



Energy Level Breakdown

A big factor that will determine whether a dog will fit well in your home is energy level. Here at Wayside Waifs we assess energy level on a scale of 1 to 5 during their behavioral assessment. Some dogs are “couch potatoes” and have an energy level of 1 out of 5, and some dogs are “wound for sound” and have an energy level of 5 out of 5. Please take into account your lifestyle and the type of furry friend you are looking for. If you want a running partner, hiking companion, or an agility dog, you’re going to want to look for our white Waif Runner stickers located on the upper corner of our kennel cards or a dog marked with an energy level of 4/5 or 5/5. However, if you’re looking for a dog to cuddle with you because you’re an avid reader or you want a calm dog because you live in an apartment, you will want to consider a dog with an energy level of 1/5 or 2/5. Regardless of a dog’s energy level, ALL dogs will benefit from taking obedience classes. The energy level is clearly labeled on the kennel card. Please note that some dogs with low energy levels here in the shelter may come out of their shells and have a higher energy level in a calmer, home environment; or, dogs with a high energy level here in the shelter may relax and be calmer in a home environment. Here is Wayside Waifs’ breakdown of key characteristics that our behavioral evaluators look at before assigning them an energy level and some recommendations for adopters:

Energy Level

1 = dog chooses to sit or lie down for a good portion of the assessment and is not interested in exploring the assessment room; dog is geriatric in age and will sleep for longer periods of time than younger to middle-aged dogs; dog solicits a lot of attention and will crawl in your lap and fall asleep; dog is fine with just pottyng and exploring in the backyard and playing with toys inside; dog cannot handle long walks and should not be run

2 = dog initially explores the perimeter of the assessment room but will calm down quickly and sit or lie down; dog may be middle-aged or older or is a breed that is known for its mellow disposition; dog calmly solicits attention from people; dog would enjoy a brief walk around the block and playing with toys inside or in the backyard

3 = dog briskly explores the room, sniffing under chairs and tentatively puts paws up on counters/desks to sniff, may or may not jump up on people briefly to solicit attention; if good with other dogs, dog plays with other dogs without excessively rough play; dog will need a daily 20-minute walk or playing fetch in the backyard and would benefit from more rigorous exercise (longer walks or runs) a few times per week; dog would benefit from mental stimulation such as playing with a variety of toys

4 = dog is very excited to be off leash in the assessment room, confidently sniffs and runs around the room, may or may not jump up on counters, desks, and people with moderate force to become acquainted with the new environment; if good with other dogs, dog plays roughly with other high-energy dogs, mouthing

and jumping up on the other dog roughly; dog will need a daily hour-long walk or a rigorous game of fetch in the backyard and would benefit from doggie daycare if good with other dogs or a 3-mile long run a few times per week; dog will also need a mental outlet such as providing a variety of toys (Kongs, Kong wobblers, plush squeaky toys, antlers, rawhides, etc.), especially when left alone; dog will need obedience training to ensure energy does not become destructive; dog may not kennel/crate well

5 = dog has the same temperament as dogs with an energy level of 4, but they may be larger in size or dog uses more physical force when excited and jumping; dog is so frenetic and confident when running and playing that it may run and slide into walls and is not afraid of physically injuring itself; dog will need an owner who is a serious runner or someone who is very committed to the dog's daily need for exercise, mental stimulation, and obedience training; dog may not kennel/crate well

*If, after trying these suggestions, you are still experiencing undesirable behaviors in your **dog**, SUBMIT QUESTIONS by clicking the link under Ask A Trainer on the Behavior and Training page of the Wayside Waifs website: www.waysidewaifs.org.*

Written by the Wayside Waifs Animal Behavior Team
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