

Borzoi Rescue – Northern California

About the Borzoi

Introduction

The Borzoi is a large, beautiful, and speedy hound with a lovely, flowing coat. They enjoy being in the house with their owners and are generally quiet and well behaved. Although an outstanding companion, the breed's size and speed may make ownership a greater-than-average responsibility. The following information is offered as a guide to prospective owners to help in the decision to adopt or not adopt a Borzoi. This is not a breed that fits into every home. Since you will be making a ten to fifteen year commitment, please consider carefully before adopting a Borzoi. Please feel free to contact BR-NC at any time. We will be happy to answer all your questions or assist you in finding the right Borzoi for your particular situation.

Size

Males range in size from 29" to 34" at the shoulder and weigh from 75 to 105 pounds, but can sometimes be larger. Females are generally somewhat smaller, 26" to 30" in height, and usually 60 to 90 pounds, but again can sometimes be larger. Though usually quiet, a full-grown dog can easily knock a person down, so a Borzoi is not usually a breed for the elderly or infirm. Obedience training is strongly recommended for control of any large breed, including a Borzoi.

Color

Borzoi come in all colors and color combinations.

Aggressive and Protective Instincts

These traits vary with individuals. Since most Borzoi rarely bark, they are not usually good watchdogs. Most are not aggressive with strangers, but many male Borzoi are aggressive with other male dogs. They must be supervised closely when around other dogs.

Training and Discipline

Most Borzoi are eager to please their owners and rarely need to be punished: a stern "NO" is usually sufficient. It is necessary to establish control over your dog, and an obedience class is often the easiest and most rewarding way of doing so. Be careful to choose a good trainer, possibly one with sighthound experience. It is not necessary to hit your Borzoi, but discipline must be consistent, fair, and firm, without being overly rough. A pronged choke collar is rarely useful as Borzoi are very sensitive. Remember to make training fun for your dog and always end the session on a happy note, with an exercise the dog does well. Lots of praise and sometimes a dog cookie work very well.

Small Children In The Home

Adaptability to small children varies with the individual dog. Many are tolerant and loving toward toddlers; others resent the rough treatment a small child can unknowingly inflict. The former life of a rescued Borzoi is not always known. It is threatening to some dogs (not only Borzoi) to have an 18-month to a 5- or 6-year-old child stagger, run, walk, or jump towards them. Some breeders recommend waiting until children are at least school age or preferably older before getting any large breed. The space in your home, the age of your children, and the amount of time the dog will be in contact with the children, as well as your ability to "read" a dog, should be considered when making your decision.

Other Animals

Since Borzoi were bred to course (chase) other animals, they should be closely watched around cats and small dogs, although many do live happily with both. Remember also that even though a Borzoi may live happily in the house with a cat or small dog, and actually be very affectionate with the animal in the house, outside may be a different matter particularly with a cat.

Destructiveness

Borzoi are puppies for a long time (18 months or more). The level of destructiveness (digging, chewing, etc.) varies with age, training, temperament, and the activity level of the individual dog. In general, the younger the dog, the more damage it may do. Any dog left alone for long periods will often be destructive from boredom. Lots of attention and daily exercise will usually help a great deal.

Crate Training

We recommend crate training your Borzoi to insure against any destructive behavior. This is not hard, nor is it cruel. What is cruel is leaving a dog alone for any period of time and then becoming upset when the dog has done something destructive, injured itself, or ingested an object which may require a trip to the veterinarian. If your dog is safely in his/her crate, both the dog and your home are secure. You do not have to worry about what your dog is doing while you are out. Both you and the dog are happy upon your return.

Be sure to purchase a crate that is large enough so an adult dog can stand, move around, and lie down comfortably. We recommend a wire crate as opposed to an airline crate. This way, even when the dog is in the crate, it can see their surroundings and still be safe. Remember to keep the crate pulled away from the wall, electrical outlets, or anything the dog may be able to pull into the crate, such as curtains.

Every time you put the dog into the crate use a word or phrase such as "kennel-up." At first, the dog may not willingly enter the crate, so you must put it inside. Stay with the dog for a short time (5 minutes or so) and talk reassuringly to it, then let the dog out and give it lots of praise and a treat. Repeat this two or three times. Next, put the dog into the crate with a treat, secure the door, and leave the room for 5 to 10 minutes. If the dog barks, cries, or whines, ignore it. At the end of the allotted time, return to the dog and let it out. Give him or her a treat and lots of praise. After doing this several times, start leaving the dog for longer periods, always leaving the dog toys and treats in the crate and giving the dog a treat and praise upon your return. If the dog is left for long periods of time, always leave clean food and water inside the crate.

You will find that after a period of time, your Borzoi will actually like the crate and go into it when tired or when it just wants to be left alone. **DO NOT USE THE CRATE AS PUNISHMENT!** You want your Borzoi to like the crate and to think of it as their "den." It is all right to put the dog into the crate for a "time-out" period to settle down if it has become over-active in the house as most puppies do at times.

Space Requirements

A large yard with a six-foot fence is ideal, but Borzoi have been successfully kept in apartments. A fenced yard or large dog run is essential for a puppy or young dog; it will help keep the dog exercised and reduce boredom. If you do not have adequate space, or the time to walk a dog several times a day, you may want to consider a smaller dog.

Climate Requirements

Borzoi tolerate cool weather better than excessive heat. Dogs should never be left outside in direct sun during summer weather. Regardless of the locale, the dog must have shelter.

Care

A Borzoi's coat requires little care other than occasional shampooing and weekly brushing. Yearly veterinary check-ups, immunizations, as well as heartworm and fecal checks, and flea control are, of course, imperative for continued good health.

Required Grooming Equipment

- A medium metal comb
- A large, heavy duty, slicker brush (the best ones are referred to as universal brushes)
- A pair of heavy duty nail clippers or Dremel
- Ear cleaner and real cotton balls. The best ear cleaner can be made in your own kitchen. (In a plastic container such as an empty rubbing alcohol bottle mix 1/3rd part water, 1/3rd part rubbing alcohol and 1/3rd part white vinegar. This can be stored until used up.)
- A pair of sharp, slightly curved scissors

After thoroughly brushing your dog with the slicker brush, comb the dog with the metal comb. In this way, you can be sure there are no mats or tangles left in the coat. If there are, work with your fingers and the brush to remove them. Pay special attention to the dog's rear feather area, chest, behind the ears, tail, and underbelly. Particularly with a male, be sure not to pull or tug on their private areas.

Next, clean the dog's ears by wetting a cotton ball with the ear cleaner. Wipe the inside of the ear canal with the cotton ball. Never poke down the ear canal with a Q-tip as you can hurt the dog. The vinegar smell will dissipate.

If you are up to it, trim the dog's nails only a little at a time. It is best if you have a professional groomer or your vet show you how to do this before you attempt it at home. In case you trim the nail too far back and cause it to bleed, you should have a product on hand to stop the bleeding. The powdered products work best and can be purchased at your local pet supply store. A good one is called "Quick-Stop."

Some owners prefer to grind the dog's nails with a Dremel, especially if their dogs have all-black nails. You can find an excellent online instructional article with pictures, "How To Dremel Dog Nails," at www.doberdawn.com.

Now you can trim any hair growing on the bottom of your dog's pads (bottom of foot). Be careful not to cut the pads of the foot. Sometimes curved scissors are best, using the curve of the scissors level with or just above the curve of the dog's pads. (The curve of the scissors and the curve of the dog's foot should be in the same direction. Never cut the hair when the curve of the scissors is opposite the curve of the dog's foot or you will cut the dog.) With your brush, lift the hair on top of the foot up and with your fingers, gently pull the hair between the toes up. While holding the dog's foot in your hand, trim the hair level with the dog's foot.

Exercise

Most Borzoi are quiet housedogs, but all need regular exercise for good health. Since the Borzoi is a sighthound (using its eyes to find quarry), it is very alert to movement and may run off unexpectedly after what it perceives as "game" (a cat, squirrels, blowing leaves, etc.). For this reason, your Borzoi must ALWAYS be kept on a leash when not in a fenced area.

Breed Problems

Eye disease is common to many breeds including the Borzoi and may cause blindness. An annual check by a canine ophthalmologist is recommended. Bloat (gastric dilation) and torsion are not uncommon in all deep-chested breeds. Prompt recognition of symptoms and immediate veterinary attention are imperative.

Breeding and Showing

Spayed and neutered dogs may compete in obedience trials and enter in lure coursing events. Should you decide to show in breed competition or possibly breed Borzoi, you should purchase the very best. Purchase only from a reputable breeder with dogs free from structural and temperament faults. Remember, breeding is a great responsibility as well as very expensive. There are far more Borzoi than there are homes for them. A breeder is responsible for every dog he or she produces. That includes all puppies produced by their sire while being used at stud as well as those produced by their bitches.

Bloat and Torsion

Bloat/Torsion is an EMERGENCY SITUATION!

Know what to look for. Any time your dog displays any or all of the symptoms below, you should IMMEDIATELY see your veterinarian. If your veterinarian is not available, seek the closest veterinarian possible. Symptoms may be caused by something else, but with bloat/torsion, time lapse is CRITICAL.

Signs of Bloat

- Unproductive vomiting
- Profuse salivation
- Apathy
- Disinclination to move or the inability to get comfortable
- Walking with legs held outward from the body
- Shallow respirations
- Shock (pale mucus membranes, rapid, thready pulse, drop in body temperature). (Normal rectal body temperature for a dog or cat is 101° to 102° degrees)
- Abdomen tense and painful
- Abdomen distended
- Whining and nuzzling of dog's side or flank

Signs of Torsion of the Spleen

- Apathy
- Restlessness
- Inability to keep food or water down
- Tenderness
- Abdomen may or may not be distended
- Shock