

Is HIGH-ENERGY or *laid back* right for you ?

Is your ideal pooch a sedate lap dog or a raucous playmate? Do you have time to take her on twice-daily walks or would you prefer to let her out a few times a day for bathroom breaks and quick runs around the yard? Mismatched energy levels can destroy your relationship with your pet. So before you make a dog part of your family, make sure his or her activity needs match yours.

Mellow yellow

Easygoing breeds, including the Maltese, basset hound, and bichon frisé, flourish as lap dogs. They tolerate longer stays indoors without going berserk and require minimal exercise—a perfect pet for retirees, apartment dwellers, or people without much free time to spend with their new pet.

One warning: Not all small dogs make good apartment pets or laid-back companions. Many small breeds—including miniature pinschers, terriers, and beagles—often come packed with energy, bark quite a bit, and require lots of outdoor playtime.

Wired for speed

Larger, high-energy dogs thrive in spacious back yards, although they don't necessarily require one to be happy. And for active sporting dogs, such as Akitas and pointers, a big yard isn't enough. Energetic dogs need energetic owners who'll spend hours tossing a ball, throwing a Frisbee, or playing fetch.

Just like many people, most dogs won't exercise on their own. So even with a backyard, an active dog may need regular walks and a rowdy game of tug now and then. If your pup can't burn off her energy constructively, she'll likely use it to trash your home and yard.

At the same time, not all active breeds need daily walks. Pomeranians, Chihuahuas, and other toy breeds can get enough exercise

racing around a living room. However, they're not always big fans of small children, so opt for a moderately active breed if you want a playful family pet.

And remember: Puppies of all breeds are high-energy pets. Some will mellow as they age while others, such as boxers and miniature pinschers, maintain their playful spirits for years—and then some.

Where do you fall?

Before you set your heart on a dog, make sure you can meet her activity needs. If you're active, look for a pet whose energy level and body type matches the sports you enjoy.

Any dog can learn to catch a Frisbee or enjoy hiking, but a dog with shorter legs can't keep up if you're a jogger. If you like speedier sports, consider a long-legged active breed: German shepherds, Dalmatians, or Siberian huskies all fit the bill.

But if you prefer spending Saturday morning lounging in a recliner leafing through the latest bestseller, a basset hound or bichon frisé are two breeds who'll happily snooze right next you.

Families with children should seek out a moderately active dog with a gentle nature. Retrievers, collies, spaniels, and many mixed breeds make loyal, child-friendly pets.

