



Jack Russell Terriers

Finding a Healthy Jack Russell Puppy

Finding a breeder with a puppy does not always mean that everything has been done to ensure the puppy's health. You have a lot of power as an informed buyer to help the breed by asking these simple and specific questions.

Ask the breeder if you can see the parents of the pup, especially the mother. The father may be from another kennel and you can ask to see a photo of him if he is not there.

JRT pups are usually more confident and well balanced if they are able to stay with their moms until they are 10 weeks old. In the critical weeks they stay with their moms, they learn a lot about playing well with other dogs and bite inhibition, which will be important to most pet owners. Ask if you can leave the pup with the mom until they are 10 weeks old.

Be sure to ask if the pup is BAER (hearing) testing NORMAL. The pup's parents should also BAER test Normal and CERF (eye) test Normal. You can ask to see the tests and ask to have them to explain the results to you. CERF is an annual test and the testing should be current within a year of the breeding. If the breeder does not test or does not keep CERF tests current, we suggest that you find someone who does. You can also go over the pedigree with the breeder and ask what they know about the health and genes of each ancestor of the pup you are considering. They may also have photographs of the ancestors. The more specific your questions, the more specific the answers will be.

Be patient and realistic, you may have to hunt for many months to find the pup of your dreams. We suggest that you go home and sleep on the decision to get a particular pup, to get some perspective on your experience. Talk to your veterinarian about choosing pups. Buying a pup can be very emotional, be prepared to fall in love and still be able to ask the important questions and make a rational decision. Settling on the first pup you see without having done the homework to find out more about them may have a big price later on.

The breeder may also ask you a lot of questions. They will want to make sure that the pup is the best one for your needs and that you will commit to the pup for its lifetime. Think hard about what you will do with the pup when it chews up your couch, dig up your garden, when you travel, when it needs expensive medical care, when you have a lifestyle change (marriage, divorce, go to college, have a baby, get a job, etc.) If you are willing to stick with this pup through thick and thin, then you will make a good home. A good breeder will give you the ability to return the pup at any time but it is better for the pup to stay with one good family. Too many pups end up in rescue as dogs, hundreds come to JRT Rescue every year.

Finding a good dog trainer may be easy in your area, there will be choices in training methods that you may want to research. You can choose to train using positive reinforcement or by using a force (ie: choke chains) or a combination. We recommend finding a *positive reinforcement* trainer who will help you to make the best of your relationship with your dog.

If you would like to find out more about the critical BAER and CERF tests, read the articles at: www.myjackrussellterrier.com/research/

Once you have found your pup, you may want to take part in a fun terrier play day group, ours has a forum at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/jrt-play-day/>

I wish you the best of luck with your puppy search,

Sandi Pensinger, River-Joy Terriers

www.river-joy.com

sandi@river-joy.com