Shih Tzu

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Breed Profile: Shih Tzu

The Shih Tzu is a fantastic addition to most families as a companion and pet. This small, fun-loving, energetic dog came from China and once served as a pet of the emperor. The Shih Tzu has worked its way around the world and into the hearts of many people, consistently making it one of the most popular dog breeds.

Interesting Breed Facts:	
Popularity:	Ranked 10th in 2008 with 20,219 registered with the American Kennel Club (AKC).
First recognized as a breed:	Shih Tzus originated in China during the 17th Century. Though a popular house pet during the Ming Dynasty, only 14 are believed to have survived the Chinese Revolution. Four of these survivors were eventually brought to England in 1930 to be bred. During World War II, American armed forces brought the first Shih Tzus to the United States. They were first recognized by the AKC in 1969. The current AKC standard was approved on May 9, 1989.
AKC Grouping:	Toy.
Size:	Both males and females average between 8" and 11" high at the shoulders and weigh between 9 and 16 pounds.
Appearance:	Due to their large, round eyes, Shih Tzus have a loving expression. The eyes are very dark in color. The ears are large and the muzzle is short and square. The nose can be black or blue, depending on coat color. The body is short and the chest is broad and deep. The legs are straight and muscular and are set well-apart. The feet are well-padded and firm. The tail is set high and curved over the back. The Shih Tzu has a double coat that is long, dense, and flowing. Often the hair on the top

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	of the head is tied up. A large variety of coat colors and markings are seen.
#1 preventable health problem:	Shih Tzus are prone to cataracts. Maintain regular veterinarian checkups to screen and treat any cataract development as soon as possible.
Preferences:	The Shih Tzu has a fairly high amount of energy, but may not require much outdoor activity because she receives considerable exercise following family members from room to room. Because of her small size and minimal exercise requirements, the Shih Tzu is perfectly suited for apartment living. She is not very tolerant of cold and even less so of heat.
Best features:	The Shih Tzu has a fantastic tolerance of others and serves as a great family pet. The breed is generally very tolerant of other dogs and pets and possesses a high tolerance for children and strangers.
Biggest challenge to owners:	The Shih Tzu may be a bit stubborn, causing training to be slightly difficult. However, the Shih Tzu has a fantastic personality and is generally well mannered. Even though the Shih Tzu does not require a lot of exercise, her need for attention, play, and mental stimulation still remains strong. Grooming a Shih Tzu requires a great deal of attention due to her long coat.

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