

This Goofy, Clownish Pet Doesn't Live Up to His Harsh Name

Snugglers in disguise, they're really lovers, not fighters, no matter what their name might suggest. And one of his most unusual traits is his need for sunscreen if he's out in the sun too long. Five reasons this sometimes scary-looking pet may be the ideal one for you.

Reviewed by Dr. Becker

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Boxers were developed in Germany in the late 1800s to be police and army dogs
- Boxers may look a little intimidating, but they're great family dogs, snugglers and oftentimes a little goofy
- Athletic and high-energy, boxers aren't fighters as their name implies, but do love to have their own way if not carefully guided and trained
- Boxers weigh in at 60 to 70 pounds and stand more or less around 23 inches tall, depending on if it's a male or female
- Boxers are generally calm with people, even those they don't know yet, and very good with children

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Whenever you see a boxer, you may be taken with his huge, soulful eyes or jowly cheeks. Maybe you'll notice his floppy, velvety ears or powerful build, but most likely, before long, his intelligent, sweet and companionable nature will become evident.

As youngsters, boxers can be rowdy, expressive and tirelessly ready to play. They'll grow out of this before long, though; the best course is just to enjoy it for however long it lasts!

Boxers are great companions and family dogs, not to mention one of the most popular breeds in the U.S. Here are five boxer characteristics that can help you decide how well this breed might work in your household:

1. **Boxers started out as police and service dogs**



As a breed, boxers were developed in the 1880s, first from German mastiff-type dogs, the Bullenbeisser and the Barenbeiszer, according to Dog Breed Info.¹ It was later mixed with the first “renditions” of mastiffs and **bulldogs**.

Early on, boxers were used in many areas of society, for cattle herding and as cart-pullers and circus dogs. Even though the “breed” as such didn’t have uniform looks as it does today, as a fighter they had a way of pummeling opponents with their front legs, which earned them their name.

Not many breeds have a background of animal heroics like this one does. Odin Kennels reported:

“Hundreds of Boxers served during the war years. They were not only guard and patrol dogs, but also messenger dogs, a job that required negotiating mud-slickened, shell-shocked ground during heavy fire to carry messages between troops.

The Boxer also transported communications wires, wearing a spool of wire that unwound as the dog ran between limits on the battlefield.”²

2. **Boxers have a playful, sometimes independent, nature**



A seemingly lighthearted personality sets this breed apart, but a stubborn streak may be evident as well. Maybe it’s because they’re so clever, but without firm and loving training boxers will positively “own” their natural bent of doing what they please. As DogTime puts it, boxers:

*"... Are intelligent and respond well to firm but fun training. They also have an independent streak and don't like to be bossed around or treated harshly. You'll have the biggest success in training your Boxer if you can make it fun for him."*³

At the same time, boxers are also cuddle bugs — if you don't mind a little drool! They also can be a bit clownish and sometimes seem aware that they're entertaining you.

3. **They're very agile**



Boxers weigh in at 60 to 70 pounds and stand more or less around 23 inches tall, depending on if it's a male or female. They're high-energy dogs who run with abandon, showing how much they require regular exercise.

They're also great watchdogs and wouldn't be afraid to confront an intruder in the same way a mastiff might.

In a nutshell, boxers are ready to go at a moment's notice. Along with exercise, they need the mental stimulation of proper training. Because his nature is to forge ahead, unless he's trained to behave otherwise, he may take you on a run you're not ready for!

4. **Boxers are lovers, not fighters**



While this breed has a long history of using bulk to pull loads and even help with strenuous police work, they're somewhat of a sensitive breed, not really into a lot of noise and activity such as a large, extremely active or noisy family might generate.

Boxers are generally calm with people, even those they don't know yet, and very good with children. As is so

often the case, it depends on the dog's upbringing and past experiences whether they'll handle any situation well. Just know boxers can be ready to defend and protect but are generally not looking for a fight. When it comes to getting along with other dogs, boxers can be a bit protective of their family members, especially when there's a perceived threat.

5. **Boxers may need sunscreen, especially on white patches**



Just like people, if a dog is out in the sun for too long, he can get sunburned. Especially if he's short-haired and has white patches, precautions should be taken to monitor how long he's in the sun. You can even put natural, dog-friendly sunscreen on your dog's white and bald areas as a preventive.

A word of caution: Sunscreen products containing zinc oxide are poisonous to dogs, so read labels carefully or pick up a good sun block product from your veterinarian. Also, boxers pant in order to cool themselves off, using their short noses. Be sensitive when it's hot and humid and avoid exercising him outdoors in extreme heat; this breed is one of the most susceptible to heatstroke.

Boxers don't necessarily like being out in the cold, either, because they have short coats and little body fat, so keep that in mind when you're taking yours for a walk on winter days with frigid temperatures. Dog sweaters and jackets aren't just to look cute; your dog will appreciate having one on when the weather outside is frightening.

Reliably Friendly

One of the best things about having a boxer is their easygoing nature and resilience. But be aware: Boxers can be loud snorers and slobber enthusiastically. Additionally, flatulence is a frequent caller that may have you opening windows often. Socializing your boxer early will help get him used to people, other dogs, busy households and new situations. Before long, you'll wonder how you ever managed without him.

Sources and References

[Vetstreet April 16, 2016](#)

¹ [Dog Breed Info 1998-2016](#)

² [Odin Kennels January 25, 2008](#)

³ [DogTime 2016](#)