

FURRY FRIENDS WITH HERDING INSTINCTS



Katie Shockley

A helping hand – or perhaps a helping paw – is sometimes needed when working with livestock.

Herding dogs have been around for over 10,000 years, helping hunt and gather wild animals. Today, dogs are often used on farms, ranches, and simply as companions. There are a few breeds that work best with livestock due to their natural instincts and intelligence. Herding dogs are known for their agility, protective nature, and quick intelligence. These dogs are easy to train and make for a loyal friend. Bear in mind, herding is not the same as guarding.

Finding one that matches your personality and lifestyle is important. Determine your expectations and what characteristics are important. Identify breeds that share these characteristics and talk with a reputable breeder to ensure they would be good matches.

Border collie

Border Collie

A Border collie is one of the first breeds that come to mind when thinking about herding and working with livestock. These high energy dogs are incredibly smart. Border collies are medium-sized, ranging in weight from 30 to 45 pounds. They are quite easy to train and learn quickly, making them a great option for anyone looking for that helping paw. They are best in a high-energy home where they can run and play a lot.

Rough Collie

According to the American Kennel Club, the rough collie is the 37th most popular breed in the country. They are known for distinct markings, flowing hair, loyalty, and protective personalities. These dogs are larger than the Border collie, ranging in weight from 55 to 70 pounds. They are a bit calmer, making them a better choice for an individual who might need to be at work away from home.

Australian Shepherd

Some argue Australian shepherds are one of the smartest breeds. Aussies are known for their prominent coloring. They are obedient, active, agile, and intelligent. This breed loves having a purpose, from controlling a herd of sheep or cattle or simply pleasing their owners through training. Aussies make a great family dog and get along well with other animals. They are very versatile canines and can fit in with any lifestyle from active to relaxed as long as they get regular walks.



Old English Sheepdog

Known for their shaggy hair, these dogs have powerful bodies and active personalities. Training is important to them due to their high energy level, but they are quick to catch on and love to please. This is a larger breed with strong herding instincts. Males range in weight from 70 to 100 pounds, while females are often 60 to 80 pounds. They love to show off their skills and will try to herd almost anything they see. A smart dog known for its friendly, adaptable, and even disposition makes the Old English sheepdog a good choice for many lifestyles.

Australian Cattle Dog

Australian cattle dogs are also known as red and blue heelers and require mental stimulation and physical exercise to help them stay happy and out of trouble. These dogs are active, intelligent, and loyal. While they are a medium-sized dog ranging in weight from 44 to 62 pounds, taking control of an animal three times their size isn't a problem for them. Australian cattle dogs are best in active homes. They are protective and obedient, making them a great choice for a herding dog.

Whether looking for that helping paw or companion, a herding dog might be for you. Keep in mind most of these dogs are higher energy, but their herding instincts make for a loyal furry friend.

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