

Asryn Siberians

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The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



"Actually, sitting on top of their dog house during inclement weather is normal for a Husky. Catching snowflakes on the tongue, however, seems unique to our particular pet."

Congratulations on bringing home your new Siberian Husky pup.

The following information is provided to assist you with the very best start and ongoing relationship with your new family member.

According to a variety of research into canine breeding and behaviour approximately 30 to 35% of a dogs ultimate behavioural makeup is genetic and the rest (60 to 65%) is attributed to its upbringing, training, socialisation, nutrition and health care.

As breeders, temperament is extremely important to us and we breed only from dogs with good sound temperaments. We then spend a lot of time with our puppies in their earliest days giving them the best start in life that we can.

Your pup has been well socialised in its early weeks of life. All Asryn puppies are handled daily from birth, and from two weeks onwards are gently introduced to a wide range of noises and experiences to help it to become a happy, relaxed, outgoing and well adjusted dog throughout its adult life.

It is important that socialising of your puppy continues after going home with you, especially during this early but extremely critical period in its development, as this time will form the basis for all that your dog will be in the future. The more chances a puppy has to be exposed to new things and experiences the less bothered it will be throughout its life when faced with new or stressful situations. Unsocialised dogs can become shy, fearful, and defensive and can even become aggressive (fear aggression). So the more you can introduce your dog to early, the better.

We suggest that you consider attending puppy pre-school (Most Vet clinics now offer these), as well as considering attending obedience classes once your pup is old enough for at least 12 months.

Doing this together will build a strong bond of trust between you as well as providing you with skills to guide your dogs behaviour; helping to make your time together time that you can really enjoy. Even for experienced dog owners the experience can be a really positive dog for socialising puppies in a safe environment. A well-trained dog is a happy dog, as it is one that knows what is expected of it and who gains pleasure from pleasing you. Even if you don't feel you will learn a lot from puppy pre school the experience will be very good for your pup.

I'm sure you have all read and heard the golden rule that a pet is a commitment for the life of that pet. How true this is! But just as important is that you understand the specific commitment you need to make in the initial period, particularly in the first year or so of your pet's life with you. Young dogs require a good deal of your time and energy to enable its role in your family to be one that you can all enjoy. A dog cannot know how to behave in the way you wish it to all by itself; it looks to you for guidance in its behaviour. And dogs look for patterns to learn so consistent repetition of training is a must.

Puppy Proofing, Bringing Your Pup Home and First Night Alone

Prior to your pup coming home (or at least prior to it having free access to your house or garden) you should ensure that your garden is well fenced (and can't be dug out from), and that you have removed from reach any items in your house or garden that could prove dangerous to your new family member. Particular items to note which have often caused serious problems when ingested or chewed are: antifreeze, garden supplies especially snail/slug baits, pesticides or mouse/rat poisons, household cleaners, medicines, power cords, chocolate, onions. We have even known a puppy to chew a tube of super glue and glue its eyes together! Some house and garden plants also can be very toxic to dogs if chewed and a list of these is included in your puppy pack.

If you have glass doors consider putting a temporary distinguishing feature on them at puppy viewing height (such as masking tape). This will save lots of painful bangs for both the puppies face and your glass door. These can be removed once your puppy has gained an understanding that this walkway can sometimes be open and sometimes be closed.

Puppies require large amounts of sleep whilst they are young. Please ensure that your puppy has a safe warm place to sleep and that children understand the need for the puppy to get adequate rest.

Being a 'baby' your pup is going to be very excitable and playful, it is important that it is allowed to be a pup, but at the same time do not hesitate in setting clear and consistent boundaries early and sticking to these.

For example, don't let your pup jump all over you, your family or guests as this will soon become habitual and what's cute and funny at first will become a problem once your cute small fluffy puppy has matured and reached its adult height and weight.

One useful training method is to teach your pup to sit quietly (initially on lead) when visitors arrive so that you instil from the start that the arrival of people is not an invitation for your dog to madly go about gaining as much attention as it can in whatever way it pleases. If you can do this before opening the door to visitors you will also begin training your dog that it should not rush to the door excitedly whenever someone arrives – trust us, this is a very practical training task to begin from an early age.

The first night after you take your pup home will be the first that it has faced without its littermates. This is a time of understandable uncertainty for any puppy as it is used to close contact from its littermates when it is awake and when it is sleeping.

Puppies are also used to waking up and playing at times throughout the night so the loneliness of a long stretch of night alone is something your puppy must get used to.

You will have been given some material, which carries the scent of the litter, and this should be left with the pup overnight as it will assist in providing a sense of comfort and security. A toy or safe chew treat is also a good distraction for puppies at bedtime. An item of clothing with your own scent on it can also be of comfort.

Make sure your pup has a comfortable bed away from draughts.

If you are going to keep your pup inside overnight, put your pup outside to relieve itself before putting it to bed. At this stage puppies cannot fully control themselves and certainly cannot go all night without needing to go to the toilet so will need your assistance with this regard if it is to learn clean habits. More information and advice on this is included in the housebreaking and crate training sections later on.

Exercise and Growth injuries in a young dog

Your pup will be ready to be introduced to a collar and a lead and you should build up its confidence around having a lead on and you at the other end. Most puppies resist leads strongly at first. Don't be discouraged and don't let your puppy get away with this behaviour. Be encouraging but firm (but never harsh).

One important factor in keeping a young dog healthy long term is to avoid heavy physical training / exercise until the growth plates have closed. Puppies are not merely small adults. There are marked differences in coordination, strength, stamina and anaerobic capabilities. Young puppy's legs and joints are not strong enough for strenuous exercise and whilst in its early stages of puppy-hood we encourage you not to take your pup for lengthy walks which might place too much strain on it. Short walks do assist with important socialisation and training. Any amount of exercise that your pup undertakes by itself while running around will be fine, as it will moderate itself and rest when necessary. The one big exception to this is that some pups have caused themselves permanent injuries through regularly jumping up and down from retaining walls or similar stepped areas in gardens so if you can avoid your puppy having free run of such areas whilst it is young this is ideal.

Growth Plates, also known as epiphyseal plates or physes, are areas of growing tissue near the ends of the long bones in young dogs. Each long bone has at least two growth plates: one at each end. The growth plates determine the future length and shape of the mature bone. These growth plates are the weakest area of the growing skeleton. In a growing dog a serious injury to a joint is more likely to damage a growth plate than to damage the ligaments that stabilise the joint. An injury that would cause a sprain in an adult dog can cause a long term injury to the growth plate in a young dog. When the dog has finished growing, the growth plates close and are replaced by solid bone. The growth plates of different bones close at different times and the larger the breed the later the growth plates close. For example the growth plates of the pelvic bones close around 5 months in smaller dogs and six months in larger dogs, whereas the growth plates of the tibia at the stifle joint don't close until 10 months in toy breeds and 14 months of age in giant breeds.

While growth plate injuries can be caused by an acute event such as a fall, or blow to a limb, chronic injuries to the growth plates can also occur usually from overuse such as continuous impact. For example dogs that are taught to jump at a young age, are taught to weave (weave poles are an agility obstacle) or which jump up and down from areas such as stairs or different levels in gardens such as retaining walls, and which undertake these activities repeatedly can develop growth plate injuries.

Whilst your pup is still young it is wise to take note of the following guidelines to minimise the risk of growth injuries:

- Do not allow your puppy to get overweight. There should be a light covering of fat over the ribs only.
- Do not allow your puppy to spend time on his hind legs (i.e. jumping up). This places a lot of strain on growing limbs.
- Do not allow your puppy to run up and down steps or to jump up and down retaining walls, or from any significant heights. Some young dogs develop problems such as slipping patella's from repeatedly jumping up and down (and this includes jumping from couches).
- Do not allow your puppy to slide or scramble on slippery floors.

Do not over exercise. Until it has reached maturity do not run your dog next to a bike, do not allow your dog to jump over obstacles or begin agility weave pole training. If you are hoping to do agility with your Sib please be patient and do not begin training on any actual obstacles (including weave poles) before your dog has reached the age of 12 months. If agility is of particular interest to you there are however many training activities that you can undertake with your young dog to build foundation skills and prepare for future activity in this sport (or others) and a large number of books exist on this topic. Local obedience/agility clubs can assist with advice on foundation training also.

The Siberian is an active dog with a huge amount of energy and it does require exercise to expend this energy, otherwise you risk your dog displaying destructive behaviours. Despite popular belief this need not be a huge amount of exercise, short periods of vigorous activity and play each day is adequate. Running around its own yard (no matter how large this yard may be) day and night will not suffice for this is a breed which requires mental stimulation as much as physical exercise and what it really craves is that you spend time sharing your life with it. The one thing that a Siberian does require above all else (even though this is not a breed that fawns all over its people) is large doses of companionship.

Heat

Although adapted for frozen climates the Siberian also adapts well to Australian conditions. In fact in many instances it deals better with our heat than many short-coated breeds that have a solid black (heat attracting) coat. The main issues in relation to heat (and these are relevant to all breeds not just to your Siberian) is that your dog should always have access to fresh water and shade. (No dog should ever be left out in the sun without access to adequate shade!) Most Siberians love water so paddling pools or similar which your dog can stand in or play in are fabulous. Siberians also usually love trips to the beach. Cool mats are also available which your dog can lie on in hot weather (these can be very useful for putting in crates.)

Never leave your dog alone in your car when the weather is even a little warm as cars heat up quickly and the temperature inside a car is always far greater than the temperature outside. Even a quick trip inside the shops to pick up a few items can be fatal for your dog if it is left in a hot car.

In summer it is important to schedule exercise sessions during the cooler hours of the day. If you do need to take your dog out on a hot day ensure that you don't keep it standing out in full sun without shade and take with you plenty of water to give it frequent drinks.

Because a dogs system cannot cool itself quickly, heatstroke can quickly become a life threatening condition. Should you dog show any signs of heat stress, place their feet in cool water and hose them down all over. You can also place water soaked towels on the head, neck, feet, chest and abdomen and turn a fan on and point in the animal's direction.

Signs of heatstroke include excessive panting and possible difficulty in breathing, rise in body temperature (if over 40 degrees this is a serious condition which needs immediate action), salivation, lose of coordination, and even seizures. Any dog showing signs of heat stroke should be taken to a vet for treatment.

Feeding

Since weaning your pup will have been fed a high quality professional dry dog food (not one of the cheaper brands available at supermarkets) specifically designed for puppies.

You would have been supplied with a small amount of this food when purchasing your pup from Asryn, to assist the pup to adapt to the changes it will encounter after going home with you.

The growth that a Siberian Husky will undertake in its first year of life is pretty significant and during this time young dogs (particularly larger breeds) require additional nutrients that are not found in adult formula dog foods. It is therefore important that you continue to feed a puppy formula for the first 12 months of your dog's life.

Raw bones, chicken necks can be fed as a special supplement but we suggest that this is only done when you are there to closely supervise. These have been known to get stuck in throats and can be dangerous if this occurred when no one was around. Bones can splinter and chicken necks can become stuck in throats and this can KILL! NEVER feed cooked bones of any kind. We feed all our Siberians a raw carrot a day and if given these from an early age they are a fun, health and inexpensive treat.

Siberians are not big eaters, especially given their size as they have evolved to maximise the nutrition in the food they receive. Care should be taken therefore not to overfeed your dog, as a fat dog is an unhealthy one. Many Siberians go through a stage of being a finicky eater. Do not pander to this – put down food and leave it for 10 to 15 minutes and then remove any uneaten portions. Do not feed again until the next scheduled mealtime. Your pup will soon learn that if it doesn't eat it will lose its food. Keep in mind of course that lack of eating can also be a sign of ill health and so any such issues must be considered if your Sib does fail to eat and promptly addressed if an underlying cause is suspected. If you are concerned about your dogs' lack of appetite sardines mixed with food often is enticing to many dogs.

Currently your pup requires two meals per day. This can be cut down to one meal a day after your dog reaches approximately nine months of age (we usually continue two meals a day at Asryn until they are twelve months old).

As mentioned above we often give our dogs raw (fresh) carrots. These are particularly useful if your dog appears hungry but is prone to put on too much weight if fed extra as they can be given to assist a dog feel like it is getting extra food without adding many calories. Most of our adults dogs get one carrot in the morning to replace their morning feed when we move them to one main meal a day. Grated raw carrot can also be added (as can many steamed vegetables) to evening meals to increase bulk without increasing calories.

Fresh water should be available to your pup at all times.

Housetraining

A puppy will need to 'go' many times a day (or night). A good schedule to start instilling housetraining is to take your pup outside to relieve itself whenever it wakes from a sleep, straight after every meal and again 30 minutes or so after a meal, and after play or any unusual excitement, and of course before taking it to its bed. Crates can be a useful tool to better manage the process overnight as long as you are willing and able to get up during the night to let the pup out to relieve itself during the initial training period.

During the process of housebreaking do not allow your pup to wonder unsupervised around your house where it may easily make mistakes. Consistency is the key for all training.

Crates can be a useful tool to better manage the process overnight as long as you are willing and able to get up during the night to let the pup out to relieve itself. Crates can also be useful during the day if you have your pup inside with you but have a period of time (to answer a phone call, answer a knock at the door etc. where you cannot watch the pup as thoroughly as you might normally).

Try to use the same door to take your pup outside so that it learns to associate this exit as a door that it can ask to go out of when it needs to. Praise your pup as soon as it relieves itself in an appropriate place. It will soon associate going to toilet outside as something that pleases you. Even if housebreaking is progressing well accidents do and will happen because puppies do not have full control until they are between five and six months of age. Your vigilance and commitment to the process of housebreaking will determine how quickly and effectively housebreaking occurs.

Crate Training

Crates come in a variety of sizes and shapes, many being collapsible for ease of transport. Crates provide a den like environment, a place of security for your dog, and a positive place for you to provide confinement at times when this might be necessary. Many crates will also fit into cars, especially station wagons, providing a great way to meet current legislation about restraining dogs whilst in moving vehicles, not to mention offering protection to your dog in the event of a car accident.

Should your dog ever have to be kept overnight at a vets it will be placed in a crate and so crate training your dog will lessen the trauma experienced by your dog in such a situation. Also should your dog ever be injured and require you to keep it quiet at home, crating is an excellent way to do this, so once again previous training for your dog in being in a crate can be very advantageous.

When introducing puppies to crates, do so initially for short periods of time. It is a great idea to feed your dog in a crate when first crate training it. Your dog will soon associate a crate as a positive place to be. Never use a crate as a form of punishment for this will make your dog associate the crate as an unpleasant rather than positive environment to be.

Crates are extremely useful for housebreaking puppies providing the crate is not too large. All dogs have a natural instinct to not soil the area where they sleep. Therefore a puppy is less likely to go to the toilet in a correct sized crate but rather ask to be let out when it needs to go. Do not leave your pup unattended in a crate for long stretches of time at first. If using to housetrain at night you will need to get up at regular intervals to let your pup outside so it can go. Each night the time between intervals can be extended until your pup can go all night without needing to go out.

Teething / Chewing / Boredom and Toys

All puppies go through stages of chewing and destroying things, often associated with the period when it is teething and wanting to massage its gums by chewing on things. Your dog needs to be taught what are permissible items for it to chew and which are not. Always provide your puppy with toys or proper dog chew items and try to remove other likely items out of temptation's way. In particular watch power cords as many puppies have seriously injured or killed themselves biting through live power cords. Also do be mindful of keeping objects out of reach that your puppy may chew and swallow, its amazing the sort of things that can end up down the throats of puppies causing dangerous obstructions.

Many behavioural problems such as barking, tearing washing from the line and digging stem from boredom.

The real issue for preventing boredom is how you provide opportunities for your dog that stimulate its mind. Some of this will be your spending quality time with your dog (a dog is not an accessory to leave in your backyard alone all day and night), some of it will be taking your dog for walks or on family trips (do try to 'share' your life and its adventures with your newest family member), and some of this will be the things you provide to occupy your dog when it must be without your company.

Many people go overboard and buy huge numbers of toys, which they scatter around their house and yard, and wonder why these lie abandoned after a few days while your dog looks for something else to take its interest.

We advocate the use of a 'toy box' for dog toys. Large numbers of toys are unnecessary but dogs do bore of toys easily after a few days. Give your dog a few toys and after a few days remove these and put them away in their toy box, giving your dog a new set of toys. A few days later these toys are removed and the original toys returned. Your dog will treat these toys, which it has not seen for a few days as new and exciting again. You will still need to introduce new toys at times but they will last a lot longer using this technique.

The pet industry now has huge numbers of 'toys' designed to get your dog thinking while it plays, through being occupied with specific tasks such as home alone tug of war toys (which hang in trees), to the very successful Kong chew toys and treat balls. We have found treat balls or a wide variety of complex food 'puzzles' particularly helpful for dogs that are by themselves as they make your dog 'work' for its food. With such devices remember to include any food placed in the treat ball within your calculations for the dog's daily food allowance, otherwise you might find it rapidly putting on excess weight.

Desexing

Your puppy has been sold to you on a neuter agreement, which means that we expect you to de-sex your puppy when it reaches the age of six months of age. This will have been explained to you at length prior to your purchasing your puppy. There is no reason for a pet to be left entire and there are many reasons why de-sexing is best for you, your dog and for the breed in general. Despite popular belief a bitch does not have any need to have a litter of pups for its wellbeing, and there are already far too many homeless dogs in shelters and far more puppies available than the market requires. Breeding is not a money making exercise; to breed in a responsible way requires much research, time and expense.

There are also significant health reasons why a dog which is not intended for breeding should be de-sexed as there are a number of very serious health conditions which entire dogs are susceptible to and which you will not have to worry about with a de-sexed animal.

Advantages of spaying females is that you don't have to worry about messy heats, you don't have the problem of howling male 'suitor's' at your windows and fences trying to get to your female, and you eliminate the real risk of pyometra (disease of the uterus) and significantly decrease the risk of incidences of mammary cancer in your dog. For male dogs the advantages of neutering include decreased incidences of wanting to display aggression to other dogs (without changing your dog's personality), decreased tendency to want to roam in search of bitches in season, and decreased incidences of many urogenital diseases (including testicular cancers).

General Health

It is not within the scope of a document like this to be able to go into details of a huge range of health issues; there are plenty of books on this subject that are well worth a read. A few key issues however which we felt worth mentioning here are:

Know what is normal for your dog – It is very difficult to pick up what is abnormal in the health of your pet if you have not spent the time to know your pet's condition when it is healthy. Establishing and maintaining a regular grooming time for you and your pet enables you to know your pet's general condition and to look out for cuts, sores, bumps or lumps, or any other abnormalities which might not usually be present. In this way you will spot any changes quickly and not be left wondering just how long that lump you found on your dog actually has been there or if it's growing in size. Keep an eye out for grass seeds that might become imbedded in your dog's coat as these can enter the dog's body through the skin and cause serious health problems. It can be useful to learn how to take your dog's temperature. Normal temperature for a dog is between 38 and 39 degrees Celsius. Temperatures under 37 degrees or over 40 degrees should be considered as very serious and your pet taken to a vet straight away for the reason to be diagnosed and treated.

Diarrhoea – There are many reasons why your dog might suffer from diarrhoea. A sudden change of diet or stress can cause such a reaction in dogs. Eating something disagreeable to the stomach may also be the cause or it could be a symptom of a range of illnesses including parasitic infections, viral, fungal or bacterial infections. If diarrhoea continues for more than 24 hours, or if the animal is very young or elderly or otherwise in ill health the animal can suffer from dehydration so monitor for signs of this within any animal that is suffering from diarrhoea. For the same reason never withhold water from an animal suffering from diarrhoea. In the first instance remove all food from your dog, and fast for a day. Then reintroduce a bland diet such as rice, and steamed or boiled chopped chicken (with all fat removed). Once the diarrhoea has subsided you can slowly reintroduce your dog's normal food. If the diarrhoea continues or if there is blood present consult your vet.

Dehydration – To check for dehydration in a dog pull up on the skin at the back of the animal's neck; it should spring back to normal position immediately when released (within 1 or 2 seconds). If there is a delay the dog is dehydrated. Very old or very skinny animals can be difficult to assess in this manner because their skin loses some of its natural elasticity with age or malnourishment. It can also be difficult to assess obese animals in this way. In such circumstances checking the gums can be a good indication, as a dehydrated animal will usually have dry and sticky feeling gums (unless excess salivation is also present which will obviously mask otherwise dry gums).

Tonsillitis – It is possible for dogs to get tonsillitis, the glands on each side of the throat become swollen and the dog may cough, and run a temperature. If this occurs consult your vet who may proscribe a course of antibiotics to cure the problem.

Dog bites – As a general rule, if you are unfortunate enough to have your dog bitten by another dog and the bite has broken the skin, it is best to take your dog or a check up at the vet's even if the bite does not look bad. Dog bites become infected more often than not and better to treat a small bite immediately than deal with the effects of a nasty infection and resulting abscess.

Canine Bloat – An intensely painful and life threatening condition in which gas, air and fluid build up in your dog's stomach. The Siberian is not prone to this condition (it appears much more frequently in many of the deeper chested breeds) however it can occur in any breed and when it does occur death can come very swiftly so preventative action is the best way to avoid problems. Try to prevent your dog from gulping down its food (feeding the daily allowance in smaller more frequent meals instead of one large meal is a good way to deal with a dog which seems to suck in its food like a giant vacuum cleaner). Also don't exercise your dog directly before or after a meal or let it drink large amounts of water at one time before or directly after exercise. Signs that a dog may be suffering from bloat are profuse salivation, a distended abdomen, restlessness, general discomfort and unsuccessful attempts to vomit or defecate).

Ear problems / shaking of the head / loss of balance – Symptoms of shaking of the head, scratching at the ear or loss of balance can be signs of an inner ear infection, water in the ear from swimming or bathing, or a foreign object in the ear (such as a grass seed).

Prolonged and untreated ear infections can lead to more serious problems so it is a good idea to take your dog to a vet if it displays any of these signs. As part of your normal care and grooming routine it is always a good idea to check ears to make sure they are clean and clear of debris. Regular checks like this can minimise difficulties although problems can still arise, especially in the form of trapped grass seeds. Other signs that an ear infection might be present include bad odour coming from the ear, or red swelling present. Odour probably indicates that a yeast infection is present; once diagnosed by a vet you can help prevent reoccurrence with the use of ear drops and by cleaning the ear gently with a mixture of 1 part vinegar mixed to 10 parts water. Never place cotton swabs into the ear canal when cleaning as this will only push any debris present further into the ear.

Strains and Sprains – Strains or sprains can be caused by over exertion, tripping/falling or rough play. If your dog displays signs of limping or swelling first check for any obvious signs of injury or other obvious causes such as three corner jacks in feet pads. If no obvious cause is present and no other symptoms are visible apply a cold compress (ice pack) or cold water to the area for 15 minutes and restrict exercise (crating can be useful here). You can repeat cold compress's once every hour for 15/20 minutes at a time if necessary. If no improvement occurs within 24 hours or the condition worsens noticeably take your dog to the vet, as an x-ray may be necessary to ensure that your dog is not suffering from a fracture or torn ligament. Never give aspirin or any over the counter pain relief medication to your dog unless prescribed by your vet, as many such human medications can be toxic to dogs.

Hot Spots – Unfortunately Siberian Huskies are a breed that are often prone to this problem so regular coat care is important as this will minimise such problems and allow you to spot any potential problems early. Hot Spots is the common name for a skin infection called pyoderma. Pyoderma can develop very suddenly and can become a large, red-raw, oozing superficial sore. The development of pyoderma or 'hot spots' is the result of your dog itching and is more common during summer months. Such itching can be caused by fleas and allergies or an irritation caused initially by an insect bite, as well as simply being a result of the dogs' undercoat becoming 'packed up' if regular coat care is not undertaken. This is why grooming is so important – especially removing undercoat when your dog is shedding. The itch causes your dog to scratch and chew uncontrollably. Bacteria normally live on all dogs' skins and with the constant itching and chewing that your dog does to alleviate itches; moist conditions on the skin cause this bacteria to explode in numbers. This then can lead to the oozing sore, which itself then often causes the dogs chewing to increase. Such sores can then become badly infected.

Treatment for hot spots is simple but time consuming. The area needs to dry out (and be kept dry as the bacteria growth is due to constant moisture), so the hair around the sore needs to be shaved, clipped or cut away. A gentle antibacterial wash can then be applied twice a day (Iodine based antibacterial washes are very effective). If the lesion is large or there are multiple sores oral antibiotics from your vet may be necessary. In severe cases your vet may also wish to give your dog further treatment to lessen the itching and break the scratching and chewing cycle.

Hip Dysplasia (HD) - As with many large breeds HD can be a problem for Siberian Huskies through careful breeding by responsible breeders has made the problem far less prevalent than it was a number of years ago. HD occurs when the hip socket and the leg ball-joint don't fit together and the surface of each wears against each other. The 'misfit' results in separation between the bones known as subluxation. This joint instability results not only in joint malfunction but also in arthritic changes in the dogs hip. Because the dog's body is trying to stabilise the joint it grows osteophytes around the joint, resulting in osteoarthritis and a misshapen femoral neck or head. The pain felt by dogs suffering from HD can be extreme.

Hip dysplasia is an inherited defect however formation of the joints can also be modified by environmental factors such as over nutrition, excessively rapid growth, and certain traumas during the growth period of the skeleton as described elsewhere in this document. Dogs that have HD have a much higher probability of passing on the problem to their offspring, which is why health testing of breeding stock is very important. However having clear parents does not guarantee that puppies will not have a problem.

This is because the problem is not caused by a single gene, it is thought to be polygenetic - i.e. it depends on a number of genes. Therefore attempts to eradicate the problem through controlled breeding is a complex process.

Anal Gland problems – The anal glans are located under the tail, just below the anus. These should normally empty when a dog goes to the toilet but sometimes can become blocked and / or infected. A dog that looks uncomfortable, and is worrying its rear end or smells unpleasant may need its glands cleared. Failure to do so can lead to an abscess or infection forming. If you take your dog regularly to a grooming salon ask the groomer to check these for you whenever you visit. Otherwise ask your vet to show you how to empty these out.

Vaccinations & Worming

Your puppy will have been wormed regularly prior to coming home with you and requires fortnightly worming until the age of 12 weeks with a puppy wormer. This means you will need to worm it the week you bring it home, and again at 10 and 12 weeks of age. After this worming should occur every month to maintain maximum health. We suggest that you place your dog on heartworm medication once it is around 4 months of age and continue this throughout its life. This is something that you will probably wish to discuss further with your vet. In many cases now combined treatments for worming, heartworm and fleas are an easy way to address these needs each month in a single process.

All of our pups receive their first vaccination at six weeks of age and will require a booster at approximately 10 weeks of age. You will have received a vaccination certificate showing details of the six-week injection your pup will have had, when picking up your puppy. There are a variety of different types of vaccination available. Your puppy has been given the best possible protection available for puppies aged six weeks; with his/her vaccination covering Distemper, Hepatitis, Parvovirus, Leptospirosis and Coronavirus. The booster vaccination must be given for this first vaccination to be effective. We suggest that you also arrange for your pup to be protected against kennel cough (only one dose is necessary if the intranasal dose is given) at the same time that the booster is given.

Each pup would have also received a general health check when it went for its first vaccination. Your own vet will also give a check up when you take it for its booster and this is a great time for you to begin an ongoing positive relationship for you and your dog with your vet. Vet visits should not be something that your pet fears.

After the booster, booster vaccinations will be required; Boarding Kennels and Obedience Training clubs will not allow your dog to attend if it is not kept up to date with its vaccinations. Annual trips to the vet are also a good time for an overall general health check to occur. Better to do this than wait for a health problem to become apparent first before visiting your vet.

Growth

A Siberian grows very quickly in its first year and in most cases will obtain most of its height by around 8 or 9 months of age. During growth different parts of the dog grow at different rates – often leaving your puppy to look out of proportion, awkward or gangly at various stages. This is normal development for a husky.

Identification

Just in case your dog does ever become lost, identification is important as it provides the best chance for your dog to make it safely back to you quickly. All puppies in our litters are microchipped at the age of six weeks to provide the best identification protection for them should they ever become separated from their owners.

When you purchased your puppy you would have filled out details on a registration form when you purchased your pup and these will be sent in to the national register to confirm you as the primary contact should the dog ever become lost. A copy of the new information will be sent direct to you once the change of contact details have been processed. Always remember to update details on the register if you move home.

The Siberian Husky Breed

Breed characteristics

The Siberian is a medium sized working dog, described as being light on its feet with a running action that should appear effortless. It should have a moderately compact well-furred body and be capable of carrying out its original function of being a harness dog carrying light loads at a moderate speed over great distances. It's body proportions and form should reflect a balance of power, speed and endurance. A Siberian should be friendly and outgoing, not nervous or suspicious of strangers and not aggressive to other dogs. They are usually not a one-person dog, due to their huge capacity to give affection. They adore their family, which can extend quickly to include everybody they meet. The Siberian is often described as possessing a clownish nature and many people talk about the Siberian as a dog that frequently 'smiles'.

The Sib is a very intelligent dog, alert, and eager to please. However the independent spirit that many possess can prove challenging where training is concerned because they can become bored easily of being asked to repeat the same tasks and a firm hand is necessary where training is concerned. Any such difficulty is certainly not because this breed has difficulty learning, quite the opposite as this is a very smart dog that learns very quickly. It's just that at times the logic of why we ask our dogs to do certain things totally escapes the Siberian. Siberians are not known for retrieving balls for example. It was once described to me that the look a Sib gives you if you attempt this game clearly states *'if you wanted that ball you wouldn't have thrown it away in the first place'*. Despite this light-hearted look at trainability many Sib's have excelled in obedience and agility competitions as well as in a range of different disciplines and in fact the Siberian is very adaptable.

It is widely believed that the modern Siberian evolved from the sled dogs of the Chukchi people of North-Eastern Siberia. For showing purposes the Siberian is classified as part of the Utility Group of dogs here in Australia. Other breeds in this group include The Alaskan Malamute, The Rottweiler, The Doberman, The Schnauzer, and The Akita. The Siberian is also a member of the Spritz breed family. They have a double coat; a more detailed description of this is included within the Coat and Coat care section of this document.

Any colour coat is permissible in a Siberian; common colourings are Grey and White (often described as Wolf Grey), Black and White, Red and White or Piebald. Common eye colour is brown or blue. Bi eyed (eyes being different colours) is also common.

Size wise the breed is described in its standard as standing between 53.5 and 60 cm in height for a male or 51 to 56 cm for an adult female. For confirmation showing there is officially no minimum height that will cause a disqualification for a Siberian (although the standard does call for a medium sized dog). Being over the maximum height allowable, as noted above, for a Siberian however is cause for disqualification in a show ring.

A copy of the full breed standard is included for your information at the end of this document. A breed standard is a description of the breed according to the characteristics that it should possess to be a good example of the breed. At dog shows each dog is judged against its own breed standard to see how closely the judge feels it conforms to what the perfect dog for each breed should be like.

Every breed has been developed to undertake certain functions so it follows that they will be good at some things and not so good at others.

The Siberian has none of the protective instincts of a good guard dog. Although the size of the Siberian alone may offer some deterrent to would be trespassers, the average Sib has much love to spread around to everybody and many will offer an intruder the same positive enthusiastic welcome that they would in greeting a friendly visitor.

The Siberian also has a great love of running, to the extent that many describe it as an inbuilt desire to run. This partnered with a total lack of traffic sense can be very dangerous for your dog should it get loose. It is important then that all Siberians are kept in yards that are well fenced. NEVER let your Sib off lead outside of enclosed spaces. Following on from this, the Siberians love of freedom also means that you should never trust your dog with an open door or gate, even when you are nearby, given the horrific consequences you might face if your dog does get out onto the road. The one time your dog does disobey you may well be its last.

Many Siberians have a strong prey drive and thus have a bad reputation when it comes to cats, rabbits or other small animals. To be sure your Siberian is cat friendly and small dog friendly it will need to be well socialised with them during its important imprint periods early in life. This issue is one that you should be aware of with regards to this breed as there are many instances where this prey drive has brought about the untimely demise of smaller pets. You may not feel the need to socialise your pup with cats if you don't have a cat and don't intend ever to have one, but even if you do not have a small dog we ask that you do socialise your Siberian with small dogs (in a controlled safe manner) to ensure that your Sib does recognise a small dog as a dog and not prey in the future. The Siberian prey drive can also be an issue for Siberians in rural areas in relation to stock and is another reason for ensuring that yards are well fenced and that your Siberian is not able to roam.

Whilst Siberians don't actually require a large yard to live in, they do love to run so try to give your Sib opportunities to really stretch out its legs (in an enclosed space of course), and watch the pure joy that comes to their faces when they do run flat out.

Coat & Coat Care

The Siberian's coat is relatively low maintenance but will require a good level of attention and care to keep it in good condition.

It has a double coat medium in length and relatively odourless. The undercoat is soft and dense. The guard hairs of the outer coat are straight, never harsh. Once or twice a year it will 'blow' its coat, which means the coat will come out in enormous quantities, before the dog grows a new coat. At this time you will wonder just how so much hair can come out of one dog (Siberians are not a breed for people who don't want dog hair on anything).

Siberians shed in a unique patch like way, and at this time they will look better (and feel better) if you work to remove the dead coat as it 'blows'. Keeping the coat clean will also help promote healthy growth.

Ideally, some grooming at other times will help stop the undercoat from 'packing up' which occurs prior to blowing. By doing this you should be able to extend the time between coat blows. Another reason for minimising the undercoat 'packing up' in this way is that once the coat gets in this state you run the risk of your dog getting 'Hot Spots'.

Hot Spots is the common name for a skin infection called pyoderma. Pyoderma can develop very suddenly and can become a large, red-raw, oozing superficial sore. The development of pyoderma or 'hot spots' is the result of your dog itching and is more common during summer months. Such itching can be caused by fleas and allergies or an irritation caused initially by an insect bite, as well as being a result of the dogs' undercoat becoming 'packed up'. The itch causes your dog to scratch and chew uncontrollably. Bacteria normally live on all dogs' skins and with the constant itching and chewing that your dog does to alleviate itches; moist

conditions on the skin cause this bacteria to explode in numbers. This then can lead to the oozing sore, which itself then often causes the dogs chewing to increase. Such sore's can then become badly infected.

Treatment for hot spots is simple but time consuming. The area needs to dry out (and be kept dry as the bacteria growth is due to constant moisture), so the hair around the sore needs to be shaved, clipped or cut away. A gentle antibacterial wash can then be applied twice a day (Iodine based antibacterial washes are very effective). If the lesion is large or there are multiple sores oral antibiotics from your vet may be necessary. In severe cases your vet may also wish to give your dog further treatment to lessen the itching and break the scratching and chewing cycle.

Breed Clubs and relevant contacts

The Siberian, whilst being a dog that can be quite independent, is also a dog that loves to be fully involved in life and sharing experiences with its people.

This is an active breed and there are a wide variety of activities that you can share with your dog. This will enrich your dogs life (and mind) and enrich your bond with your dog. If you have made a commitment to owning a husky you should be willing to join a club like those suggested below PLUS a nearby obedience club for at least 12 months to best place you and your dog for a long and happy life together.

Examples of Breed clubs provide access to a wealth of information on the breed, activities to become involved in and new friends to be made:

Siberian Husky and Alaskan Malamute Club of SA (SHAM) – Breed specialty club for SA. <https://www.facebook.com/ShamClubSA/>

Siberian Husky Club of Victoria - <http://www.siberianhuskyvic.org.au/>
Siberian Husky Club of NSW - <https://www.shcnsw.org.au>

Examples of Sled Dog Racing Clubs - not breed specific but great fun and great stimulation for your husky :

SA Sled Dog Club <http://www.sasleddog.org.au/> or <https://www.facebook.com/sasleddog/> A sled dog club open to dogs of any breed. Activities of this club include sled dog racing meetings (and training days for beginners), and Obedience training. Races are held on dirt tracks in the pine forests of the Adelaide Hills and races include teams of single dogs, 2, 3, 4 and 6 dog teams. Sleds are usually 2 or 3 wheel scooters and this clubs website gives some information on such sleds.
Wild Dog Mushers Association - https://www.facebook.com/WildDogMushers/?eid=ARAcLa7iCGR Aeoi stNUQmChT_c -BlqSeWiLtUB8lqd2x_cLcoWyt-qh7Ph3D2dl1Ga0EA_S89QCP2zcz

Examples of State Canine Control Bodies that oversee shows, obedience trials and many other events and activities :

Dogs SA (Formally the South Australian Canine Association) – <http://www.dogssa.com.au>
Controlling body for dog clubs, confirmation shows, obedience and agility trials and dog breeding in South Australia.
Dogs Victoria – Controlling body for dog clubs, confirmation shows, obedience and agility trials and dog breeding in Victoria <https://dogsvictoria.org.au>
Dogs NSW - Controlling body for dog clubs, confirmation shows, obedience and agility trials and dog breeding in NSW <https://www.dogsnsw.org.au>

Pedigree Information and your pup's parents

You pups parents are registered Siberian Husky's. Because it has been sold as a pet, your pup has been registered with Dogs SA on their Associate Register, which verifies its pedigree status without registering it as being able to be used for breeding or showing purposes.

Whilst the breed has relatively few hereditary health issues incidences of hip dysplasia and eye diseases do still occur (although dog breeding practices by ethical breeders is thankfully minimising these now). For this reason our dogs are regularly health screened; Asryn does not breed from any dogs that display hereditary problems of any kind.

Obedience Training

A wide variety of training methods exist and you will find that you may have to vary some techniques to suit your dog as each is an individual and many respond differently. For example some dogs are motivated by food as a reward whilst others are motivated more by toys or praise. You will soon learn what sort of rewards best motivates your dog to repeat wanted behaviours.

Many people make the mistake of thinking of their dog in the same way they think of a person or child, with expectations that dogs think and interpret our actions in the same way as a child might. It is important that you understand your dog from the dog's point of view, as dogs see our world on their terms and certainly not in the same way that a human does. An example of this is the way in which dogs relate to our family as their 'pack' with a hierarchical structure in the same way that a dog pack would have one. Understanding your dog and the way it thinks rather than the way we think it should think will give you a great start in terms of training. If you are someone who likes to read and are interested in knowing more there are some fabulous books on the market, some suggestions are included in the reading list attached.

The basis of all training is operant conditioning, marking behaviour that you want repeated (good behaviours) and marking other behaviours as ones that you don't want to see repeated (bad behaviour). Enthusiastic praise and encouragement for correct behaviour and prompt firm correction for unwanted behaviours is vital to successful training and consistency in approach is a key to quick learning for your dog. Never be cruel with any corrections that you may make. Training should be a fun experience for you and your dog.

Do not give your dog too much formal training at any one time; short sessions are far more effective. Siberians Husky's in particular bore quickly of repetition and so training your dog on the same exercise over and over again can often have negative rather than positive effects. Always finish a training session of with a successful exercise and don't train if you're feeling tired or grumpy.

Training can and should begin as soon as you bring your puppy home – begin as you intend to continue! Do however allow your puppy to be a puppy, it will need time to run and play and explore. Throughout all training patience is vital!

HUSKY: hus-ky (noun)

Someone who can't hear
their name being called
repeatedly but can hear a
bag of chips being
opened through three
walls and a **thunderstorm**.

Last Word ☺

Asryn Kennels takes seriously the responsibility we have in bringing each and every one of our pups into the world. We do not just take your money and then smile and wave goodbye expecting never ever to hear from you again. We believe that a breeder's responsibility to each dog they breed, and to the owners that take on these pups, continues on well into the future.

For this reason we ask that you do stay in contact (we love to hear how our pups grow up and love piccies!), let us know how you are getting along, and should you move house to let us know your current contact details. This enables us to arrange to come see how each pup matures as an adult dog, helping us to continually improve our breeding program in the future. We also ask that should you for any reason find that you cannot keep your Siberian that you give us an option to assist in rehoming if we can (we would hate for any of our puppies to end up in an animal shelter).

In return we have a commitment to be available to answer any questions you may have now or in the future and to offer any advice that you may need.

Consider yourself a member of the Asryn family!

READING LIST

- By no means an extensive list but these are a few books that we own and have enjoyed reading ☺ Many other quality books are of course also available. If you can't get these books locally most would be available through Amazon.com.

Whose The Boss? – Written by Val Bonney. Published by Bonnie's Dog Obedience and Care Centre (Qld Aust.)

Dog Logic – Rapport based training. Written by Joel M. McMains. Published by Howell Bookhouse – Macmillian Press, USA.

Play Training Your Dog – Written by Patricia Gail Burnham. Published by St. Martin's Press, New York.

The Dog Whisperer – Written by John Richardson & Lesley Sharon Cole. Published by New Holland Publishers (Aust.) Pty Ltd.

The Dog's Mind – Written by Bruce Fogle. Published by Pelham Books, through Penguin Books Ltd.

Beyond Basic Dog Training - Written by Diane L. Bauman. Published by Howell Bookhouse – Macmillian Press, USA.