

German Shorthaired Pointers

by Eric Reeder

Section 1. Name That Dog

What dog is the ideal hunting dog?

What dog needs a fence that is at least six feet tall to keep it from escaping?

What dog can do more types of work than most other dogs?

What dog might decide to chew up the carpet if it gets bored?

Did you say the German shorthaired pointer?

Then you are correct!

Section 2. The Ideal Hunting Dog (History)

Long ago, in the 1800s, hunters in Germany decided they wanted the best hunting dog possible. They developed this ideal hunting dog by breeding several different dog breeds together. This means that they mixed them together. The dogs included the old Spanish pointer, the English pointer, the German tracking hound, and the English foxhound. That is 4 different types of dogs mixed. (It may have also included other types of dogs. We can't be sure about this.) All of these types of dogs have some traits that make them good hunters. From all of these dogs, the German shorthaired pointer was developed. This new type of dog could hunt on land. It could also **retrieve** animals from the water. It was indeed an excellent hunting dog. This dog breed was brought into America in the 1900s. People who buy German shorthaired pointers like to know they are buying **purebred** dogs. Purebred dogs are often registered with organizations such as the American Kennel Club. In 1930, the American Kennel Club added German shorthaired pointers as a new **breed**.¹

By the 1940s, the German shorthaired pointer was a popular hunting dog in America. Today, German shorthaired pointers are still a popular hunting dog breed.²

Section 3. General Information

German shorthaired pointers are smart dogs. They make great pets and excellent hunters. Adult German shorthaired pointer males are around 23 to 25 inches (58 to 64 centimeters) tall at the shoulder. They weigh around 55 to 70 pounds (25 to 32 kilograms). Adult German shorthaired pointer females are usually smaller than males. Females are around 21 to 23 inches (53 to 58 centimeters) tall at the shoulder. They weigh around 45 to 60 pounds (20 to 27 kilograms).³

Their fur is sometimes wiry or thick and can be a variety of colors. They are usually brown (sometimes called "liver"). The liver color can be anywhere from medium to dark brown. They

may have spotted fur or fur that is solid black, brown, or white. Other possible fur colors are red, tan, or orange.⁴

German shorthaired pointers have a short, flat **coat** that keeps water and dirt out. They have webbed paws. These webbed paws act like paddles to help them move through the water. Their paws have heavy, tough nails. Their tough nails help them to grip and move on land and sea.

These dogs are usually healthy and do not have many health problems. They may live for 12 to 16 years or even longer. Lack of exercise can cause problems with hips and other joints.⁵

Section 4. What are German Shorthaired Pointers Like?

German shorthaired pointers are active dogs with lots of energy. Sometimes they may seem too hyper for their owners to deal with them. Interesting sounds, smells, and sights can cause these dogs not to focus. Owners of German shorthaired pointers have to know how to train and **discipline** them. Luckily, these dogs learn easily. They are independent and have a mind of their own. But they can be trained to behave. They can also be trained to perform different tasks. German shorthaired pointers are good with families. They make good pets. They enjoy being around people. People who own German shorthaired pointers say they have great personalities. They want to please their owners. They are also **loyal** to their owners.⁶ But they may bark at strangers and noises.⁷

German shorthaired pointers need lots of exercise. They like to jump and run. These dogs are playful and fun. Some people train them to shake hands or do other tricks.⁸

German shorthaired pointers must be kept busy. If they are not busy, they will behave in ways that their owners will not like. If bored, they may chew up clothes or carpet. They might even destroy furniture.⁹

Section 5. German Shorthaired Pointer Puppies

German shorthaired pointers often have many brothers and sisters. Sometimes there are 12 or more puppies in one **litter**. The first weeks of their lives, German shorthaired pointer puppies need to be **socialized**. This means they are made to become used to other animals and people. If puppies are not socialized, they can be afraid of people and other animals. They can also become mean if not socialized.¹⁰

In their first few weeks, puppies are cared for by their mothers. Their mothers feed and protect them. Female German shorthaired pointers keep their puppies safe. They will do their best to make sure no one hurts their puppies. These dogs should not be separated from their mothers before they are seven weeks old.¹¹

Also, when German shorthaired pointers are puppies, they can begin being trained to fetch items and to play.¹² During this training, they need to be shown that their owner is in charge. Raising a German shorthaired pointer can be lots of fun. It also takes a lot of time and effort from everyone in the family who can help.¹³

Section 6. German Shorthaired Pointers Go to Work

German shorthaired pointers are smart dogs. They can do many different types of jobs. Most dogs cannot do as many different types of work as they can. They are known as dogs that can do almost anything.

These dogs were made to hunt. This has been their main type of work. They can catch land and water **game**. They can hunt smaller game, such as rabbits and squirrels. They can also larger game, such as bison and deer. Sometimes they find and kill the animals themselves for their owners. Sometimes they retrieve animals that their owners have hunted. And sometimes they point out animals to their owners. This is why they are called pointers.

They use their bodies to point when they have found game. In the pointer pose, the dog is standing still. Its head is down. It is looking straight ahead. Its front paw is lifted. And its tail is pointed upward. Its body is roughly in the shape of an arrow. In this pose it might point out a deer it has spotted for its owner to shoot.¹⁴

Other German shorthaired pointers are trained to be therapy dogs. They go to places like hospitals and nursing homes. There they help people in those places to feel calm. Some German shorthaired pointers are also used as search and rescue dogs. They find people who are lost or trapped.¹⁵ They can also be trained to perform in dog shows.¹⁶ These are just some of the jobs that German shorthaired pointers can do.

Section 7. Caring for a German Shorthaired Pointer

Caring for German shorthaired pointers takes a lot of work. Like all dogs, German shorthaired pointers require food and water. Also, they require a great deal of exercise. Owners should make sure these dogs have lots of room to run and roam. At least an hour of strong exercise every day is needed. German shorthaired pointers are not happy just sitting around. Without exercise, they may become nervous and break things.

German shorthaired pointers seem to always have energy. A short daily walk is not enough for these dogs. They enjoy running, hiking, jogging, and playing Frisbee. These are outdoor activities that require lots of energy.

They can turn into badly-behaved dogs without an owner who is determined and firm. They must be trained from the time they are puppies. They have to know that their owner is in charge. Luckily, German shorthaired pointers do well with being trained.

These dogs have fur that is short and firm. They only need to be bathed once in a while, maybe once a month. Owners should trim their nails as needed.¹⁷

Sidebars

1. They are shy around people they do not know until they become familiar with them.¹⁸ (Section 4. What are German Shorthaired Pointers Like?)
2. They can retrieve game without hurting it. They could, for example, pick up a bird in their teeth and take it to their owner without hurting the bird.¹⁹ (Section 6. German Shorthaired Pointers Go to Work)
3. They are amazing athletes with almost endless energy. They can run and run.²⁰ (Section 6. German Shorthaired Pointers Go to Work)
4. German shorthaired pointers do not usually have hip and other joint problems. Other types of hunting dogs often have these problems.²¹ (Section 3. General Information)
5. If not trained right, they could knock over small children. This is because they play rough and fast sometimes.²² (Section 7. Caring for a German Shorthaired Pointer)
6. Some German shorthaired pointers choose not to listen to their owners.²³ (Section 4. What are German Shorthaired Pointers Like?)
7. They get along well with other animals and humans.²⁴ (Section 4. What are German Shorthaired Pointers Like?)
8. Some GSP puppies as young as 8 weeks old can point. They just know how to do this, even if they have never been on a hunt before.²⁵ (Section 5. German Shorthaired Pointer Puppies)
9. Watch out. Bored German shorthaired pointers can escape. They need at least a 6-foot-tall fence if they are going to be kept outside. If the fence is too short, they can get away.²⁶ (Section 7. Caring for a German Shorthaired Pointer)
10. Some German shorthaired pointers have unlocked kitchen cabinets to get to garbage cans.²⁷ (Section 4. What are German Shorthaired Pointers Like?)
11. The German shorthaired pointer's fur produces oil and keeps dirt out.²⁸ (Section 3. General Information)
12. These dogs can also be watchdogs, alerting their owners to intruders.²⁹ (Section 6. German Shorthaired Pointers Go to Work)
13. They may dig huge holes in the yard if not given enough exercise.³⁰ (Section 7. Caring for a German Shorthaired Pointer)
14. They have been known to open refrigerators.³¹ (Section 7. Caring for a German Shorthaired Pointer)
15. In the United States, German shorthaired pointers are usually used to hunt birds.³² (Section 2. The Ideal Hunting Dog (History))

16. (Sidebar about Germany for page 7) The map on the right shows where Germany is located on Earth. The map below shows a close-up view of Germany.³³ (Section 2. The Ideal Hunting Dog (History))

17. (Historical fact sidebar for page 9) German shorthaired pointers have been called the “everyuse dog.” They were called this because they can do so many types of work.³⁴ (Section 2. The Ideal Hunting Dog (History))

German Shorthaired Pointer Quiz

1. How many puppies are often in litters of German shorthaired pointers?

12

2. How tall of a fence do German shorthaired pointers need to keep them from getting out?

Six feet tall

3. Why were German shorthaired pointers developed?

To be an ideal hunting dog

4. How old should German shorthaired pointer puppies be before they are separated from their mother?

Seven weeks old

5. What might German shorthaired pointers bark at?

Strangers and noises

6. When did German shorthaired pointers become popular in America?

The 1940s

Key Words

1. Breed: type or species of dog

2. Coat: an animal’s fur

3. Discipline: train a dog to make it listen

4. Game: animals to be hunted

5. Litter: a group of baby animals born together

6. Loyal: devoted and faithful

7. Purebred: coming only from members of one breed

8. Retrieve: to grab or fetch

9. Socialized: made used to and comfortable with other animals and people

Index

Bark

Coat

Colors

Dog shows

Energy

Exercise

Fetch

Fur

Height

Hunting dog

Litters

Nails

Outdoor activities

Paws

Play

Point

Pointers

Puppies

Purebred dogs

Search and rescue dogs

Therapy dogs

Training

Types of work

Weight

Work

References:

1. Bauer, Nona Kilgore. *German Shorthaired Pointer: A Comprehensive Guide to Owning and Caring for Your Dog*. Freehold, NJ: Kennel Club Books, 2008.

2. George, Lani, and Joan Hustace Walker. *German Shorthaired Pointers*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's, 2012.

3. Maxwell, C. Bede. *The New German Shorthaired Pointer*. 4th ed. New York, NY: Howell Book House, 1982.

4. McKowen, Robert H. *The New Complete German Shorthaired Pointer*. New York, NY: Howell Book House, 1998.

5. Tabor, Joan. *A New Owner's Guide to German Shorthaired Pointers*. Neptune City, NJ: T.F.H., 1998.

Endnotes:

1. Tabor, Joan. *A New Owner's Guide to German Shorthaired Pointers*. Neptune City, NJ: T.F.H., 1998, pp.6-12.

2. McKowen, Robert H. *The New Complete German Shorthaired Pointer*. New York, NY: Howell Book House, 1998, pp. 16-17.

3. Bauer, Nona Kilgore. *German Shorthaired Pointer: A Comprehensive Guide to Owning and Caring for Your Dog*. Freehold, NJ: Kennel Club Books, 2008, p.31.

4. McKowen, Robert H. *The New Complete German Shorthaired Pointer*. New York, NY: Howell Book House, 1998, pp. 1-2.

5. Tabor, Joan. *A New Owner's Guide to German Shorthaired Pointers*. Neptune City, NJ: T.F.H., 1998, pp. 15-16.

6. George, Lani, and Joan Hustace Walker. *German Shorthaired Pointers*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's, 2012, p.10.

7. George, Lani, and Joan Hustace Walker. *German Shorthaired Pointers*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's, 2012, p. 15.

8. Bauer, Nona Kilgore. *German Shorthaired Pointer: A Comprehensive Guide to Owning and Caring for Your Dog*. Freehold, NJ: Kennel Club Books, 2008, pp. 22-23.

9. Tabor, Joan. *A New Owner's Guide to German Shorthaired Pointers*. Neptune City, NJ: T.F.H., 1998, pp. 77-78.

10. Bauer, Nona Kilgore. *German Shorthaired Pointer: A Comprehensive Guide to Owning and Caring for Your Dog*. Freehold, NJ: Kennel Club Books, 2008, p.56-58.

11. Tabor, Joan. *A New Owner's Guide to German Shorthaired Pointers*. Neptune City, NJ: T.F.H., 1998, p.36.

12. Bauer, Nona Kilgore. *German Shorthaired Pointer: A Comprehensive Guide to Owning and Caring for Your Dog*. Freehold, NJ: Kennel Club Books, 2008, pp.46-47.

13. Bauer, Nona Kilgore. *German Shorthaired Pointer: A Comprehensive Guide to Owning and Caring for Your Dog*. Freehold, NJ: Kennel Club Books, 2008, pp.58-60.

14. McKowen, Robert H. *The New Complete German Shorthaired Pointer*. New York, NY: Howell Book House, 1998, pp. 159-160.

15. Tabor, Joan. *A New Owner's Guide to German Shorthaired Pointers*. Neptune City, NJ: T.F.H., 1998, p. 86.

16. Maxwell, C. Bede. *The New German Shorthaired Pointer*. 4th ed. New York, NY: Howell Book House, 1982, pp.199-213.
17. 5. Tabor, Joan. *A New Owner's Guide to German Shorthaired Pointers*. Neptune City, NJ: T.F.H., 1998, pp. 62-72.
18. George, Lani, and Joan Hustace Walker. *German Shorthaired Pointers*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's, 2012, pp. 77-78.
19. George, Lani, and Joan Hustace Walker. *German Shorthaired Pointers*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's, 2012, p. 16.
20. George, Lani, and Joan Hustace Walker. *German Shorthaired Pointers*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's, 2012, p. 31.
21. Tabor, Joan. *A New Owner's Guide to German Shorthaired Pointers*. Neptune City, NJ: T.F.H., 1998, p. 37.
22. George, Lani, and Joan Hustace Walker. *German Shorthaired Pointers*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's, 2012, p. 23.
23. Tabor, Joan. *A New Owner's Guide to German Shorthaired Pointers*. Neptune City, NJ: T.F.H., 1998, pp. 77-82.
24. George, Lani, and Joan Hustace Walker. *German Shorthaired Pointers*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's, 2012, pp. 21-24.
25. Bauer, Nona Kilgore. *German Shorthaired Pointer: A Comprehensive Guide to Owning and Caring for Your Dog*. Freehold, NJ: Kennel Club Books, 2008, p. 13.
26. Bauer, Nona Kilgore. *German Shorthaired Pointer: A Comprehensive Guide to Owning and Caring for Your Dog*. Freehold, NJ: Kennel Club Books, 2008, p.23.
27. George, Lani, and Joan Hustace Walker. *German Shorthaired Pointers*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's, 2012, p. v.
28. George, Lani, and Joan Hustace Walker. *German Shorthaired Pointers*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's, 2012, p. 18.
29. George, Lani, and Joan Hustace Walker. *German Shorthaired Pointers*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's, 2012, p. 3.
30. George, Lani, and Joan Hustace Walker. *German Shorthaired Pointers*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's, 2012, p. 18.
31. George, Lani, and Joan Hustace Walker. *German Shorthaired Pointers*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's, 2012, p. 17.

32. McKowen, Robert H. *The New Complete German Shorthaired Pointer*. New York, NY: Howell Book House, 1998, p. 1.

33. Suggested map images: Earth with Germany pointed out; Germany surrounded by other European countries

34. McKowen, Robert H. *The New Complete German Shorthaired Pointer*. New York, NY: Howell Book House, 1998, pp. 22-26.