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# **The Schnauzer, Very Versatile Breeds**

**A Schnauzer is a German breed of dog.** The name comes from the German word for snout because of the dogs' distinctively furry muzzles. The AKC generally subdivides these dogs into three breeds by size: Miniature which is less than 15 inches at the shoulder, Standard the females are 17 to 19 inches and the males 18 to 20 inches at the shoulders, and last but not least The Giant 23.5 to 25.5 inches. **The three share some common features such as intelligence, alertness, strong sense of smell, and loyalty to family.** Each breed is very distinct in their own right. The Miniature was developed in the 19th century from Standard Schnauzers and Affenpinschers or Poodles. The Standards date all the way back to the 15th century. It has a blunt whiskery muzzle and a square body. The Giant is developed from a cross between the Standard and various working breed dogs. **The Miniature is classified in the AKC terrier group and the Standard and Giant are classified in the working dog group.**

The Schnauzer was once used to accompany coaches as messengers in WWI, and as vermin hunters and guards in stables and on farms. They actually still put many cats to shame hunting mice. They also watched children earning the name kinder watcher. Some have even been trained as livestock guardians and retrievers.

The only colors that are currently accepted to be shown in the American Kennel Club conformation events are the black and silver, salt and pepper and the black. White, chocolate, and parti-colored Schnauzers are not permitted in the conformation ring since they do not conform to the breed standard. They have a hard wiry outercoat with a soft undercoat that is short on the body but longer on the legs and face, where it forms the characteristic eyebrows, moustache and chin whiskers. The small, v-shaped ears are set high and fold over except in countries where ear-cropping is practiced. The tail is docked to a short length.

The wiry coat is pretty easy to look after. But the undercoat needs to be combed and brushed daily or it will become matted. They should be clipped to an all over even length twice a year, in the spring and fall. Trim around the eyes, ears, and nose with blunt nosed scissors. They have no odor and shed little to no hair. Making them a great prospect for allergy sufferers.

The Schnauzer is a pretty healthy breed but are predisposed to congenital cataracts, progressive retinal atrophy and Schnauzer comedo syndrome. Their life expectancy is about 15 years.

The Schnauzer is a fearless and protective dog making a great watch and guard dog. Some of their other talents include hunting, tracking, retrieving, military work, agility, competitive obedience, and performing tricks. Having the personality of a terrier they are high spirited, affectionate, clever, intelligent, demanding, and playful. They need companionship and make excellent dog to travel with. Schnauzers have a high learning rate but can be willful thus needing firm training. They should be socialized well early in life to keep them from becoming overprotective later in life. Schnauzers need a lot of exercise and need at least one good brisk walk a day. They also need a dominant owner to show them who is boss. This breed does better with older children.

What very versatile breeds! Being such an intelligent breed they can be trained to do just about anything. In the Schnauzer you will have a friend and loyal protector for life.

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