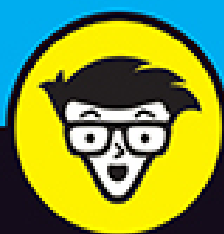


LEARNING MADE EASY



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Introduction

A Doodle is the result of the intentional breeding of a Poodle with another purebred dog or, sometimes, a Doodle with a Doodle, or a Poodle with a Doodle (say that ten times fast!). Doodles are popular canine companions, and it's easy to see why: They're cute, sweet, athletic, and excellent family dogs.

Poodles are the perfect parent breed to create Doodles because they're intelligent, versatile, and social. In fact, Poodles were parent breeds for many of today's current purebred dogs, such as the highly popular Labrador Retriever, who in an earlier version of its evolution was a Curly-Coated Retriever. When looking at a Curly-Coated Retriever, you can easily recognize the Poodle genes: It has a lanky, athletic body; long legs; narrow head; and, of course, a tight, curly coat.

Doodle Dogs For Dummies explores the reasons for the popularity of Doodles, from their origins to living with them, and it helps you decide whether a Doodle is right for you and your family (and if so, which one).

To narrow the choices, I explain which purebred dogs, mixed with a Poodle, might best fit in with your lifestyle. Awareness of the characteristics of each purebred parent will enhance your understanding of the possible appearance and behavior of their offspring.

When you've made a choice and brought your new Doodle puppy home, you'll need to ensure they quickly adjust to their new environment. I fill you in on everything from feeding and grooming to housetraining and health considerations.

Keeping your Doodle healthy is only part of what it means to own a Doodle. These designer breeds require clear communication and consistency, which you can get through obedience training. Doodles are highly intelligent and active, so you need to know how to guide them in the right direction and stimulate their brains (in order to keep them on the straight and narrow). Socialization is also important — Doodles are very sensitive and aware of their environments.

In this book, I explain how to address behavior problems before they occur and how to handle them if they become bad habits.

When you have a well-behaved Doodle companion, you may want to continue to spice up your lives with fun dog sports and activities. Doodles love action! The more you train your Doodle for activities such as agility, dock diving, or retrieving games, the happier and better adjusted they'll become. Engaging in these activities with your Doodle will enhance your relationship in so many ways.

In this book, I've gathered all the information you need to find, obtain, raise, care for, and train your Doodle. I also help you understand the needs of your senior Doodle and how to integrate a second dog into your family.

Doodles are unique and fun! When you understand them inside and out, you'll have years of great experiences ahead of you.

About This Book

Although you'll find all kinds of useful information in each chapter of this book, you don't have to read it from cover to cover to benefit from it. Each chapter contains all the tools you need to accomplish specific goals. I

know you're busy, so in this book, I tell you only what you need to know and nothing you don't.

If you're short on time, you can safely skip the sidebars (text in gray boxes) — the information they contain is interesting but not critical. You can also skip any paragraphs marked by the Technical Stuff icon (see [“Icons Used in This Book”](#), later in this Introduction, for more information).

Within this book, you may note that some web addresses break across two lines of text. If you're reading this book in print and you want to visit one of these web pages, simply key in the web address exactly as it's noted in the text, pretending as though the line break doesn't exist. If you're reading this as an e-book, you've got it easy — just click the web address to be taken directly to the web page.

Foolish Assumptions

Because you've picked up this book I assume you're not a dummy. You're either thinking of getting a Doodle or you already own one. Plus, the fact that you want to find out more about your dog makes you exceptionally intelligent. I make some other assumptions about you:

- » You have, or are about to get, a Doodle because you wanted a unique individual to love and live with.
- » You want just the facts; you need to make sure you accomplish your goals. You don't want all the scientific jargon and terminology explaining the background of each topic.
- » You have a big heart to take on a dog and give them a happy home.

Icons Used in This Book

Icons are those little eye-catching pictures in the margin of this book. These icons are eye-catching for a reason: They flag important information. Here's what they mean:



TIP

The Tip icon helps you solve problems faster or explains an easier way to approach an issue.



WARNING

The Warning icon prevents you from doing something dangerous to your dog, yourself, or others. Heed this icon!



**TECHNICAL
STUFF**

The Technical Stuff icon marks information that's interesting, though not vital to your Doodle's well-being. Although you really don't need to read the information marked by this icon, you won't lose much time doing so, and it may help you understand your dog better.



REMEMBER

The Remember icon flags anything you should commit to memory.

Beyond the Book

In addition to the book you have in your hands, you can access some extra content online. Check out the free

Cheat Sheet for questions to ask when adopting a dog, tips on temperament testing, and a checklist of supplies to have on hand. Just go to www.dummies.com and type **Doodle Dogs For Dummies** in the Search box.

Where to Go from Here

Because this book is written in a modular manner — with each chapter a stand-alone unit — you don't have to read everything in order. In fact, if you already have a Doodle, you won't need to read the chapters on where to find a dog, nor will you need the information on making sure a Doodle is right for you. If you get a Doodle, you might want to find out more about how to train them than solve problems that they likely haven't developed. Or, if you've had a Doodle for many years and you're curious about the changes they'll be going through as they age, you may want to skip to the chapter about senior dogs. Use the Table of Contents and Index to find the chapters that appeal to you now, and come back to this book as your needs and interests change.

Regardless of where you begin reading, you're sure to discover new things that inspire you to spend time with your Doodle and enhance both of your lives.

Yours is a partnership for life. Have fun together!

Part 1

From Poodle to Doodle

IN THIS PART ...

Discover the history of Doodles.

See why Poodles make such great parents.

Find out about the different varieties of Doodles.

Chapter 1

Meet the Doodle

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Looking at the different sizes of Doodles
 - » Exploring common Doodle personality traits
 - » Considering Doodles' health
 - » Training a Doodle at any age
-

The first known Doodle was created in 1955, when a Poodle was crossed with a Cocker Spaniel to create the Cockapoo. Cockapoos became very popular, because they're generally sweet, intelligent, and great family dogs. In 1969, the great-granddaughter of Charles Dickens, Monica Dickens, bred the first Goldendoodle, by crossing a Golden Retriever with a Standard-size Poodle. She was looking for a sweet, athletic dog who didn't shed all over her house like the typical Golden Retriever does. It took decades, however, for the Doodle to become highly desirable. And, though still not highly sought after by the dog-adoring public, there were dog enthusiasts who continued to cross their purebred dogs with Poodles to enhance specific characteristics, such as better swimmers for retrieving or faster runners to aid in hunting.

In this chapter, I fill you in on the different Doodle sizes and personality traits, as well as their health traits and how to train them at any age.

Doodle Sizes

Doodles come in almost every size imaginable — from the tiniest Yorkidoodle to the largest Pyredoodle. The one that's right for you may depend on your lifestyle. For example, if you live in a big city and don't have a fenced-in yard, you may want to consider a Toy-size dog, one who will get plenty of exercise just running around your home. If you live in a rural area and want a dog who can run beside you as you gallop on horseback through the woods, a larger dog may be a better choice.

The following sections explore the Doodle sizes to help you decide which size is right for you.

THE ORIGINS OF THE DOODLE

The start of the Doodle craze is credited to an Australian breeder, Wally Conron, the breeding manager for the Royal Guide Dog Association of Australia. He bred Labrador Retrievers to aid those who were physically challenged. He was tasked with obtaining or breeding a dog who didn't shed or distress someone who had an allergy to canine dander. While Conron tried to teach numerous Poodles to work as service dogs, he wasn't successful until he bred a Standard-size Poodle to one of his Labrador Retrievers. A few of the offspring of the pair turned out to be good service dogs, plus low shedding. But although Conron eventually fulfilled the request for that one client, his crossbred puppies didn't sell well because most people preferred purebred dogs.

Conron marketed his new designer dogs as Labradoodles, a term used for a mix between Labrador Retriever and Poodle, in Donald Campbell's 1955 book, *Into The Water Barrier*. Through the brilliant publicity of proclaiming Labradoodles dogs who don't shed, and because they could be a multitude of colors, Labradoodles' popularity took off. There was a bit of deception in their marketing ploy, however, because while *some* Labradoodles are low shed, many shed almost as much as purebred Labrador Retrievers do! But the marketing ploy worked nevertheless.

It wasn't long before other purebred dogs were crossbred with Poodles of all varieties. One of the major reasons for doing so was to create non-shedding dogs, but it has turned out that very few of them actually are non-shedding. Plus, much like their Poodle parent, they require professional grooming.

One of the reasons that Conron required so much time to create a Labradoodle who worked well as a service dog was that not all the Labradoodles he produced were of the appropriate character to perform the

job of an assistance dog. There were a large variety of personalities in one litter, from super-hyper and unable to focus to outright fearful. A service dog must have confidence, intelligence, and the desire to work hard. Those traits are rare and require working with many dogs from puppy to adult to ensure that one can make the cut. That's why you'll come to know more dogs who have failed assistance dog training than those who have succeeded.

The current reasons for creating Doodles are their popularity, adorable appearance, and ability to fit well into most families. And although some (such as Goldendoodles, Labradoodles, and Bernedoodles) can be trained to be assistance dogs, most are able to be emotional support companions, which is basically why we have dogs in our lives anyway. There are still some Doodles, however, who can be outright fearful or reactive, usually due to lack of early training and socialization.

Overall, Poodle dogs of all varieties — Standard, Miniature, and Toy — tend to enjoy longer life spans than most other dog breeds. The smaller the Poodle, the longer they tend to live. It's not unheard of for a small Poodle to live beyond 17 years, whereas there are few other purebred dogs who can achieve such longevity.

Having a Poodle parent improves Doodles' possibility of living a long life, provided those great Poodle dog genes have been inherited. Unfortunately, because Doodles are a mix, you never know which genes will be prominent and in which capacities. For example, a Doodle can have a curly Poodle coat, instead of the straighter coat of the other parent dog, and have behavioral characteristics more like the non-Poodle parent, instead of the Poodle parent.

Toy-size Doodles

Toy-size Doodles weigh less than 30 pounds and are typically created by crossing a Toy Poodle with a Toy purebred dog. Examples of a Toy-size Doodle are Pekapoos (Pekingese x Toy Poodle), Maltipoos (Maltese x Toy Poodle), Shipoos (Shih Tzu x Toy Poodle), and Yorkipoos (Yorkshire Terrier x Toy Poodle).

Some of these Toy purebreds have straight coats, *brachycephalic* (broad and short) skulls, or bulging eyes, but mixing them with Toy Poodles creates offspring with curlier, lower-shedding coats; longer noses for easier respiration; and healthier eye placement. It can also serve to reduce the dog's overall tendencies for behavioral reactivity. An example can be the Pekingese

or Maltese breed's tendency to *resource-guard* (using assertive behavior to guard an object or person). Toy Poodles rarely have the resource-guarding tendency, and they can pass this trait on to their Doodle offspring.



TIP

Regardless of the size of your dog, be sure to go through training. A little dog may not be able to do a lot of damage, but a bite is a bite, and the barking of little dogs can be even more annoying than the excessive barking of big dogs.

Toy-size Doodles make great lap dogs, happy to play fetch in your home and relax with you on the couch. They enjoy outdoor play, too, but they don't require as much activity as larger dogs do. A Toy-size Doodle is more likely to tire of activity within 30 minutes, whereas a larger dog typically requires several hours of activity every day.

Toy-size Doodles are great in homes with very young children, elderly residents, or family members who aren't highly mobile. Because they're small, teaching them to do their business on a pad may be more convenient than if the dog were a larger size. This makes them ideal in urban areas, where going outside to potty isn't always possible.

If you live in a suburban area, a Toy-size Doodle can still be easier to care for than a larger dog, especially if you're very busy. A smaller Doodle may be easier to take with you to work. If you work from home, a Toy-size Doodle can warm your lap as you type or attend Zoom meetings.

Toy-size Doodles also make great therapy dogs. They can easily sit on laps, beds, or chairs and soothe the soul just

by being there. And traveling with a small dog can be easier than it is with a larger one. Toy-size Doodles fit under the seat on airplanes or in over-the-shoulder carrying cases. For those in urban areas who use public transportation where dogs must be held, small dogs make this a breeze — they're lightweight and fit into a backpack, happy to look over your shoulder and watch the world go by!

Miniature-size Doodles

Miniature-size Doodles can weigh anywhere from 30 to 50 pounds and are typically created by crossing a Miniature Poodle with a Toy purebred dog.



REMEMBER

Because the Doodle pups are a mix of two purebreds, it's tough to know exactly how big they'll grow to be. A lot depends on the other parent. For example, if the Doodle pup is the offspring of a Bernese Mountain Dog and a Miniature Poodle, the puppy can mature to anywhere from 40 to 60 pounds, depending on which size genes are dominant. But if the Doodle is a mix between a Beagle and a Miniature Poodle, it may be closer to 30 pounds at full maturity. Size can vary greatly within the litter, too. Most breeders have a fairly good idea of the ultimate size of the Doodle pups they've bred, but there are always outliers and no breeder can *guarantee* the size of their puppies upon maturity.

Miniature-size Doodles aren't small enough to be lap dogs, but they often want to be! They're just so adorable that it's tough to not hold them on your lap when they're young puppies. Beware of setting a precedent, however

— your Doodle pup is learning the rules the moment they enter your life.



TIP

From the day you bring home your puppy, set the rules that you'll want them to adhere to when they're fully mature. This way, you'll reduce misunderstandings and build a more harmonious relationship with your new best friend.

Miniature-size Doodles require time outside to exercise, but they're still easily manageable in an urban or suburban environment — you'll just need to be willing to take them for walks five or six times per day. If you have a safely fenced yard for relief and exercise, all the better. Miniature dogs don't tend to be as athletically inclined as the larger varieties, but they still need to run, and they thrive on having a job, whether it's chasing off squirrels or meeting postal carriers and delivery people.

Standard-size Doodles

Standard-size Doodles typically weigh 50 to 100 pounds and are typically created by crossing a Standard Poodle with another large breed. This variety of Poodle is often very tall, with long legs and an athletic body. They're highly energetic and intelligent and acutely aware of everything around them. Standard Poodles have been a hunter's working companion for centuries because of their ability to work tirelessly all day and because they enjoy water (they were created to retrieve downed waterfowl from waterways). You can be most certain that your Standard-size Doodle will enjoy swimming — some are totally obsessed with it!



TECHNICAL
STUFF

The classic Poodle coif of keeping the hair long on the chest, joints, and head aided in buoyancy and maintaining warmth when they were used as waterfowl retrievers. Their close-cut hind ends allowed them unrestricted movement while working.

Regardless of which purebred dog is paired with a Standard Poodle, it will be tall and quite possibly very solid. They can weigh up to 100 pounds, even if one of their parents is only 70 or 80 pounds (such as a Golden Retriever). If the parent dog is of a giant dog breed (like a Great Pyrenees or Saint Bernard), you can bet on your Standard-size Doodle maturing to be even larger.

Because of their high energy level and environmental awareness (which can translate to becoming reactive to certain stimuli), Standard-size Doodles are best-suited for suburban or rural areas. They need to run and require a securely fenced area to do so. Running a couple times a week isn't enough — they require daily, high-quality exercise.

Standard-size Doodles also need consistent training, using a positive approach. They may be large, but their personalities tend to be very sensitive. Standard Poodles aren't hard-headed canines — they're easily taught and directed, which is part of what makes them such high-quality working dogs. You can depend on their offspring, even when mixed with another type of purebred dog, to also be sensitive.



REMEMBER

Positive training techniques, along with consistency and clear communication, enhances and speeds up the training process. Dogs trained in this manner are highly motivated to perform. With the forward-thinking Doodle, you'll have a willing partner and close companion.

Doodle Personalities

Both purebred and mixed-breed dogs (like Doodles) can have a huge range of behavior traits, from super-assertive to overly submissive. Some easily accept and remain calm in any situation, while others become highly reactive at the slightest movement. And, although early training and socialization can prevent any dog from becoming an excessive barker or jumper, all Doodles tend to have some typical behavior traits across the board. They can be super-sensitive, very intuitive, and, in the case of the Standard-size Doodles, hyperactive. Understanding your Doodle's personality will help you take the right approach in every interaction.

Super-sensitive

Most Poodles are very sensitive, so you can count on your Doodle also having a sensitive personality. This means that they don't handle aggressive actions or loud, harsh voices very well. It can also make them shy around strangers and other dogs they've never met.

Standard Poodles also tend to be very reserved. Taking the time to allow your Doodle to make the first overtures will help prevent a fearful reaction, such as backing away or urinating. And, because Doodles are generally

very friendly, you can count on their reaching out at some point. Just be patient.

A sensitive dog requires a special approach to training and overall rule setting. Clearly explain your desires through a positive, consistent approach. Your Doodle will probably be quick to learn a new concept, but you may need to break it down into smaller parts and gradually add criteria to attain the ultimate goal. Repetition and clarity are key features of this approach.



REMEMBER

Teaching your Doodle should involve capturing and shaping, not correcting. (You can find more about training in [Chapter 10](#).) Overcorrecting your Doodle will cause the dog to be shy and shut down — you may see your dog lying down in a corner, facing the wall. Yes, Doodles are *that* sensitive!

Being sensitive also means you shouldn't flood your dog with a situation in which he's insecure. *Flooding* means pushing your dog into something that's frightening to him in order to teach him it's no longer frightening. For example, your Doodle may be afraid of other dogs they don't know. Flooding them would be to put them in a room with a bunch of other dogs and let them work it out to the point where they're playing with all the dogs instead of cowering in a corner. With Doodles, that's the wrong approach. They'll be so overwhelmed that they *will* cower in a corner and then be afraid of that situation moving forward. Instead, meeting one dog at a time, in a relaxed environment, will give your Doodle time to adjust in their own way.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Regardless of which TV dog trainer you've watched, keep in mind that success doesn't happen in 30 to 60 minutes. When the TV dog trainer puts a new dog in with a group of dogs and claims that's the best way for them to learn manners, don't believe it. That's flooding, and it can backfire big time, resulting in a dog being injured and/or traumatized. Training takes time and patience, as well as understanding the dog well enough to read their signals. There are no overnight cures for inappropriate behavior.

Sometimes a sensitive Doodle can be mistaken as fearful or having been abused. Lack of confidence can often appear similar to a dog who has had these emotions or experiences, but it doesn't actually mean they're accurate. It merely takes more time for an adult Doodle to warm up to a new environment, people, or other animals — especially if the individuals are outgoing and come at the Doodle, which can be intimidating.

Sensitivity can often make the training process challenging. It may take a while to figure out how to motivate a Doodle when they would rather just watch the world go by and try to remain unnoticed. But every dog is motivated by something. And when you've discovered this key — the one thing that they'll do anything to get — even a sensitive Doodle will gradually come out of their shell and discover a whole world of wonder, learning how to better understand their people and home. As this process progresses, your sensitive Doodle will become more confident and accepting of new situations.