

You Might Want To SKIP This Dog!

Is a Jack Russell Terrier right for me?

So you saw the movie *My Dog Skip*, and now you want one. You might name it Skip, or Eddie, or Wishbone. You and your puppy will live happily ever after, and he will charm you forever with his intelligence and antics. Right?

Think again.

The Jack Russell Terrier you saw in "*My Dog Skip*" and you've seen on *Frasier* is in real life a dog named Moose, who shares both roles with his son Enzo. But they can't work together, they can't get along.

What impact do these "stars" have on families who watch "*My Dog Skip*", "*Wishbone*", and "*Frasier*"? They all want one, of course. Just like the millions of families who responded to *101 Dalmatians* by buying Dalmatian puppies, many families will be looking for Jack Russell puppies in the next few years. So what's wrong with that?

The Jack Russell Terrier is a working breed. Historically, they were specifically bred to chase prey (mainly foxes, but any fast-moving critter will do), into the ground, burrow and dig, and bark furiously, to annoy that prey out of its safe haven. When the prey comes above ground, the hunter can then get a clean shot at it.

The very characteristics that make a Jack Russell a champion are the same characteristics that make it unsuitable for many families. They dig furiously, they bark, they are relentless when they want something. (Prey, food, a sock, a Barbie Doll's head?) They are extremely territorial, they often don't get along very well with other dogs, especially dogs of the same sex. And according to many sources, they could easily kill your cat. When their prey drive kicks in, all logic as to who or what they are chasing is lost.

Jack Russell Terriers also need enormous amounts of exercise. The most common phrase echoed around the country from breeders and trainers is "A tired Jack is a good Jack." An hour a day of running, playing chasing and digging is the bare minimum. Ask any self-respecting Jack Russell himself, and he will tell you three hours is more like it. Do you as a family have this much time to devote to just playing with your pet? Do you have a fenced yard to keep playtime safe? If you don't have time to play, your Jack will invent his own fun; shredding your furniture, digging craters in your yard, chewing every sock and toy he can find laying around.

You still want to get a Jack Russell puppy for your kids? Keep in mind that the typical Jack doesn't tolerate small children very well. A reputable breeder will most likely refuse to place a Jack Russell in a home with children younger than age five. The most innocent nudge to a sleeping Jack can enrage him and cause him to bite. Heaven help the toddler who trips over a sleeping Jack. They also have zero tolerance for their ears, tails or feet being pulled on, and unlike a Golden Retriever or Lab, they will NOT make special

allowances for children. Many Jack Russells are deposited at local humane societies and Russell Rescue, just for this reason.

According to Jane McClay, a private rescuer of Jack Russells in Maine, most rescue dogs would make wonderful family pets, for families familiar with the breed. "Most of the dogs I get in rescue aren't given up because there is something wrong with them, but rather just because they're Jack Russells and people didn't do their research. The dog is FINE and it's the owner that just shouldn't have gotten this breed." If you are interested in a Rescue dog, check them out at www.terrier.com.

Jack Russells are notoriously stubborn. Training is a MUST. Professional training, with a trainer who specializes in this breed is recommended.

Any antics that you find amusing in a ten week old puppy (oh, listen to that cute little snarl) and ignore, will most likely escalate into major problems later on. By the time you realize it's a problem, that dog has had YOU trained for quite a while. They can be very difficult and stubborn to potty train, also. Are you willing to clean up messes in the house potentially for 10 to 12 months?

Do not feel bad if you have decided that a Jack Russell is not right for your family. You should be proud that you have done your research, and with more research, you will find the perfect dog for you!

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