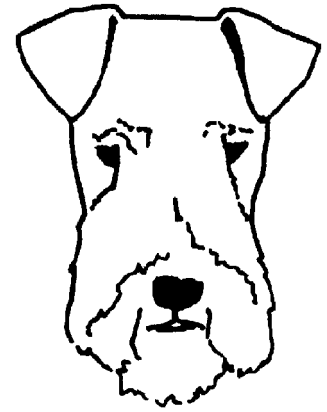


Welcome to the World of the Welsh Terrier!



Congratulations on your recent acquisition of a Welsh Terrier. The Welsh Terrier Club of America (WTCA), founded in 1900, as well as its five regional club affiliates, want you to know they are ready to help you in every way to enjoy your Welsh Terrier to its fullest. Knowing something of the breed's origins will help you to better understand the breed and your own individual dog.

The Welsh Terrier is a very old breed, first mentioned in 1450 by a Welsh poet thanking the donor for a "good black and red bitch to choke the brown polecat." These were working terriers used by Welsh farmers to rid their lands of fox, badger, rodents and other vermin, and to catch an occasional rabbit for the dinner table. From the 1700s several hunters in North Wales bred Welsh Terriers exclusively to run with packs of hounds to bolt the fox. From this we know the Welsh Terrier was not only game, but able to work alongside other dogs and horses.

When dog shows originated these rather scruffy Welsh earthdogs were tidied up for the show ring. In 1887 the Kennel Club in London recognized the Welsh Terrier for registration and the Breed Standard was written. In 1885 the first two imports to the U.S. were registered by the American Kennel Club (AKC) and were first shown in the Miscellaneous Class. Four years later, now with classes for the breed, an imported dog, Nigwood Nailer, became the first AKC Champion Welsh Terrier. Currently, an average of 55 Welsh Terriers per month are registered with the AKC.

This background will give you some indication of the character of the breed. Welsh Terriers were bred to preserve their hunting instincts. However, they were also required to be steady, affectionate and easily controlled since the dogs lived with the family, played with the children, had to get along with other animals on the farm and still maintain their fearless prey-drive in pursuit of rabbit, rat or badger. "Sensible" is a word often used in describing the black and tan Welshman.

The Breed Standard calls for the Welsh Terrier to be a game dog, in other words alert, aware, spirited—but at the same time to be friendly and show self-control. Aggressiveness or shyness are not only undesirable, but are uncharacteristic traits. He's a good watchdog, loves people and makes himself right at home wherever home happens to be, thus older dogs change homes easily. Infants and toddlers in general do not make good dog owners, but responsible older children will find a perfect companion in a Welsh Terrier. The Welsh is playful and fun-loving, but not hyperactive. Part of his charm is to be everything at once: A happy dog, a quiet companion, a protector of hearth and home, naughty, mischievous—and endearingly apologetic. These are intelligent, sensible dogs with a desire to please.

He is a terrier, and a "desire to please" will be a desire to please himself if obedience training is not properly undertaken. This is an essential part of responsible dog ownership. Training requires patience and consistency on the part of the owner. Maintaining a sense of humor helps, too!

If your Welsh Terrier is under 6 months of age, puppy kindergarten is an excellent way to socialize him with other dogs and people, and at the same time he will learn to pay attention to you. Then comes basic obedience training. One 6-8 week session is not enough for a Welsh Terrier. Two is minimal, three is better. Train with fun, food, praise and firm determination. Welsh Terriers will not learn by rote and, because they are easily distracted by scent, sight and sound, are mistakenly thought to be stubborn. As this would indicate, they seldom become stars in obedience competition, although what they do learn they will retain for life—with gentle daily reminders, of course!

An older dog will benefit from obedience training in order to respond to you as its new owner. It will take a little time to change previous habits to your way of doing things. If you bought your Welsh as show potential, the dog still must be socialized so it will interact well with dogs in—and out of—the ring and accept being handled by a judge without problem.

Above all, the Welsh is not a breed to be bullied, forced or roughly handled. Any such abusive treatment will bring out the kind of aggression normally reserved for those rats and woodchucks.

City-dwellers rely on leashes for safety, but suburban and rural residents require a securely fenced area for their Welsh. These are earthdogs, so adding wire fencing 6 inches below ground level will deter “escape digging” activities. Do not let your dog run free. He’s a hunter and will get into trouble. Electronic fences are not recommended due to the breed’s natural curiosity, speed, and prey drive. His focus is so intense that he won’t even notice the electronic barrier when chasing a squirrel or cat across the road. He may not notice oncoming cars either.



The other protection a Welsh Terrier needs—and wants because he is a “den” animal—is a crate. It provides a small safe place of his very own that is out of bounds to all his human family. The crate is not just for sleeping, but an aid in housetraining, the safest spot for riding in the car, the place to be when workmen are coming and going, and a perfect spot for a “time-out.”

The Welsh is calm, sensible and friendly and does best when treated in a like manner with respect and understanding. He is not a baby and will only become unmanageable if you treat him as one. He is very much a dog. He prefers the country, adapts well to city life, is happy with daily walks and playtime, but will be ecstatic if given the chance to demonstrate his natural expertise in an Earthdog Trial. Then there is the fun of Agility training and Agility Trials and the new event, Rally Obedience, which is a combination of Agility and Obedience. These are some of the things that will satisfy your Welsh Terrier’s need to be a physically and mentally healthy companion.

General Help

Your dog’s breeder will start you off with a proper diet for the dog’s age. At maturity the Welsh Terrier will weigh 16 to 20 pounds. You will also have been given the dog’s health care record to date. Continue with regular veterinary care, including immunizations and other preventive medication as recommended. Welsh Terriers are a hardy breed with a lifespan of 12 to 15 years. They are generally free of genetic health problems other than those common to all canines such as glaucoma, skin allergies and epilepsy which are among the health issues currently being researched by the AKC Canine Health Foundation. The Welsh Terrier does not shed if the

coat is properly maintained. He has a double coat (a soft undercoat and a wire topcoat) which requires weekly brushing and combing to remove dead hair. The coat should be clipped or handstripped about four times a year. All show dogs must be handstripped, but pets and dogs entered in performance events may be clipped.

Spay – Neuter

If you acquired your Welsh Terrier as a pet, spaying or neutering was no doubt required in the breeder’s contract. This is one of the best things you can do for your pet. Nothing about it will be changed by removing its reproductive capability, nor will it cause your pet to become obese or lazy. A neutered male will generally be more tolerant of other male dogs. Having a litter is not in any way beneficial to a bitch and can lead to very serious problems, even death. Spaying her may add years to her life.

The American Kennel Club permits spayed and neutered animals to participate in junior handling, all phases of obedience and other performance events but not in most conformation classes.

Breeding dogs is a great responsibility as well as a significant financial investment. To breed and raise a litter properly, it is necessary to devote round-the-clock time daily to care for, clean up after, and socialize young pups so that they reach their full potential. Veterinary care of the dam and of the pups, including tail-docking at 3 – 5 days, is further expense to be considered. Proper facilities for delivering and housing newborn pups are a must, with expanded facilities as they mature. On top of all this, there is the essential process of finding and educating responsible new families to ensure that those puppies are never returned to you or left at a shelter. Because so much is involved in the breeding and raising of Welsh Terriers, the Welsh Terrier Club of America backs up their member breeders, all of whom sign and abide by the Breeders’ Code of Ethics.

As with all purebred dogs recognized by the American Kennel Club, there is an approved Breed Standard for Welsh Terriers which is a written description of how the ideal Welsh Terrier should look, move and behave. All responsible breeders strive to produce dogs that conform to this Breed Standard. It goes without saying that a Welsh Terrier with major deviations in appearance, structure or temperament should never be bred. A copy of the Breed Standard can be found on the WTCA website and in the book devoted to the breed, *The Welsh Terrier Leads The Way* (Doral) by Bardi McLennan.

Enjoy your Welsh Terrier!

Additional information on the breed, the Club and on the Club’s rescue group, WTCARES, is available on the WTCA Web site: <http://clubs.akc.org/wtca/> or from:

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