchful and protective of the home front.

Since the nature of the working Collie's relationship with the shepherd involves dialogue, the Collie can be quite vocal with a large and interesting range of sounds, from barks of various pitches and intensities to grunts and the famous Collie 'singing', and facial expressions such as the head cocked to one side and the other, puffing cheeks, nods, smiles, nose nudges or even alligator like teeth snapping, all are ways which the Collie communicates with what is going on.

Another benefit of the Collie's shepherding heritage is the breed's ability to get along with other dogs and other animals in the same household. The Collie's original job often involved multiple dogs who had to work together to care for a flock of animals. This translates into a breed which tends to get along well with other dogs, and also tends to be tolerant of other family pets in the household. As a family dog, the breed character of the Collie is that of an intelligent and fully participating family member with a strong desire to please. The breed is a wonderful choice for those who want their dogs to be fully engaged in their family lives.

Males are 22 to 24 inches and females at 20 to 22 inches at the shoulder.

## **GROOMING**

Rough Collies, like all dogs, require some general grooming, and a good brush once a week will take care of many mats and tangles and keep a Collies coat in good condition. You will however need the right tools to do the job, as a minimum you will need a Pin Brush to get through the coat down to the skin, a comb, and a pair of scissors to trim the excess hair around the feet and hocks.

Collies are naturally clean dogs and do not need regular baths, and even if they get muddy, once the mud dries, it can easily be brushed off.

Collies have a full moult usually once a year, when a bath is recommended to get rid of all the old dead undercoat. Once they are bathed the old coat 'lifts' away from the skin and it is very easy, and quite therapeutic for both dog and owner to get the old coat out.

It is however, far easier, and quicker to use a dog blaster/dryer, and if you do not have one, or access to one, it may be that you can ask your local groomer to just 'bath and blast' your dog, under strict instructions that they must not do any trimming.

Whilst some think clipping would keep the dog cool, it is likely to do the opposite. Clipping a Collie's coat stops it insulating against the heat and keeping cool in the summer.

It is worth noting that once spayed/neutered, the loss of hormones can have an effect on your Collies coat. It can become fine and wispy and not as easy to manage and most breeders are against spaying/neutering unless there is a good reason to do so. This is purely a cosmetic change, but you do need to be warned about it, especially as some vets try and encourage new owners to book their dog in for spaying at the initial booster vaccination appointment! If you really want your Collie spayed/neutered, at least give it time to reach adulthood and wait until after 12 months of age.

## **HEALTH**

Collies can live until they are 12 -14 years of age. When buying a puppy, they will usually have been tested for CEA (Collie Eye Anomaly). There are very few lines in the UK that are genetically clear of CEA, but a mildly affected dog will rarely have a problem.

Along with some other herding breeds, some Collies have a sensitivity to certain drugs due to a mutant gene – MDR1. It is important that if you own one of these breeds you and your vet are aware of the drugs that should be avoided. There is a simple DNA test that can be done with a cheek swab at home to confirm your Collie's MDR1 status. More information about MDR1 can be found on the health pages on [www.collielife.com](http://www.collielife.com), from the Rough and Smooth Collie breed clubs and the internet.

## **EXERCISE**

A young puppy will tire easily, and spend a lot of time sleeping. Do not let them run with older dogs for any length of time, and should only have short walks (5 minutes per month of age is often recommended ie: 3 months of age = 15 minutes per day) up until they are 9 months of age when their bones are more developed.

Everyone has different preferences on the type of collar/lead they use on their Collies. Most people will use either a rolled leather slip lead, or an adjustable half check leather collar, and the purchase of a good leather collar and lead will last you the lifetime of your dog. There are several online pet stores where suitable collars and leads can be purchased

Like all breeds, socialisation of your Collie is important from an early age. Collies are quick to learn and very eager to please and house training can usually be achieved very quickly. They will also enjoy obedience training and agility.

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