

SUNSONG WIREHAIRED DACHSHUNDS

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Photo: Tracy Morgan

PUPPIES - CARE & INITIAL TRAINING

1. DIET

Your puppy has been reared on a puppy complete diet. We will give you a supply of food to take away with you and you should try to stick to this diet for the first few days, only making any changes gradually. Details of your puppy's diet follow below. You do not need to add any vitamin or mineral supplements to this diet. Fresh drinking water should always be available.

8-12 WEEKS

4 meals a day at approximately 8 a.m., 12 noon, 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. - each exactly the same:-

1 to 2 oz (25g to 50g) of puppy complete food with a little warm water added; at 8 weeks feeding about 1 oz at each meal, increasing to about 2 oz (50g) each meal by 12 weeks, but be guided by the size of your puppy, and if he finishes his meal quickly. If he leaves any food and walks away, then you are giving him too much.

As your puppy grows during this initial four week period, the quantities suggested should be gradually increased. You will know if you are feeding too much if the pup does not clear his dish within about 5 minutes. Don't leave food down for him if he does not eat it all up. Wait until the next meal time and prepare a fresh feed.

12 WEEKS - 5 MONTHS

At 12 weeks, cut out the supertime feed so that 3 meals a day are fed.

If you decide to change the food your puppy is eating please make any changes to the diet gradually over a period of days (otherwise the puppy will get diarrhoea if you switch brands or types of food abruptly). Don't feed too varied a diet. Find something the pup likes to eat and feed the same every day.

Increase the quantities fed as the pup grows. By 5 months he could well be eating 3 oz (75g) of puppy complete food at each meal.

5 MONTHS - ADULT

Around 5 months, cut out the lunchtime meal. Keep an eye on how your dog looks. Obviously, if he is too fat or thin, adjust the amount fed accordingly. As a guide, our adult dogs have two meals daily of 4 oz (100g) of complete food.

REMEMBER - Have fresh drinking water available at all times.

2. WORMING

Your puppy has been dosed to eliminate roundworms at 4, 6, and 8 weeks. He will need dosing again at 10 and 12 weeks, then monthly until 6 months. Thereafter dose 4 times yearly.

Obtain a roundworm preparation from your vet, and be sure to weigh your puppy accurately and follow the instructions closely.

3. VACCINATION & MICROCHIPPING

Before collecting your puppy, you should have found out from your vet at what ages your puppy needs vaccinating against the various canine diseases. This will vary from area to area, so please take your vet's advice. A typical vaccination regime could be at 8 and 10 weeks. Until your puppy is fully vaccinated, he must not meet other dogs or leave your house and garden.

Be sure to have your dog's immunity boosted regularly as advised by your vet. Boarding kennels will not take your pet unless you have a current vaccination certificate.

It is best to have the puppy microchipped by your vet at the time of the second vaccination.

4. HOUSE-TRAINING

Right from the start, get your puppy used to relieving himself outside in the garden. Do not be tempted to put newspaper down in the house. This only confuses him and encourages him to relieve himself indoors which is not a habit to be developed and, once established, is difficult to break.

Adopt a positive approach, and forestall the need to tell your puppy off by putting him outside frequently and giving lavish praise every time he goes. Put him out every time he wakes up, before and after every meal, and when he is awake, every 15-20 minutes. Time spent now is worth its weight in gold.

When you collect your puppy at 8 weeks of age he will not be able to be clean overnight, so confine him to a playpen or a small corner of the kitchen with a box or basket for sleeping in, and lay newspaper on the floor for him to relieve himself on. At about 12 weeks when you cut out the last feed, you can help teach your pup to be clean overnight by putting him in a cage. He will not wish to soil his bed and is more likely to "hold on" until morning, if confined in this way.

5. AROUND THE HOUSE

A) CHEWING & TOYS

Young puppies like to chew, and as with house-training, establish the ground rules right from day one.

Provide a selection of toys such as nylon bones, sterilised bones, hard rubber balls and knotted rag rope. If the pup attempts to chew anything other than these toys, scold him verbally and

immediately give him one of his own toys and praise him. In this way, your pup will soon learn to ignore anything that is not his. Once again, time spent now will pay dividends when your pup is older and you will know you have a totally reliable dog who will respect your possessions and not become destructive.

B) SLEEPING & CAGES

Young puppies need a great deal of sleep. Please ensure your puppy has a secure draught-free bed to go to when his energy flags, where he can sleep undisturbed by children or other pets.

A folding wire cage is the best type of bed when your dog is young and could be prone to chew things if left unattended. These can be obtained on-line or from dog shows and pet shops. The cage must be large enough for an adult Dachsie to stretch out in comfort. Your pup can be put safely in his cage to sleep, and can be shut in with some toys whenever you are unable to keep a close eye on him, or when you go shopping, for example. You can buy a clip-on water dish to fit inside the cage. You should only leave him shut in his cage for a couple of hours during the daytime. If the cage fits into your car, your pup can also travel safely in it. The folding cage is also useful when you go on holiday with your dog, or when visiting friends. When your dog is older and 100% reliable you can always leave him loose in your kitchen with a comfy dog bed to sleep in.

C) LIFTING YOUR PUPPY

Until your puppy is about 6 months old, he is growing rapidly, and is thus susceptible to injury. He will be quite loosely constructed until he attains adult size and muscles up. For this reason, do not allow him to jump on and off chairs or ascend and descend stairs.

When lifting him, put one hand under his chest between his front legs and with the other hand, support him under his rump. This way, you will not strain his back. Never pick him up under his elbows.

6. CAR TRAINING

While your pup is still young it is a good idea to get him used to car travel as some dogs can have a tendency to be car sick. The best idea is to travel your pup in his cage for short trips initially, reassuring him with your voice.

On no account let the pup travel in the front of the car. If you do not have a cage, either keep him in the back of your hatchback or estate car with a dog guard or travel him on a rug on the back seat. You can obtain a restraining harness that fits into the seat belt mountings in the back seat of your car. If he is persistently car sick, you may need to obtain travel sickness pills, but usually, with regular, short journeys your pup will outgrow this habit (particularly if he gets a treat such as a walk at the end of the trip).

7. LEAD TRAINING & EXERCISE

Although your puppy is not allowed out until he has finished his course of inoculations, it is a good idea to get him used to a collar and lead before this, in your garden.

Put a light collar on him for a couple of hours a day, and after a bit of initial scratching at it, the pup will soon learn to ignore it. Attach a lead and try to encourage your pup to walk with you. Hold a tit-bit in your right hand and the lead in your left. Show him the food and encourage him to follow your hand, by holding the food just out of his reach in front of him as you walk forward.

He may behave like a fish on the end of a line, leaping and twisting against the lead or he may sit down and refuse to budge. Soothe the lively puppy quietly and praise lavishly when he accepts the restraint of the collar and lead and walks with you. Reward him with the tit-bit you have been using to encourage him forward. The puppy that sits rooted to the spot will need patient, gentle encouragement to persuade him to walk. You may eventually have to pull him along gently for a few steps which he may dislike, but as soon as he gets to his feet, give lavish praise. Usually the food rewards he receives will give him the right idea.

Five minutes a day at the most is all the training necessary when the pup is young. Always try to end on a positive note.

Once the puppy has finished his course of inoculations, start to take him for a short walk of about 5 minutes every couple of days or so to help him get used to traffic and other people and dogs. By the time he is about 4 months old, he should be having a 20 minute walk every day, then as he gets to 5 months gradually increase the distance and time to about 25 minutes every day. By 6 months he should be going for a 30 minute walk each day. By a year old you should be giving your dog a 40 - 60 minute walk a day. Once adult, your Dachsie will take any amount of exercise you care to give.

Because Dachshunds are not noted for their obedience and, in some, the hunting instinct is quite strong, it is a good idea to begin letting your puppy off his lead and teaching him to come back to you when he is still quite small. As soon as he has finished his inoculations, choose somewhere free from traffic and away from the distractions of lots of other dogs, and let the puppy run free. He will be a little overawed by his surroundings, and hopefully this will mean he will stay close to you for reassurance. Take some titbits with you and call him back to you now and then, rewarding him with food when he returns. If you do this regularly, by the time he is 6 months old he should be good off his lead.

If you want to take your young dog somewhere where you are likely to meet lots of distractions, then it can be a good idea to put him on a Flexi-lead initially. This is an extending lead which will give him about 16 feet of freedom, but you still remain in control. You can buy a Flexi-lead from any pet-shop.

8. GROOMING & STRIPPING THE COAT

Your wire will need regular grooming once a week using a bristle brush and wide-toothed metal comb. Get your puppy used to standing quietly on a steady table to allow you to brush him. Pay particular attention to the longer hair on the legs and beard to ensure there are no tangles.

Once a week, check your dog's eyes, ears and feet. If you discover runny eyes, or a smelly brown discharge in the ears, visit the vet. Keep the nails short using nail clippers, (the guillotine type are the best). Be careful not to cut through the quick and make the nail bleed.

It is a good idea to use a spot-on treatment such as 'Frontline' every two months to guard against fleas and ticks, which you can obtain from one of the on-line veterinary pharmacies or your vet. At about 6 months of age, when your dog has all his adult teeth, you should start regularly brushing his teeth each week. Use a toothbrush and special "doggy" toothpaste obtainable from pet stores or the vet, and don't forget to try and brush the back teeth too. This way you will help keep your dog's teeth free from tartar build-up.

STRIPPING THE COAT

Wire Dachshunds have a "double-coat". There is a longer, harsh top coat with a dense, woolly undercoat beneath. Two or three times a year the long, dead top coat will need to be plucked out to allow the new top coat to grow in. Wires have the advantage of not moulting like other dogs.

You can take your pet wire to a grooming parlour to have his coat stripped or you can, with time and patience, do it yourself. If you decide to do it yourself, put the dog on a table and starting at the neck, raise a fold of skin with one hand - you will see the long hairs of the top coat standing away from the woolly undercoat. Taking a few of the long top coat hairs between the finger and thumb of your other hand, or using a stripping knife, pluck them out. If the coat is ready to come out, the top coat will come away easily without distressing the dog. Continue down one side of the dog, then the other and down the back, until the dog is in his undercoat all over. This could take several sessions over a few days to achieve. Be kind and firm and patient at all times. Finally, tidy the tail and legs with a stripping knife, which can be obtained from dog shows or on-line. We use a 'Mars 328' on our dogs. You can keep the coat tidy in between full stripping out with a 'Mars Coat King' (20" extra-fine for a Wire Dachshund coat).

9. GENERAL HEALTH CARE

Tummy upsets - young puppies are noted for being keen to eat various unsuitable things in the garden etc., and adult dogs are occasionally sick without there being any cause for alarm. However, if your dog vomits or has diarrhoea, keep a close eye on him. It may be just a one-off or could be something more serious. Withhold food, and give only small drinks of water. If there is no improvement over a 12 hour period or if the dog passes any blood, see the vet.

As mentioned above, regular weekly checks when grooming your dog will keep you aware of any changes in your dog's health. If you are at all worried about any aspect of your dog's health do consult your vet.

10. INSURANCE

Your puppy comes to you with 4 weeks free insurance. After it expires you must weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of pet health insurance and decide for yourself. There are several reputable specialist pet insurers, including the Kennel Club. Your vet can also provide you with details of insurance companies.

Third party insurance, however, is a must. If, for example, your dog were to escape from your garden and cause an accident, you would be liable.

Do ensure that whenever your dog goes out he wears a collar and name tag with your address and telephone number. This is a legal requirement as well as being a sensible precaution.

11. AFTER-SALES SERVICE

We are always happy to answer any queries you may have at any stage of your dog's life and do like to hear how your dog is progressing.

You can be assured that your puppy has been well reared and is a fit, healthy and typical specimen of the breed.

Please remember that a puppy bought as a pet is not suitable for showing or breeding from.

If at any stage, for whatever reason, it becomes necessary to re-home your dog, please speak to us initially. We will not be annoyed if this is the case - circumstances change, and we may know of someone who could give the dog a loving home. We are not, however, able to have your dog back to stay when you go on holiday - you must make arrangements with a boarding kennel.

Good luck with your new puppy, we hope you will enjoy many years of companionship with your Wire.

12. THE WIREHAISED DACHSHUND CLUB

You may be interested in joining the Wirehaired Dachshund Club, which caters for both Standard and Miniature Wirehaired Dachshunds. A newsletter called 'The Live Wire' is produced, and contains articles and information about Wirehaired Dachshunds.

The Club holds an annual Championship Show, usually in the Midlands, where large numbers of both breeds can be seen.

If you would like to join, write to the Secretary of the Club to obtain a Proposal for Membership form. We will be happy to act as your proposer and seconder. The Secretary's name and e-mail address is:-

Phil Rollinson

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Tel: 01752 216331

<http://www.whdc.co.uk/>

Please ask us for details of other, regional, Dachshund Clubs if you are interested in joining any of these. You may also be interested to visit our Internet site: The UK Guide to Wirehaired Dachshunds at www.sunsong.co.uk