



# Rottweiler - the best guard dog

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**T**he Rottweiler is a dog of many talents; he's rough and tumble, ready for anything, easy to train, if treated with respect and consistency; loyal and protective, strong, yet gentle. He is aloof and dignified with strangers and playful and loving to his family. In short, the Rottie is typical "tough guy with a heart of gold". They belong to the European mastiff breeds which probably have their origin among the dogs which guarded and helped to drive the herds of cattle which accompanied Roman armies. This steadfast canine soldier developed from the Molossus dog of Italy, a Mastiff type dog bred to fight lions in Roman amphitheatres and serve the army in its campaign.

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The Romans established Arae Flaviae in Southern Germany as a fortified cultural and administrative centre. The red-tiled roofs of the most important buildings gave the village its German name, Rottvil (red villa) later changed to Rottweil.

The Rottweiler Metzgerh und was an integral part of the regions' prosperity until its use declined with the coming of the railways and mass transport of cattle. The breed's resurgence began a few years into the new

century when Rottweilers were recognised as potential police dogs for their intelligence, loyalty and strength. Popularity in the US has accelerated puppy production and caused health and temperament problems in the breed.

## Physical Appearance:

The Rottweiler is a large dog, with males ranging from 24-27 inches at the shoulder and females from 22-25 inches. Weight ranges from 80-110 pounds. The dog is slightly longer with a large frame balanced by a deep, broad chest and a heavy muscling. Rotts are always black with dearly delineated rust or mahogany markings over the eyes, on the side of the muzzle, on throat, chest and lower legs.

The Rottie coat is smooth and short with an undercoat present on the neck and thighs.

The Rottweiler in motion is a picture of power and stamina with strong reach in front and forceful drive in the rear. A well conditioned Rott is a superb athlete; he trots with great stamina and seemingly little effort - an efficiency of movement inherited from his days as a cattle drover.

## Temperament

It is a breed of temperament that the Rott is often misjudged. A well-bred Rottweiler is calm, confident and courageous with an inherent aloofness towards strangers and a reserved attitude in new situations. Combined with his fierce devotion to home and family, these characteristics can be subverted from their original purpose by poor breeding practices, lack of socialisation and failure to teach basic good manners.

## Training:

Like all other breeds with strong natures, it has become a target for those who would ban dogs by breed rather than individual temper. Failure to select a well-bred Rott and to train it appropriately can result in individual tragedy and in prohibition of the entire breed in a community. Like other dominant breeds Rotts must be trained in order to obey and respect the humans in its family. Rottweilers should never be banished to the backyard, whether confined to a kennel run or chained.

## Health:

Rottweilers are susceptible to structural problems such as hip and elbow dysplasia, mal formations of the joints that can cause crippling and osteochondrosis. Retinal problems are also a possibility, as is spinal cord paralysis. Like all deep-chested dogs, the Rott is also susceptible to bloat, a condition in which the stomach can turn and block, causing a build up of gas. Unless treated very quickly, bloat can be fatal.

