Jack Russell Terrier: Personality, Care and Training
Placeholder for the "Links" field



Jack Russell Terrier: Personality, Care and Training

Published November 19, 2026

Small, clever, bold and bursting with energy — the Jack Russell Terrier is a little dog with an enormous personality. If you're considering bringing one of these spirited small dog breeds into your home, this dog breed guide covers everything you need to know about personality, care and training. Every Jack Russell Terrier is unique, so use this Jack Russell guide as a starting point and tailor your approach to your own best friend.

Key Takeaways

- Jack Russell Terriers are small, clever and bold dogs bred for energy and intelligence
- They need both physical exercise and mental stimulation every day to stay happy

- Positive reinforcement training works best for this intelligent, independent breed
- A complete and balanced diet, regular grooming and routine vet checks support a long, healthy life



Jack Russell at a Glance

- **Size:** 25–38 cm tall at the shoulder
- **Weight:** 6–8 kg
- **Lifespan:** 13–16 years
- **Coat types:** Smooth, broken or rough
- **Energy level:** Very high
- **Trainability:** High, with consistency
- **Kid-friendly:** Yes, with supervision
- **Apartment-friendly:** Possible with enough exercise

History and Origin of the Jack Russell

The Jack Russell was bred in England in the early 1800s by Reverend John Russell, who wanted a compact, fearless terrier breed for fox hunting. That working-dog heritage still runs deep — these dogs were built to chase, dig and think on their feet. Understanding where the breed comes from helps explain why your Jack Russell has so much energy and such a strong prey drive.

Jack Russell temperament, personality and family fit

Understanding the Jack Russell Temperament

The Jack Russell temperament is a lively mix of intelligence, confidence and tenacity. These dogs are affectionate with their families and fiercely loyal, but their working terrier heritage means they’re naturally alert, curious and quick to react. Understanding Jack Russell Terrier temperament means appreciating that these dogs need both physical exercise and mental stimulation. Among energetic dog breeds, the Jack Russell stands out — a bored Jack Russell can become destructive, so keeping that sharp mind busy is just as important as tiring out their body.

They can be wonderful family dogs when socialised early, though their boundless energy and tendency to chase means supervision is wise around very young children and small pets.

Jack Russel training and daily exercise that actually works

Training a Jack Russell for Success

Terrier training works best with positive reinforcement — rewards, praise and short, engaging sessions. Your Jack Russell Terrier is smart and independent, so focus on foundational skills like recall, loose-lead walking, “leave it” and settle. Keep training fun and varied. Managing typical terrier behaviours like barking, chasing and digging starts with giving your dog appropriate outlets for their natural instincts.

Exercise and Mental Enrichment Requirements for Jack Russells

A Jack Russell needs at least 60 minutes of exercise daily, plus plenty of mental enrichment. Scent games, puzzle toys and training exercises are brilliant for keeping that sharp mind satisfied. Why does enrichment matter so much? Because a mentally stimulated Jack Russell is a happy, well-behaved one — and enrichment is just as important as physical activity.

Jack Russell Care: Feeding and Nutrition

Feeding and Nutrition for a Healthy Jack Russell

Feeding your Jack Russell a complete and balanced diet supports their overall health and wellbeing. Nutritional requirements vary depending on age, activity level and individual lifestyle, so it’s worth selecting food that meets the needs of such an energetic breed. Wet dog food benefits and feeding tips can help you choose the right option.

Feeding Requirements Throughout Different Life Stages

Jack Russell puppies need frequent, nutrient-rich meals to fuel growth, while adults do well on two meals a day. Senior dogs may need fewer calories and joint-supporting nutrients. Review your feeding routine regularly as your dog ages — their needs change just as yours do.

Maintaining a Healthy Weight and Body Condition

Jack Russells are compact and athletic, so keeping them lean protects their joints and supports longevity. Monitor body condition, measure portions and limit treats to keep your best friend in top shape.

Choosing the Right Food for Your Jack Russell

Look for crafted, wholesome recipes made with real meat and quality ingredients. MY DOG® products offer a range of delicious options that make every meal a moment to savour — because only the best will do for your best friend.

A puppy-to-senior Jack Russell care plan

How Care Needs Change Throughout a Jack Russell's Life

- Puppy: Focus on socialisation, routine and development. Your puppy's first week at home is a great starting point.
- Adult: Maintain consistent exercise, enrichment and balanced nutrition.
- Senior: Prioritise mobility support, gentle exercise and regular health monitoring.

Regular grooming also matters at every stage — a guide to grooming your dog can help you build a routine that keeps your Jack Russell's coat healthy and clean. Good terrier care is about staying proactive, so your best friend can thrive at every age.

Call to Action

Ready to savour every moment with your Jack Russell? Explore the full MY DOG® range and find crafted, wholesome meals your best friend will love. Love them back™.

FAQs

All Questions jack russell
Filter by

- All Questions
- jack russell

1. ### Are Jack Russells good family dogs?

   Yes — Jack Russells are affectionate, loyal and playful, making them wonderful family dogs when socialised early. Their energy and prey drive mean supervision is wise around very young children and small pets.

2. ### How much exercise does a Jack Russell Terrier need every day?

   A Jack Russell Terrier needs at least 60 minutes of exercise daily, plus mental enrichment like scent games and puzzle toys to keep their sharp mind satisfied.

3. ### Are Jack Russells easy to train?

   Jack Russells are highly intelligent and quick to learn, but their independent streak means positive reinforcement and short, engaging sessions work best. Consistency and patience are key.

4. ## Do Jack Russell Terriers bark a lot?

   Jack Russells are naturally alert and vocal, so they can be prone to barking — especially when bored or under-stimulated. Training, exercise and mental enrichment help manage excessive barking.

5. ## Why do Jack Russells dig?

   Digging is instinctive for Jack Russells — it comes from their working terrier heritage of going to ground after prey. Giving them a designated digging area or alternative outlets can help redirect this natural behaviour.

Source URL:
https://www.mydog.com.au/articles/jack-russell-terrier-personality-care-and-training