

Eight Myths That Can Make These Dogs Sad and Lonely

Common misconceptions about these dog breeds can leave them wanting love and attention. They may think people don't trust them, or don't think they actually want affection and cuddling. How many of these persistent but false myths do you believe?

Reviewed by [Dr. Becker](#)

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

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- Another old wives’ tale about large and giant breeds is that they prefer to live outdoors, away from their human family
- If you’re hesitant to bring a large dog home because of popular misconceptions about the differences between large and small dogs, it could be time to open your heart and let a big dog win you over

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Eight Myths About Big Dogs

1. **Myth: Big dogs are aggressive** — Generally speaking, canine aggressiveness is much more about nurture than nature. Any dog can become aggressive in response to its environment. The reason many people assume large and giant breeds are more aggressive than smaller dogs is due strictly to their size. Compared to smaller breeds, large dogs are taller (especially when they stand up on hind legs), their mouths and teeth are bigger, their barks sound more serious, and their bodies appear more powerful.

The reason we hear more about aggressive large dogs is because they cause more harm when they bite, not because they bite more often than their smaller counterparts. It’s similar to an airplane crash — it doesn’t happen often, but it makes a good news story.

2. **Myth: Some big dogs have “locking jaws”** — Utter nonsense. From Fido Friendly Magazine: “Based on dog anatomy, it’s impossible. If an animal has a locking jaw, it’s not a dog. Case closed.”¹
3. **Myth: Big dogs belong outdoors** — All dogs, regardless of size, should get outside to exercise, explore, socialize, and put all four paws in contact with the earth. And while it’s true many large breeds seem to be

more comfortable in nature than smaller dogs, it doesn't mean they should spend most or all of their time outside.

Dogs of all sizes and breeds are social animals who need to be physically close to their humans. Relegating any dog to the garage, backyard or barn away from his family is inhumane.

4. **Myth: Big dogs make the best running partners** — A dog's size has little to do with her ability to keep up with you on your morning runs. In fact, large and giant breeds are at much higher risk of certain orthopedic conditions — for example, hip dysplasia — that prevent high-impact forms of exercise like running. Smaller dogs often make better runners because they weigh less and place less stress on their joints.

If you have your heart set on running with the big dogs, consider a natural like a Dalmatian or Greyhound, or a light, sleek, large mixed breed. Make sure your dog has a clean bill of health from your veterinarian before you take her out with you for a run.

5. **Myth: Big dogs can't live in small spaces** — Don't assume it's the square footage of your living space or your fenced-in backyard that makes the difference in your dog's quality of life.

It's not about how much space you have in your home or yard — it's about how much heart-thumping exercise your dog gets each day, regardless of his size. Any dog, large or small, can be happy and healthy in any size home as long as his exercise needs are met.

6. **Myth: Big dogs and kids don't mix** — As long as your dog (large OR small) is obedience trained and well-socialized ... and your kiddo has been taught the do's and don'ts of handling dogs ... there's no reason the two can't get along famously. Most dogs recognize the difference between an adult and a child (which is why there are so many YouTube videos of giant breeds gently playing with toddlers).

It's important to supervise each interaction between child and dog in the beginning, until you're completely confident each knows how to behave with the other and they've formed a loving bond.

7. **Myth: All big dogs make great guard dogs** — The truth is, many large dogs are friendly love bugs with anyone and everyone, while many 5-pounders are downright ferocious when a stranger approaches. It's the size thing again — big dogs appear to many people to be the obvious choice to protect hearth and home.
8. **Myth: Big dogs aren't cuddly** — Whoever came up with this one doesn't know much about big dogs! Some dogs — small, large, and every size in between — are independent by nature, but generally speaking, big dogs are every bit as affectionate as lap dogs. If you lay on the floor near your Golden Retriever, she'll be all over you in a heartbeat. If you invite your 80-pound mixed breed, your pit bull or your Newfoundland to warm up your bed, he'll be more than happy to oblige.

It's usually not for want of trying that your big dog lays at your feet instead of across your lap, so be sure to invite him for snuggles often.

Sources and References

[VetDepot January 14, 2015](#)

[Dublin Dog Blog February 27, 2015](#)

[VetStreet December 18, 2014](#)

¹ [Fido Friendly Magazine March 4, 2011](#)