



## ARE YOU CONSIDERING OWNING A COCKER SPANIEL?

If you are considering owning a Cocker Spaniel please know:

1. A Cocker Spaniel costs an owner approximately \$1,000 a year - high quality food, monthly heartworm and flea protection, professional grooming 6-8 times a year, annual immunizations and at least one well-being visit to the veterinarian all adds up.
2. Numerous health issues afflict Cocker Spaniels - ear, eye, skin and orthopedic problems may occur.
3. Cocker Spaniels need to be indoor dogs. Why? If kept outdoors, the beautiful, long, heavy, floppy ears trap moisture in the ear canal causing bacteria, fungal or yeast infections. This causes their ears to stink and induces pain. In a worst case scenario, the dog will require expensive ear ablation surgery. If kept outdoors, they also can develop skin problems and allergies.
4. Cocker Spaniels are companion dogs. They want and need to spend time with “their people”. A Cocker who does not get enough attention, may become destructive, a barker or both.
5. Some Cocker Spaniels are not good with children, particularly under 7 years of age. Cockers generally don't like the unpredictability and erratic behavior of young children.
6. Their coats require brushing at least twice a week, if not more often. They can be kept clipped, in which they'll need to be professionally or home-groomed every six to eight weeks.
7. The ears need weekly cleaning.
8. Cocker Spaniels are often headstrong dogs who require consistent and loving discipline.

In short, owning a Cocker Spaniel requires exceptional commitment from the owners. The time, energy and financial expense are considerable but you will be rewarded with a devoted friend.

Information about adopting one of our beautiful dogs and dates of our adoption events are online at

[www.RockyMountainCockerRescue.org](http://www.RockyMountainCockerRescue.org).

You can also like us on Facebook to see special announcements and participate in our wonderful fundraisers.



## IS THIS THE RIGHT BREED FOR YOU?

### *COCKERS ARE NOT FOR EVERYONE*

**Cocker Spaniels are a wonderful breed for many reasons, but they are not for everyone. Here's the rundown on Cockers so that you may have the facts and decide for yourself if one of these wiggle-butts is right for you.**

#### **Velcro Dogs**

Cockers bond tightly with their people (usually one family member is their absolute favorite) and need to be with them at all times in order to be really happy. Most Cockers love to be next to you on the couch or sit on your lap in a chair. If you want a dog that leaves you alone, this breed is not for you. If, on the other hand, you love to have a lap dog to pet while you're relaxing, read further...



#### **Sensitive Natures**

Cocker Spaniels are very sensitive dogs that do best with positive reinforcement of correct behaviors. Punishment for bad behavior does not work well with this breed and can break their merry spirits. If you want a dog that responds well to praise and treats for good behavior, you may be on the right track for finding the right dog.

#### **Can be difficult to House-Train**

Some Cockers are difficult to fully house train, so if you absolutely cannot have a dog that has occasional accidents in the house, this is not the breed for you. If you have the patience to positively reinforce good house behavior and you are consistent in your training, it will pay off for you ten-fold with this breed.

#### **Need Regular Grooming**

Cocker Spaniels have silky coats that require regular brushing or very short hair-cuts to stay mat-free. In addition, you will need to get their coats trimmed every 4-8 weeks as it grows to keep it looking good. Professional grooming for a Cocker Spaniel is around \$40-\$50, so you may want to purchase the tools and learn to do it yourself. If you are unwilling to brush their long, silky ears a few times each week and remove mats on a regular basis, this is not the breed for you.



#### **Shedding**

Depending on the type of coat, Cockers are average shedders. Coats that are a little curly or coarse seem to shed less than the straight, silky coats. The shorter the coat, the less obvious the shedding. If shedding and regular brushing just isn't your style, you will want to keep the coat trimmed very short (including the ears).

## Need Quality Food

Cocker Spaniels are prone to yeast infections in their ears. These can often be eliminated by removing wheat from their diets (including treats). Many dog foods on the market today contain wheat and corn as fillers, so if you are not willing to pay a little more money for a high quality dog food that does not contain these ingredients, this breed is not for you. If you want only the best for your fur-ever friend, we can provide you with a list of quality food to get you started and give you websites to check out how dog food is graded according to their ingredients. Cockers need only 1/2 - 3/4 cup of quality food twice a day, so paying more for high quality food is not much to ask.

## Veterinary Care

Cockers can live to be 16-18 years old, so you need to be able to provide them with many years of quality veterinary care to take care of any health issues that may arise such as ear infections, cherry eye, cataracts, arthritis, bad teeth, luxating patellas, hypothyroid, cancer, etc. If you cannot afford the potential financial risk or burden, this breed may not be for you. If you keep the dog healthy by providing annual health exams, wheat free dog food, regular grooming and teeth brushing, your vet bills will probably stay low, but we all know there is no guarantee there!

## Indoor Dogs

Cocker Spaniels are NOT to be left outdoors unsupervised. They are only happy when they are with you (see #1 above) and do not do well when left outside for long periods of time unsupervised. They love to play and run around outside WITH YOU, but alone they are miserable and miserable dogs bark, whine and otherwise annoy neighbors.

## Love to Play and Go for Walks



Cocker Spaniels were bred as hunting dogs so they can be quite energetic and enthusiastic in their play. Most love to play fetch with balls (especially squeaky balls) and go for long walks. If you over feed them and do not give them the exercise they need to stay healthy, they tend to gain weight, which leads to health problems. So, if you are looking for a partner to help keep you in shape, Cockers may be a good match.

## Snugglers

Cockers not only love to snuggle every waking minute, but also all night, so they prefer to sleep in your bed with you (maybe even under the covers). You may find yourself on the edge of the bed because they snuggle right up against you and, when you move over, they move over to stay close. If you don't like this much togetherness, you will want to crate train your Cocker right from the start!

***NOTE:** Although dogs are different based on their environment, owners, and genetic breeding, the items noted above are the typical behaviors, traits, and personalities of most Cocker Spaniels.*