



Feature Breed

The Queensland Dog World

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The American Hairless Terrier



The 'AHT' American Hairless Terrier

By Lynn K. Poston, AHTCA Secretary

The American Hairless Terrier is more commonly referred to as the 'AHT'. This is truly an American breed, that originated in Louisiana as a natural mutation of the Rat Terrier. Historically, the AHT began in the early 1970's, when a hairless puppy was born into a litter of mid-size Rat Terriers.

While not the first hairless puppy born to these parents, it was the first to be given to Edwin and Willie Scott and the Scotts immediately fell in love with this female puppy and named her Josephine. Josephine became the progenitor of the American Hairless Terrier breed.

Like all the other hairless dog breeds, the AHT comes in two varieties (hairless & coated) but that is where the similarity ends. The AHT is uniquely different than all the other hairless breeds in several ways. Most importantly, the genetics of the AHT is a simple recessive.

This means that the coated AHT carries a hairless gene and can produce both hairless and coated offspring.

The hairless AHT has only hairless genes.

All the other hairless breeds are genetically a dominant lethal. This means that the hairless variety of all these other hairless breeds need to have one gene for coat and one hairless gene.

Thus giving the hairless variety of those breeds patterned hair on the head, feet and tail. The coated variety of these other hairless breeds carry no hairless gene and therefore, they can only produce coated offspring if bred together. Because the AHT genetics are different, the hairless AHT is born with a soft down that is referred to as a 'birth coat', which they lose by the time they are 8 to 12 weeks of age.

Making the feel of the AHT skin very different and not as prone to the skin issues seen with the other hairless breeds. The hairless AHT also lacks the dentition issues seen with the other hairless breeds. The AHTs have normal shaped and well-rooted teeth.

The hairless and coated AHT come in a variety of colours and patterns, including solid coloured.

The AHT was accepted into AKC's Foundation Stock Service (FSS) in October 2011 and the original submission to AKC was over 1,200 pedigrees. On January 1, 2016, the AKC granted the American Hairless Terrier full breed recognition and moved them into the Terrier Group.

According to the parent club's records, by the end of January, 10 AHTs achieved their AKC Championship and 2 achieved their AKC Grand Championships!

In a nutshell, the AHT is a smoothly muscled, small to medium size companion who attracts attention and fans wherever they go. The breed is alert, curious, intelligent and easy to train. Because the hairless variety of the AHT lacks the protection of a coat, it makes them unsuited for field hunting.



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While the AHT was not really developed to be a 'working' terrier, the instincts are there and many AHTs (both varieties) excel in Obedience and a variety of performance events.

In the Conformation ring, the AHT should NOT be sparred and is a tabled breed.

A few important points to remember when judging: The AHT has no relationship to the Chinese Crested or Xoloitzcuintli. The AHT is uniquely and genetically different than all the other hairless breeds.

☛ In a nutshell, the AHT is a smoothly muscled, small to medium size companion who attracts attention and fans wherever they go. The breed is alert, curious, intelligent and easy to train. ☛

There is a coated variety of the AHT.

The coat should be short, smooth and dense, with a sheen. A blue or blue fawn dog is permitted to have blue or amber eyes.

A chocolate dog will also have lighter eyes.

These are self-coloured with matching nose leather. Neither are to be faulted. However, other colour AHTs should have a dark brown eye. Both varieties of the AHT come in a variety of colours and patterns, including solid coloured. But Merle and Albinism are to be DQ'd.

The AHT is ideally 12" to 16" at the shoulder and the body is rectangular, being slightly longer than tall. Movement is smooth and effortless, showing good reach and drive.

We have a wonderful Illustrated Breed Standard that can be viewed on the AHTCA website at: www.ahtca.info

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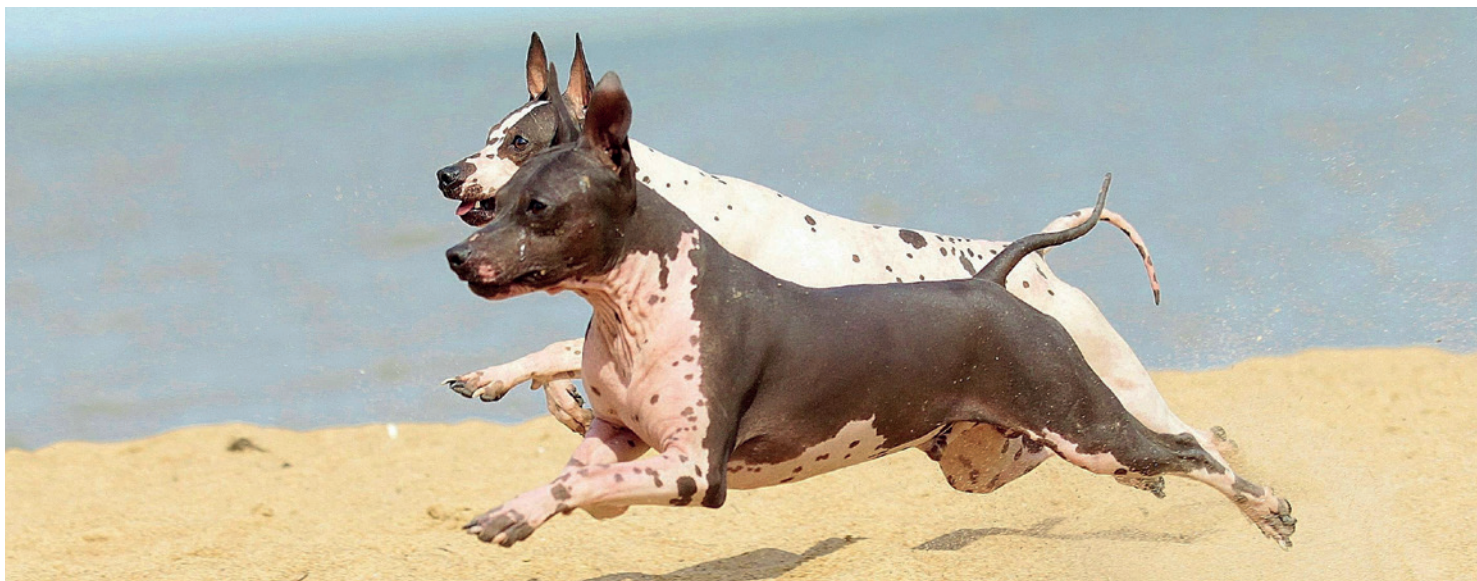
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American Hairless Terriers in Australia

By Kay Holmes

The American Hairless Terrier was officially recognised as a Registerable Pure Breed by ANKC in Australia on the 17th January 2017 and will be eligible for exhibition in Group 2 (Terriers) from 1st July 2017. Australia's first AHT was approved for re-registration from her AKC Papers on the 19th January 2017, we have high hopes for this wonderful breed in Australia in the coming years.

Temperament

American Hairless Terriers are alert, intelligent, playful, inquisitive, lively and loving dogs. This affectionate dog makes an excellent indoor companion in the right home.

They are good with children, especially if raised with them from puppyhood, but being a small dog, can be easily injured by an overly enthusiastic child, so adult supervision is a must, as with any puppy.

The AHT is lively yet loving, they need a human who understands how to be the leader it is best to teach your children how to be gentle leaders early. Most AHT's respond well to treat or clicker based training.

Most AHT's are generally good watchdogs, yet is friendly and not generally fearful with strangers. The AHT is a Terrier-they are quick and very playful and have the lively, feisty and fearless quality found in most terriers. In saying this, AHT breeders have worked through the years to 'tone down' the terrier temperament! The AHT are terrier-smart without being terrier crazy and do have an 'off switch'.

AKC was originally going to put AHTs in the Non-Sporting group – not the Terrier group as the breed was developed to be a companion and NOT a working terrier. The AHT loves hunting, although it is not recommended for the hairless variety, due to the lack of protection on their skin.

Some are not good swimmers, so need to be closely supervised especially around pools, preferably with a doggy life jacket securely on. The AHT is very eager to please and is therefore relatively easy to train and responds well to positive reinforcement based training. Nevertheless, don't bequeath your AHT with small dog syndrome. Be the pack leader in order to curb any negative behaviour.

Exercise and Living Conditions

The AHT is strictly an indoor dog, not a yard dog. AHTs are equally comfortable on both an acreage block and in an apartment. They are fairly active indoors and love challenging games and toys.

They should either have a small to medium sized yard to play in for 20 - 30 minutes of exercise per day or be taken for a walk for this amount of time each day. This breed excels at Agility, Trials and Obedience.

The American Hairless Terrier is a very good prospect for some allergy sufferers.

AHT breeders here and overseas have had experience doing hands on and remote allergy tests with people who have an allergic response to dogs and often these people have been previously tested and are unable to own a dog, even with other breeds that are reported as 'hypoallergenic'.

🐾 Studies have shown that the AHT can be the best opportunity to own a dog for many dog allergy sufferers, with breeders reporting seeing grown men cry when they come to pick up the first puppy that they have ever owned. 🐾

Studies have shown that the AHT can be the best opportunity to own a dog for many dog allergy sufferers, with breeders reporting seeing grown men cry when they come to pick up the first puppy that they have ever owned. Holding a puppy with no reaction is a very powerful feeling and being able to provide that is an honour to the guardians of this wonderful breed.





General and Skin care for AHTs

By Danielle Gal and Kay Holmes

The most important lesson: less is more! The AHT is different to other hairless breeds and don't have any of the breeding complications usually associated with other hairless breeds. They do not have hair anywhere on their body, many may retain a Vellus, the hairless variety obviously does not shed fur and doesn't get fleas. Their dentition is well-rooted and strong and they also do not have major skin problems commonly seen with other hairless dogs.



Never use scented products or products with lanolin/wool in them, as these may create skin issues in sensitive dogs.

Their skin feels like silk! Nothing will prepare you for the sheer softness and pliability of their skin without needing potions to make it that way. Unscented lotion/cream/coconut oil should only be applied when you see dry skin.

This may be once or twice a year, mostly on ear tips and girth areas. Frequent bathing can necessitate more lotion being needed, but again, less is more.

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Only apply if you see that their skin looks dry. There is a difference between skin that has been protected from UV and dogs that haven't (usually solid coloured dogs).

Without having felt a dog whose skin has been cared for, one could be mistaken in thinking that an unprotected dog has lovely skin, as compared to the other hairless breeds, it does!

However, once one has felt an AHT that has been cared for all its life, the comparison is rather obvious. I find this to be the case regardless of colour/pied vs solid and strongly feel that owning solid dogs specifically so that one doesn't have to protect their skin from UV is far from the truth and very dangerous with the powerful sun here in Australia.

Sunburn hurts and it only takes one bad burn to ruin their skin forever.

It may not show up immediately, but will eventually. It's not that complicated to protect them from the sun and is their only true skin care requirement!

You wouldn't let your child out without clothes for an hour or two in this killer sun without protection and the amount of time it takes to put on a UV onesie or apply sunscreen is negligible.

AHT can get clogged pores and develop pimples if they get dirty and the skin isn't cared for – this is more commonly the case in puppies or an older dog, but they generally go away on their own with normal Skin care. Rashes and other allergies can occur, but are not that common.

The Cold

AHTs are like having kids - if you're cold they will likely be too and need a coat. There are some great clothes makers in Australia, but don't use wool or wool products; Polar

Fleece for warmth should be fine.

They love to sleep under the doona, but if your dog doesn't sleep in your bed, you need to ensure that he/she has warm enough clothes in winter to not be uncomfortable overnight. On the other hand, don't overdress your dog - they handle cold better than heat.

Wash bedding and Clothes in Hypoallergenic products to prevent/minimise any contact reactions from your soap powders in sensitive individuals.

The coated AHT is covered with a short smooth and dense coat that has a sheen. Trim nails once a month but more often if necessary.

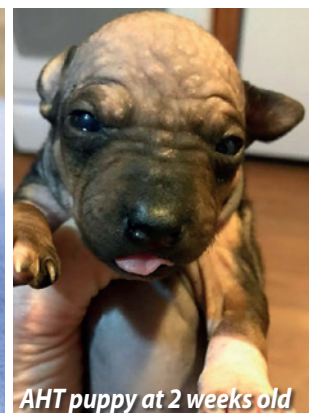
Keep ears clean and ask your vet to check for grass seeds during any regular check-ups as they don't always show symptoms.



AHT Puppies are Born with fur which sheds off the Hairless Variety by approx. 6 weeks of age



AHT puppy at 1 week old



AHT puppy at 2 weeks old



AHT puppy at 4 weeks old



AHT puppy at 8 weeks old



A little from the AHT Ambassadors in Australia

As there are only a few of us to date, I thought it would be reasonable to put in a little paragraph from each person involved in founding this breed in Australia to give you different perspectives from each person, as we all come from a different demographic.

Kay Holmes:

Although my first AHT will join our family a little later this year, I believe I have played an integral part of this breed being accepted into Australia.

From doing the 'Breed Application', finding an AHT in Australia and applying for the 'Breed Recognition', to offering to write this editorial.



I happened across the AHT breed as my eldest son (of 3 children) is allergic to dogs, ponies etc. Although he is dog mad, unfortunately he has allergic reactions to them. We introduced him to all the 'Hypoallergenic' breeds and other hairless breeds in a controlled environment. He reacted to each one and each time our hearts sank with the realisation that we may never be able to have an inside dog again.

So, off to the Internet I went, in search of a breed for my dog-loving son and I came across the American Hairless Terrier!

Not so long after my discovery, I got talking to a lovely lady at a dog show (Jane) and I don't know how it came up, but it turned out that she had an American Hairless Terrier at home. Jane was more than happy for us to come and meet her AHT and we were ecstatic when my son did not react.



The rest from there is history and we are now anxiously awaiting the arrival of our AHT girl later this year. I would personally like to thank Lynn K. Poston and Terri Murphy for all the tireless work they have done for this breed over the last 30 odd years and all the help they have given me personally along our Journey so far.

I would also like to thank Patty Smith for allowing us the opportunity to own an AHT and we will endeavour to do you all and the Breed proud.



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Jane Ridley:

I first saw an AHT online 17 years ago and it was love at first sight. 15 years later my dream of owning one came true with the arrival of my UKC Champion titled girl from the United States.

She is a very soft kind girl who is very easy to live with; she is the easiest care dog imaginable. AHTs love their food-I feed raw and find this takes care of their skin and overall wellbeing. Their nails seem to grow very quickly, but a quick file each fortnight takes care of this easily. AHTs love their clothes in the cooler months... my girl has a closet just as large as mine!

My girl was officially re-registered from her UKC papers in Australia on the 19th January 2017. I am importing semen soon and have an exciting litter planned for this year. My aim is to breed healthy, solid coloured dogs with good temperaments that will make life long family members, particularly for people with allergies that have not been able to have a pet before, as American Hairless Terriers are one of the most 'hypoallergenic' dogs.



Danielle Gal:

I first got involved with the American Hairless Terrier in 2009, when I had Chinese Crested, but didn't feel that they were my heart breed. I grew up with Staffordshire Bull Terriers and loved their bold, happy, people-orientated attitude.

I loved the idea of that same personality without the constant little hairs I was always picking off everything and the smaller size package that I could easily pick up if I encountered trouble with a less than friendly dog off leash. Having to try to pick up a squirming Stafford or keep it apart and fend off the aggressor while on beach walks was one of my biggest worries, but my dogs loved their walks and swims, so I couldn't deny them those pleasures.

A lapdog that could actually fit on my lap and not just think it did, was also a motivation!

While living overseas in 2010, I got my first AHT from Wales, with many thanks to Teri Murphy who helped make this happen and my life was never the same again.

My girl has travelled the world with me, handled temperatures from -5C to 45C with her fantastic can-do attitude, hiked up mountains and across deserts and just laid in bed with me on days I didn't want to get up. She's lived on dairy farms and in apartments and run next to my bicycle on my way to work on the shores of Lake Kinneret.



We lived in an area being bombed at one stage and I was truly grateful that at 7kg, I could scoop her up and make it to the bomb shelter just in time, because I would never have left her. Problems on beach walks were a thing of the past!

She has never met a stranger, is friends with all creatures great and small and a total hit with all the neighbourhood kids she's met-in more than one language. She plays fetch with them, does tricks for them (even after they've asked for the 50th time) and is always the perfect lady and my best friend.

Before she appears too perfect, I'll admit her weakness for newspaper left lying around! Meeting and interacting with people who have allergies is where the true worth of her breed comes to the fore. There will always be people unable to tolerate even an AHT, but we have found that of all the less allergenic breeds, more people appear to be able to tolerate them.

People who have never been able to have or even pat a dog, can happily interact with her and I believe that she has changed lives and converted many people who may have been put off when first seeing a hairless dog.

I look after her the way I do myself. If I'm cold, we both wear a coat; if the sun is out and I need to put sunscreen on, she gets a quick spray with kiddies sunscreen and we're off! When I moved to Australia, there was never a question of whether she would come or not. If she couldn't, I wouldn't either! So in 2013, my girl came to Australia and the rest is history!

I saw that there were no other AHTs here and having promised myself that I would always have an AHT in my life, I set about planning how to do that and in 2015, brought a dog and bitch from Germany. I have high hopes for my breed here and most importantly my life is better just living with them!



American Hairless Terrier Photo credits:

Photos and Articles Supplied by Kay Holmes (LILCRACKA) with Thanks to the American Hairless Terrier Club of America.

For Enquiries visit www.lilcracka.net.au

With Many thanks to the American Hairless Terrier Club of America, Inc and especially Lynn K Poston, AHTCA Secretary for all your help and Guidance with this Article.

