

# Congratulations On Your New Old English Sheepdog



The Old English Sheepdog Club of America (OESCA) members wish to welcome you into the world of this wonderful breed. The OESCA is composed of dedicated fanciers, breeders, trainers, handlers, judges, and animal health professionals who all enjoy the companionship of their OES. By working together, we all can preserve the breed's characteristics and protect both the health and well-being of our special breed. The remainder of this flyer provides you with some basic background information to help you enjoy your new companion.

## History

The origin of the Old English Sheepdog remains a question of keen interest to Bobtail fanciers and is still open to new theories and discoveries. However, there are traces of evidence that place its origin in the early nineteenth century, centered in the Southwestern Counties of England. Some maintain that the Scottish Bearded Collie had a large part in its making; others claim the Russian Owtchar as one of the progenitors of the Old English Sheepdog.

Writings of that time refer to a "drover's dog" that was used primarily for driving sheep and cattle to market. It is speculated that these drover's dogs were exempt from taxes due to their working status. To prove their occupation, their tails were docked... leading to the custom of calling the sheep dog by the nickname "Bob" or "Bobtail." Since this dog has been used more for driving than for herding, the lack

of a tail to serve as a rudder, so to speak, has in no way affected its ability to work with heavier kinds of sheep or cattle. By the early 1890s, several wealthy US families had imported Old English Sheepdogs. History states that these families had kennel help and staff to care and groom their Old English Sheepdogs!

## Exercise

An Old English Sheepdog is an athletic animal. Be prepared for energy and enthusiasm. Begin teaching your companion to retrieve a ball or toy. This becomes a rewarding experience for you and your Old English Sheepdog, plus a lovely sight to see with his/her hair "blowing in the wind." Be careful not to over-exercise your young dog. Bone growth continues to take place up to about fifteen months, and injuries to joints and hips can occur. Exercising within a fenced area is most desirable and, of course, the safest area for your pet. Their inherent herding instinct sometimes tells them to herd moving "objects," including cars, bikes, and other wheeled articles. Being struck by a car is one of the top killers of our breed. Your pup's herding ability should be closely supervised around small children. Toddlers can easily be toppled and nipped in the leg or behind by your dog while displaying his love for life! Your dog and small children should always be supervised when together.

## Training

The Old English Sheepdog is an intelligent, versatile animal. In recent years sporting events such as obedience competition, herding, and agility trials have become very popular with our breed. The Old English Sheepdog is happiest when performing a task. There is nothing more satisfying than watching your Old English Sheepdog performing obedience commands. This is particularly true when you have trained your dog. Remember, this fuzzy puppy grows quickly from a 15 lb to a 70 lb dog in a matter of months. Basic obedience training is a must! The earlier you begin the better!



**A Show Dog—Ready for the Ring**



## Old English Sheepdogs Need to See!

### Coat Care

The Old English Sheepdog is not a dog for everyone. This breed is for those who have researched the breed and are aware of the problems inherent in its proper care.

The special appeal of the Old English Sheepdog stems from both its hairy appearance and clown-like personality. Part of your puppy's early training requires its becoming accustomed to frequent coat brushings. When grooming is done properly and started as a young pup, bonding between the pup and master develops quickly.

Here are some grooming tips:

1. Always brush or comb the hair to the skin to make certain any tangles or mats are out of your dog before bathing.
2. Gently use a pin brush or a coarse comb to separate your pet's mats. You must be able to see the skin when grooming.
3. Never brush a dry coat. Use a spray bottle with water or a coat conditioner, and mist the coat while brushing. This makes brushing easier.
4. A grooming table is recommended for grooming. The dog can be trained to put his paws on the table for a "boost" onto the table. The table allows for better control of your dog and also saves your back. Your dog should be brushed at least twice a week to keep the coat free of mats.
5. Carefully clean the "sleepies" out of the corners of the eyes. Check the ears frequently for healthy smells. Sheepdogs have a tendency to have ear infections, as do most "drop ear" breeds. The area around the rectum needs to be clipped short for cleanliness. To avoid matting, the hair between the foot pads should be trimmed short.
6. Please keep the hair out of your pup's eyes. Many Old English Sheepdogs have lost an eye by running into sticks or household objects. Keeping the hair cut in a visor above the eyes or wearing a topknot allows your dog to see his world and enjoy it safely.

### Spaying and Neutering

Being a responsible pet owner means providing a warm loving environment for your pet. It is highly recommended that you consider spaying or neutering your pet. If you plan to maintain your dog as a family pet, spaying or neutering is the healthiest means to ensure your pet's health for many years. With the increasing prevalence of the Old English Sheepdog coming into our National Rescue Program, the way to prevent unwanted pregnancies of purebred and mixed Old English Sheepdog pups is early spaying and neutering. The basic disposition of your pup will not be changed by removing its reproductive capabilities. Spayed bitches have reduced risks of mammary cancer and pyometria. Neutered males can not develop testicular cancer and have a lower rate of developing prostate cancer. Your altered pet may participate in most AKC events, such as obedience, agility, and herding but cannot compete in conformation classes.

### Health

While the Old English is basically a healthy breed, it can be affected with various health problems just like other breeds. The most prevalent genetic health defects are hip dysplasia and eye problems. Any OES that is to be used for breeding must be screened for these defects. Please consult your veterinarian for more information concerning health issues.

### Additional Information

For more information about your Old English Sheepdog, visit our website at [www.oldenglishsheepdogclubofamerica.org](http://www.oldenglishsheepdogclubofamerica.org). Member contacts with email addresses are listed to help answer questions regarding health issues, basic obedience education, herding, agility, rescue, and breed referrals. An application to join the Old English Sheepdog Club of America can be printed from that site.

In addition, several breed books are available at libraries and bookstores that can further expand your knowledge of the Old English Sheepdog.

