

Frequently Asked Questions About the Sighthound

Many people who have never or rarely seen sighthounds are eager to learn as much as possible about them because they are so unusual. Many are moved by their elegance, while others are surprised. There are many myths and rumors about the sighthound. Opinions about sighthounds are often very contradictory, depending on the experience and involvement of the owners. Let's try to clear up some of the confusion and clearly answer the "tricky" questions that are often asked about the sighthound breed.

Question 1.

Why are sighthounds so rarely seen on the streets of the city?

In fact, the number of sighthounds is gradually increasing. In the early 2000s, they were practically unseen in our city. Now, there is a noticeable rise in the breed in Kyiv and throughout Ukraine. The sighthound is not a dog for the yard or the streets. Most often, they are walked in parks, away from traffic. Why? Because they are a sighthound, they need more exercise than other dogs. And where else can these swift and agile creatures run if not in the park? Additionally, sighthounds are quite sensitive to noise, and some are simply not accustomed to the hustle and bustle of the streets. Some owners find it easier to leave their peacefully sleeping sighthound at home rather than walk them for two hours a day amidst city noise. That is why you see so few sighthounds on city streets. However, they are companion dogs, and with proper training and socialization, a sighthound will love to be everywhere with their owner, on any trip or walk.

Question 2.

Why is the sighthound so thin?

This is the most frequently asked question. It always brings a smile or a grin to the faces of sighthound owners. The sighthound has a very fine and delicate structure, unlike any other breed. They are light and graceful rather than thin! Not everyone is ready to appreciate the beauty of a slender sighthound. We often see bulky Labradors, well-fed Dachshunds, and fluffy Poodles. But here, everything is in plain sight. All the anatomy is visible under the velvet-thin coat. The sighthound is a creature of grace, as if stepped out of a medieval painting, capable of reaching the speed of a running hare in seconds! Do you think such a dog can be overweight? A sighthound has everything needed for fast running and light, quick jumps – lean strong muscles, elastic ligaments, and a thin, light bone structure. Some lines of sighthounds are exceptionally light-boned. The weight of such sighthounds does not exceed 2.5-3.5 kg. Sometimes, you can indeed see their ribs, but this is more an exception than a rule, indicating improper care, feeding, and lack of proper exercise. Of course, the sighthound should be light and graceful according to the standard! But some sighthounds love to eat and are constantly limited in their diet. If not, they can overeat and look overweight.

Question 3.

Is it true that sighthounds do not shed or smell?

Of course not! Like any other dog, a sighthound changes its coat. Even people regularly lose hair. But you will rarely see a sighthound's hair on your clothes or the floor. There are times when the coat changes more actively, usually after winter, before estrus, and after whelping. But this happens gradually and almost imperceptibly, especially if the diet is properly selected, and the sighthound does not lack vitamins essential for coat health. Sighthounds have a very pleasant scent, not at all dog-like. They can even smell like honey or milk, each in its way. Sighthounds often sleep with their owners at night. Hygienic procedures are necessary for sighthounds, just like any dog: teeth cleaning, bathing. Even people do not smell pleasant without these routines.

Question 4.

Is it true that sighthounds are hard to house-train?

We will answer this question very categorically – no, it is not true! It's all about skill and experience – read our special article on this topic. If you get a puppy at the age of 2.5-4 months, it will take effort and time but no more than with a puppy of any other breed. There are small nuances. For example, the metabolism of a small sighthound is higher than that of other dogs, so the frequency of natural needs will be slightly higher. If you are training your sighthound puppy to relieve itself outside, you should take it "to the grass" at least 5-6 times a day. There is a belief that if you train a sighthound to go on a towel or any other fabric, all fabric surfaces in the house will be seen by the sighthound as a "new modification of the toilet." I completely disagree! My sighthounds had their little toilet in the apartment, specifically a towel, and there were no intentions to soil the sofa and carpets at that time. However, it has been noted that inappropriate elimination behavior is seen in certain sighthound lines with unstable nervous systems or weaker psyches.

Question 5.

Is it true that sighthounds often break their legs?

No more often than other small dogs, such as Toy Terriers, Chihuahuas, or Yorkshire Terriers. Like any graceful and agile dog, sighthounds are at risk of injury, especially during puppyhood and adolescence when bones are growing and not yet fully strengthened. Let's use a simple analogy. You wouldn't give a 5-year-old child a knife or scissors, knowing they could injure themselves. You wouldn't let the child climb on furniture and watch them jump off. It sounds pretty absurd, doesn't it? It's the same with sighthounds. At a certain tender age, sighthound puppies tend to show courage and try to jump from high places, often acting foolishly and behaving confidently. During the growth of the skeleton and muscles, around 6-7 months, there is a natural imbalance, so puppies up to 9 months should be protected and given fewer opportunities to jump. Similarly, with running in the woods or on uneven unfamiliar surfaces, your vigilance at this time will always be rewarded. But an active lifestyle for a sighthound is the key to solving fragility problems! You don't need to treat them like a crystal statue. Proper physical development is a key element of a sighthound's health. If your puppy sits on the couch all day, only going out for brief walks or just for 10-15 minutes to "do its business," it will not develop properly physically (and even super-premium food won't help here).

Question 6.

Is it true that sighthounds are timid?

Rather, they are very cautious... There are certain lines of sighthounds where timidity and nervousness can be encountered. But this is not the "timidity" that is, by the way, a disqualifying fault according to the standard. Any sighthound can and should be socialized so that it feels great in any environment, be it at a show, on a walk, in transport, or at a guest's house. This, of course, requires work and time from the owner. But the same goes for puppies of any breed.

Question 7.

Why does the sighthound tremble?

The sighthound is a dog with a delicate nervous organization, and some trembling can be noticeable in certain moments. The sighthound does not have a calm, balanced temperament like, for example, the Whippet. They often react strongly to loud noises as well as to cold weather and wind. The sighthound is not afraid; it just perceives the world this way – through its entire skin surface. If your sighthound has a stronger psyche or is already mature and confident, you will almost not notice any trembling.

Question 8.

Why is the sighthound so expensive?

A sighthound, like any other well-bred dog, will not be cheap. Here, it is worth understanding what you expect from a dog and comparing it with the price. A professionally raised sighthound puppy from healthy, titled breed representatives will never be cheap. This rule applies to any breed. When buying a sighthound, never rush! Talk to the breeder, ask them all your questions. Be sure to visit their home and observe how the dogs live and in what conditions. If you are not even allowed to cross the threshold, leave the idea of buying a sighthound puppy from this house. Be sure to attend a show and see the sighthounds live before purchasing a puppy. The impressions you get will be different from viewing photos. Never make a spontaneous decision to buy a sighthound!

Question 9.

How much time do you need to spend with a sighthound puppy?

A lot! And not just with the puppy, but also with the adult dog. If you leave a young sighthound alone at home for too long, you may not recognize your home upon return. Sighthounds are not destructive but very energetic, and their play initially needs to be directed correctly. After 2-3 years, the sighthound becomes very calm, and you might not even notice them at home. Although they are always ready to play and have fun at any age.

Question 10.

Which is better to choose, a male or a female?

The answer to this question depends on why you are getting a sighthound puppy and what kind of family it will join. Females often have more complex characters than males, but females are somewhat calmer and more thoughtful. However, as with people, initially, it seems that females are more tender with their owners, but males can equally be affectionate. A more tender creature than a male sighthound is hard to find. Males are more active and energetic, better accustomed to the street, braver, and more sociable than females. But everything is relative, as with any breed. Sighthounds are so individual that each puppy can be the exact opposite. However, if you want a puppy for your family as a pet and companion, choose a male!

Milena Myshkovska, Kennel "Sunnymoon Place"

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