



The Samoyed: Is It The Right Breed For You?

So, you think you would like to be owned by a Samoyed. However, the responsibility of owning a Samoyed is much more involved than it's exterior beauty. The decision to own a Samoyed, as with any animal, should involve the entire family. Please do thorough research prior and talk to as many Samoyed owners or breeders as you can about the Samoyed Breed. Whilst we, as proud Samoyed owners, would very much like for you to join us. We want you to be fully aware of some of the obstacles, to ensure that you and your Samoyed remain Lifetime Companions.

Samoyed History

The Samoyed was named after a nomadic inuit tribe from northern Siberia in Russia, called the Samoyede people. The Samoyede people were a gentle, nomadic tribe of family groups, that were accompanied everywhere by their dogs. They used the dogs to herd reindeer, pull sleds loaded with goods, and keep them warm in the frigid Siberian winters. The dogs were also used to babysit the inuit children and were brought into their chooms (or tents) at night to keep the families warm. It was this close bond over thousands of years that made the Samoyed such a people loving, family orientated dog. The temperament of the well-bred Samoyed is a reflection of the breed's beginning: brought up within the family, eating at the campfire, snuggling in the beds, this dog is the ultimate companion, gentle with family members and happy to work.

Temperament

The Samoyed is charming, intelligent, active and playful through to old age; he is amazingly comical, yet thoughtfully sensitive. What sets this breed apart, aside from their magnificent beauty, is their love for all people. Thus the Samoyed is not a guard dog. He can however be a good watchdog. They will bark to alert you to someone coming. The Samoyed is an exuberant, independent and intelligent natured dog. The constant companionship with man through the years, has given the Samoyed an uncanny human understanding. His guarding of reindeer, requiring always a protector, never a killer, has developed a disposition in the breed unique in the canine world. A Samoyed is totally trustworthy with children and develop a close affinity with humans. Due to their exuberance with children's games, supervision is encouraged with toddlers to prevent accidental knocking.

A Samoyed's main objective in life is to sleep by his owners. He needs to be an integral part of your family. They are a human oriented breed, who demand to be with their people inside or where ever their people happen to be at any given time. The affectionate Samoyed will be your friend for life! If you are looking for a dog to put out in the backyard to greet as time permits, you are looking into the wrong breed. An ignored Sammie equals a bored Sammie resulting in behavioural problems.

They are a highly intelligent breed, which is sometimes confused with disobedience or stubbornness when it comes to obedience or other types of training. You can look into the eyes of the Sammie and know the lights are on...they make decisions. The best way to train the happy and fun loving Samoyed is with a lot of patience, praise and consistency much like you would do with your human children. Training needs to be fun for the Samoyed. The Samoyed is a dog who

requires adequate exercise. They are an active working dog; although, not high strung. They will exercise inside and/or outdoors.

A Samoyed is a natural born digger. If you are a gardening enthusiast I don't recommend a Samoyed unless you keep him in a separate area. I have known people to describe their backyard as a moon crater. It is a Samoyed's natural instinct to make "beds" for itself. In the arctic conditions they would dig hollows to protect themselves from the climate. In Australia they tend to dig shallow ditches to find that cooler wetter ground and make themselves as comfortable as possible.

Samoyeds are naturals when it comes to dog sports, and will thrive on the stimulation and adrenaline rush of activities like obedience training and agility. There is also a sledding competition held annually during winter. Breeders warn that without the stimulation of daily exercise and people contact, the Samoyed will become a shadow of its true self and will fall into a depressed state. This can lead to unruly behaviour, as well as a tendency to escape from the yard. As with all dogs, early socialisation and training is a must with the Samoyed to ensure it develops good social skills.

Appearance

The Samoyed is actually a rugged, compact working dog of both dignity and grace. He is a double-coated breed with a softer undercoat and a harsher standoffish outer coat. The Samoyed coat can be white, cream or biscuit or a combination of any of the three. Any colour other than listed or blue eyes are disqualifications in the Samoyed. The Samoyed is, in spite of what you may have heard, a breed that does well in all elements. While they prefer the cooler climates; the Samoyed acclimatizes well to the warmer climates. Their dual coat protects them in both cold and heat. You will just need to use the common sense approach as it applies to the heat and humidity factors. The Samoyed is less active during the summer months and will want to go outside in the summer months in the very early morning hours or the late night hours. They do get their exercise indoors too.

The breed standard describes it as a medium-sized dog of moderate build. Males are noticeably larger than females. Females are 45-51cm at the shoulder, the males are 51-56cm.

The Samoyed's coat is a thick double-layered hair coat. It is not a fur coat like common breed dogs and thus tends to have lower allergic reactions. The coat should be thick and requires little washing. Even when coated in mud, after drying the dirt tends to fall off easily or with gentle brushing leaving a white coat underneath. This occurs, as the coat is naturally resilient and repellent. Thus you should not wash a Samoyed more than once a month as you remove this protection barrier. The Samoyeds also do not have a strong smell (common in breeds like cattle dogs and golden retrievers). A Samoyed will only smell if ill (normally from hormonal imbalance or gastric upsets) or if the under coat is left wet for long periods of time. For this reason when washing a Samoyed it is important to dry the thick under coat as quickly as possible, investment into a strong hair dryer or dog blower with a good supply of talcum powder is a great investment when owning a Samoyed. As a Samoyed owner you should be prepared to brush their coat once a week for at least half an hour.

Why NOT to clip/shave Samoyeds:

The arctic dog's coat is so constructed that it is a very efficient insulator. Therefore, little of the heat produced by the body is lost by means of contact with the outside air through the skin. This, of course, is very good in the winter; but remember Arctic areas in summer can reach very high temperatures, somewhere in the 70's (21C) and 80's (27C) or even higher for short periods of time. So, therefore, the Samoyed must also be able to adapt to this increase in temperature. It so happens that the insulation principle is still of use to the animal. If one lives in warmer climates,

it is much easier to air-condition a well insulated home than it is to air-condition one that is not insulated. In the case of the animal, the only requirement is that there be some relatively efficient mechanism that the animal can turn on to dissipate his own heat. With a well-insulated body, he will be very little affected by the outside temperature and the Samoyed can maintain his body temperature even with changes in outside temperature. Therefore, the Northern dog in warmer climates will do as well or better in excessive heat than the short-haired dog who is very susceptible to heat stroke. Anyone who has dealt with dogs knows that the dog pants when he is hot. It is his panting mechanism that allows the dog to lose heat he does not need when the weather is hot. If the Samoyed loses his insulation during very hot weather, by having his coat clipped for instance, he runs the risk of not being able to maintain his body temperature. His skin temperature loss probably is not only inefficient but, since he does not perspire; it will increase the temperature of his skin and his body temperature as well. Samoyeds were able to survive in the Arctic not only because they could tolerate cold but also because more precisely, they could tolerate extremely wide swings of temperature in relation to their body temperature**. **Taken from article "Temperature Adaptation in Northern dogs" by Ted Greenlee, 1971.

Caring for a Samoyed

The Samoyed requires a secure, fenced yard (6ft preferred) to run and play in; however, they also can do well in apartments provided the owner is willing to put forth the extra effort to exercise and potty adequately. Remember Samoyeds are bred to be active working dogs. Sammies need regular grooming to ensure their thick coat stays healthy and matt-free. This canine has a double-coat, which will need weekly, even daily, brushing. The coat sheds seasonally (males once a year and females after every season), so if you are house-proud and have an aversion to dog hair sticking to your furniture and carpet, think twice about getting this breed. In extreme conditions, however, they do appreciate the indoor comforts of air-conditioning. One enormous plus to the Sammy's coat is that it is hypoallergenic and, therefore, very good for people who are allergic to dog hair.

Although highly intelligent, this breed can be difficult to train, for the dogs have a mind of their own. They learn tasks easily but tire quickly of repetitive training, and thus do better with motivation than with correction (i.e. Positive reinforcement food / clicker training). Some Sam's resent obedience training so much that they perform their exercises with a hang-dog look, convincing spectators that the owner must frequently beat the dog into submission. If you make training fun for them with positive reinforcement Samoyeds can make excellent agility dogs. However, strong correction is sometimes needed, for the Samoyed will run the show if not notified that the handler is in charge. Samoyeds like malamutes and huskies are a dominant breed and highly intelligent; if you give them an inch, they will take a mile. All northern breeds are highly motivated pack members of their chosen family but the owners need to firmly establish their alpha leadership in the "pack". Northern breeds will always look for a way to outsmart you. But people need to understand that Samoyeds do this with a sense of humour and smile on their face not with a malicious intent.

However, for those with a sense of humour to cope with this recalcitrance nature and who have the time to groom, the Samoyed is a wonderful family pet. The breed is excellent with children, always loves to play, and has a great witty sense of humour. Sam's can make good watchdogs by alerting you to visitors (but may tend towards licking them than scaring them away), but Sam's also make wonderful therapy dogs or can be competitive in agility (with positive fun training).

The Samoyed has changed little in temperament, appearance, and ability from the time and place of his origin. He is still the consummate family dog, affectionate to almost everyone, at home on sofa or in harness, traveling hither and yon with his master. No one could possibly be lonesome with a Samoyed for a companion as they bond so closely with people. They are sympathetic and

very responsive to owner's emotions and people often say he knows exactly when I'm sad and lonely and when to give extra cuddles. Samoyeds have also shown to be receptive to owner's health and have been known to become extremely attentive and depressed days before owners have fallen seriously ill due to the close link they form with their family.

For this reason the worst thing you could possibly do to a Samoyed in their eyes is leave them in the backyard alone. If you don't want a long-haired dog inside, then the Samoyed is NOT for you. If you are worried about having white fur on your clothes, don't get a Samoyed. Because a Samoyed wants nothing more than to be with you always and everywhere. This means inside, outside, in the bathroom, away on holidays, in the car down to the local shops, and walking the human kids to school. As far as a Samoyed is concerned they are one of the kids (or sometimes the master if you don't enforce strong leadership) and therefore should have all the rights of one. They are often characterized as showing human emotion and characteristics. Their faces show deep emotions and they are the masters of the big sad brown-eyed look (don't let them fool you).

The Samoyed personality is quite unique in the dog world. "Fun" is the Samoyed motto. If the activity is considered fun by the dog, he'll throw his all into it, but if the fun stops, he's likely to switch off and go looking for something else to amuse himself. If you find your Samoyed is showing bad behaviours (e.g., excessive barking, digging, chewing) always ask yourself "what should he be doing instead, and would he consider that fun?" If the answer is "no, sitting around all day doing nothing while I'm at work is not considered fun", then this will help you to understand why he prefers to pull clothes off the line. The best answer to this problem is of course to make your dog's environment more fun by giving him things that he can do during the day.

General Health

The Samoyed is a hardy robust breed, able to survive in harsh conditions, so only the fit and healthy dog survived to be able to breed. This means a lot of common hereditary problems found in man breeds are not present in the Samoyed.

Hip Dysplasia is one problem that has occurred in the breed. It is not a major problem as it has been in other breeds, but responsible breeders are aware of condition, and are taking steps to ensure against an increase. Whether parents have been X-rayed or not, it is not possible to guarantee that the puppy is free of the condition. We can only assess the status of our breeding stock, breeding only dogs with low scores. The formation of the joint is governed primarily by the dog's genetic makeup, although environment and lifestyle can play a part.

Eye problems are virtually unknown among Australian Samoyeds, as are kidney problems and heart conditions, however they may occur in individual dogs from time to time. Diabetes is another problem that may occur, but usually in older dogs.

Vaccination is vital. Infectious diseases such as Canine Distemper, Canine Hepatitis, Canine Parvovirus, Parainfluenza and Bordetella can now all be prevented with a series of injections in the first few months and then a yearly booster. Apart from vaccination, the best protection against infections and illness is to keep your Samoyed fit and healthy.

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