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Toy Dog Breeds: The Top Ten Dogs Of This Group

By Mike Mathews

The Toy Group includes most of the very small and miniature lap dogs and apartment-sized

companion dog breeds. Toy dogs play a critical role in the lives of people that live alone and their presence can have beneficial effects on the health of the sick, the elderly and the housebound. Toys are popular companion dogs for people living in cities and adapt well to apartment life. Many Toys distrust strangers and make great watchdogs and don't need a lot of exercise beyond what they get running around and playing indoors. Toys make great traveling companions and are readily accepted just about everywhere. Toy dog breeds are always difficult to housebreak but usually adapt well to apartment life. If your Toy isn't completely house trained after 3 months then you should seek professional help. Toddlers and small children are too rough for toy dogs that may bite in self-defense. The top 10 most popular Toy breeds in the US according to the American Kennel Club 2005 registrations are discussed below and their registration rank is included in brackets. The inclusion of the Toy Poodle as #2 is incorrect as its rank is a composite total of all 3 Poodle varieties – Toy, Miniature and Standard. It probably belongs somewhere in the top ten but not in the #2 position.

Yorkshire Terrier

The Yorkie (#3) almost overtook the Golden Retriever as the second most popular dog in the US in 2005. This rugged toy dog is very popular because it has all the admirable attributes of larger dogs but in miniature. The typical Yorkie plays hard and has limitless energy. With persistence a Yorkie can be obedience trained. Some are bright and learn quickly, while others are more obstinate and opinionated. Yorkies get along well with other pets but they can be very possessive of their food and toys. The Yorkshire makes a better pet for older and calmer children. The Yorkshire will bark at strangers, often in a high pitched voice. Early socialization is required so that the dog doesn't become too shrill and to ensure barking is controlled.

Poodle (Toy)

All the wonderful things that you can say about a Standard Poodle don't all apply to the Toy or Miniature versions. Toy Poodles (#8) are less than 11 inches at shoulder height but the same American Kennel Club standards apply across all sizes. Toys are generally more sensitive than the

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Standard and are also more active, louder and less confident. Early socialization and training to curb excessive barking and leg lifting is required. Even though these dogs are very small, they still enjoy lots of playtime and long walks. Toy Poodles will do fine with older considerate children.

Shih Tzu

The exotic looking Shih Tzu (#9) is one of the sturdiest and most robust of the toy dog breeds. Shih Tzus are intelligent, playful, affectionate, friendly, self confident and outgoing. Shih Tzus make great apartment dogs and companion dogs for the elderly. These charming and personable dogs are devoted to their owners and their families. They make great traveling companions and rarely show any aggressive behavior toward strangers or strange animals. The breed gets along extremely well with older, considerate children.

Chihuahua

The Chihuahua (#11) is the smallest of the toy dog breeds. Chihuahuas are intelligent, charming and loving dogs who are devoted to their owners. This breed needs close contact with its family and make great companions. Chihuahuas can have delusions of grandeur and self-confidence and will challenge much larger dogs. Chihuahuas are good with older children if raised with them. Chihuahuas are intelligent and can be trained fairly easily. Some Chihuahuas can be overly insecure and are prone to excessive barking and early socialization and training while a puppy is recommended.

Pug

The Pug (#12) is a sturdy small dog that is one of the most popular and largest of the toy dog breeds. This charming, adorable and playful small dog will make you laugh. The Pug is an even tempered, easygoing, pleasant and friendly companion. This sturdy, small dog breed gets along well with children and with other pets although toddlers and small children should be supervised carefully to ensure they don't injure the dog. The Pug doesn't need much training but enjoys the process and is fairly easy to train.

Pomeranian

Pomeranians (#14) or "Poms" are one of the smallest toy dog breeds. The Pom is lively, spirited and animated. This breed is a keen-eyed extrovert who is very inquisitive and must check out all activities going on around him. The Pom is a proud and confident, even cocky, toy dog that requires early and thorough socialization with strangers to minimize its tendency to bark. This toy breed is intelligent, eager to learn and takes readily to positive and gentle training methods.

Maltese

The Maltese is one of the most intelligent and most gentle of all the toy dog breeds. This lively and agile little toy dog loves to play games. This toy breed is cheerful, loving, playful, smart and has lots of personality. Maltese should have early socialization while they are puppies to give them more confidence and overcome their distrust of strangers and minimize their tendency to bark. Maltese enjoy

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obedience training and some will do well in competitive obedience and agility competitions. This toy breed does fine with older and considerate children.

Miniature Pinscher

The Miniature Pinscher or Min Pin is the most active and lively of all the toy dog breeds. Miniature Pinschers are full of energy, alert, loyal, intelligent and very courageous for their size. Min Pins think they are much larger than their toy size and can be aggressive towards other dogs. These toy dogs can be stubborn and need lots of early socialization and obedience training while puppies. The breed does fine with older considerate children and household pets. Outdoors, this toy breed should be on a leash or in a securely fenced yard as they can disappear quickly.

Cavalier King Charles Spaniel

The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel (#31) is a graceful and happy toy spaniel that is larger than its close relative, the English Toy Spaniel. The Cavalier is a gentle, even-tempered, happy and playful small dog. Cavaliers make excellent family dogs who even like to play with small children (always under supervision of course). The Cavalier finds all humans delightful and loves to cuddle in their laps and snuggle in their beds. However, these comfort-loving Spaniels love to run in the yard and chase

chipmunks, squirrels, and birds. Cavaliers are easy to train but require early socialization as puppies to overcome their natural timidity.

Papillon

The Papillon (#35) is one of the oldest European toy dog breeds and the French word for butterfly was used to describe this lively toy breed with the erect butterfly ears. The Papillon is a friendly, affectionate and intelligent dog that is much more robust than it appears. The Pap is definitely not a lap dog and is high spirited, active and loves to play outside and go for walks. This breed is very smart and can be trained to be a good agility and obedience dog for competitions. If the Pap is socialized early and trained properly, and not pampered and spoiled, it becomes a confident and outgoing companion who gets along well with older children and pets.

Mike Mathews is a contributing writer and editor for the popular dog breed site:

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. He provides informative, real-world advice and tips on dog breeds,

dog health, dog grooming and more. As well be sure to check out his free report on Dog Training.

Toy Dog Breeds

By Stephanie Hetu

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Toy dog breeds include greyhounds, terriers, pinschers, pugs, chihuahuas, pekingese, spaniels—the official list of the AKC is quite extensive. Regardless of breed, toy dogs are desired for their cuteness and cuddle-ability. Many retain the characteristics of a puppy for their entire lives. This may be one of the big attractions that toy dog breeds hold over larger breed dogs.

Diminutive size, however, does not mean that toy dog breeds are less hardy. Once safely past puppyhood, their energy levels and enthusiasm rival any breed of dog. Some are excellent watch dogs, but they won't be able to follow through preventing entry of an intruder. The hue and cry of toy dog breeds can be enough to make your hair stand on end!

There are several advantages to toy dog breeds. Besides the ease of handling a smaller sized dog, they are more appropriate for apartment dwellers because they do not require as much exercise space as a large dog. Additionally, toy dog breeds usually shed less than their larger counterparts—not because they have different coat characteristics, but because there is less dog! All sides of dog care are smaller: from cleaning to clean-up and food consumed to food expelled.

Historically, toy dog breeds were used as companion dogs. They were friendly and alert, yet willing to be held and petted. They are very comforting and can bring peace to an owner. Nursing homes and adult care facilities have found toy dog breeds to be soothing for their patients. Contrary to common perception, there is no law preventing animals from living in nursing homes. It is up to the eldercare facility to allow—or disallow—pets. The calming influence of any pet, especially one that will transfer affections to everyone equally, is a wonderful aid for patient facilities.

You don't have to reside in an eldercare facility to enjoy toy dog breeds. They do provide companionable joy for many who otherwise would be concerned about space, exercise and care requirements of a larger breed of dog.

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Toy Dogs

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