

A few things to consider if you are interested in owning an Afghan Hound by Stir Greer

Afghan Hounds are beautiful creatures, known for their long coats. A basic equipment list for grooming an Afghan Hound at home includes a grooming table (\$150), pin brush (\$35), greyhound comb (\$25), slicker brush (\$10), large nail clippers (\$27), styptic powder (\$10), grooming arm for the table (\$40), grooming noose for the arm (\$15), scissors for trimming foot pads (\$25). Shampoos/Conditioners cost about \$8/gallon up to and exceeding \$50/gallon (Higher priced ones normally work better...sorry!). We're up to about \$350 so far. You will also need a way to dry the dog. Drying with a hand dryer is extremely time-consuming, but you can pick up a decent one cheap (\$40). A stand dryer is a better idea (\$200-\$500). You probably already own towels. You'll need a hose adaptor for your bath/shower. Professional grooming for a coated Afghan Hound in my area *starts* at \$100.

Afghan Hounds are also known for running away. A good 6' fence, laid tight to the ground, is an excellent way to keep your Afghan Hound from being hit by car and killed. Alternately, AHs hit by car usually require veterinary care (either to save them from dying or despite the fact that they will die anyway). (One family living in the DC area turned their AH loose in a park. They spent nearly \$10,000 to fix a broken femur – their regular vet was closed, so an emergency clinic was utilized. Then the dog was transferred to their vet, and required orthopedic surgery. The family was upset at the cost, but I was upset that they were stupid enough to let the dog loose, when they promised me that they would never do such a thing). (The takeaway on this is: stupid is expensive) If you do not currently have a fence, I recommend you price fencing materials for your yard, as well as installation. Having a fence installed on a ½ acre parcel can cost as little as \$6000 or more, depending upon materials. So-called "underground" fences DO NOT WORK FOR AFGHAN HOUNDS. A \$6000 fence is about \$4000 cheaper than a really big vet bill.

Afghan Hounds are a large dog, and having a crate for transporting in a vehicle is a very good idea (it will keep your car clean when you transport a dog with diarrhea to the vet in a Vari Kennel crate, not to mention the dog is safer and more likely to survive in the case of an accident). Large dog crates start around \$100 (excluding shipping).

Afghan Hounds are known to have a high prey drive. This means a leash and collar obviously. Skinny little necks meeting their skinny little heads mean a typical buckle collar may not work, so look for Sighthound Collars (google that) for your Afghan Hound. Your pet bunny may not be safe from your Afghan Hound. Even your existing housecat may not be safe. If you plan to keep a dog with high prey drive that is not safe with your housecat, you will need to make sure you can keep them separate at all times (we installed several additional doors in our house, b/c an Afghan Hound which we RAISED from puppy hood, with several housecats in residence, IS NOT CAT SAFE). Some Afghan Hounds ARE CAT SAFE. Some Afghan Hounds ARE NOT. No outdoor cat is safe with an Afghan Hound.

Afghan Hounds, like all dogs, of all and mixed breeds, can have medical issues. Breeders of Afghan Hounds most frequently check dogs they intend to breed for Thyroid Disorders, Eye Disorders and Hip Dysplasia. While thyroid medication is relatively inexpensive, even for a dog the size of an Afghan Hound, medications and treatment used for dogs with hip dysplasia are typical not inexpensive. A dog the size of an Afghan Hound which is being given an NSAID, for instance, will require periodic blood tests as well. (For example, Rimadyl is commonly dosed at 1mg/# of body weight, twice a day. For my oldest Afghan Hound, that is one 75mg caplet twice a day, which is roughly \$75 per month, not including vet exams and necessary lab tests. Many vets want to see your pet twice a year for a liver panel in particular. That cost is roughly \$400). My point? It can

cost more to medicate/vet a dog the size of an Afghan Hound than it costs to medicate/vet a dog the size of Pomeranian.

Afghan Hounds have an exercise requirement that is best filled through the use of free running in a large enclosure. This is especially true of younger Afghan Hounds. If you do not have any yard at all, and you do not already enjoy jogging, you are in for a major life change (and probably some weight loss). However, you will still need to find a way to allow your Afghan Hound to have free running exercise. Afghan Hounds are dogs that are designed to run. A tired dog is a good dog. An Afghan Hound with pent up energy, under-exercised can and will destroy your house and your belongings.

Afghan Hounds have long hair (back to that again). They are typically considered non-shedding, though they do indeed shed. However, the topknot and bodycoat grow to longer lengths, so each hair stays on the dog longer (longer life span if you will). This means matting (see grooming above). It also means vacuuming. While wood/tile flooring can be vacuumed with the household equivalent of a shop vac, carpeting requires vacuums with roller-brushes. The hair gets stuck to the carpet (and your upholstered furniture, unless you had the foresight to get leather furniture). (Here at my house, where only ½ the house is carpeted, we have 2 roller brushes for our vacuum. After each vacuuming, the roller brush is replaced, and the hair is CUT OFF the used roller brush, then pulled off with needle nosed pliers. Vacuums are a hot topic on many pet/show dog owner email lists, for a reason!)

Adult Afghan Hounds are typically aloof with strangers. If you long to have a dog that loves to meet people, you may not want an Afghan Hound. It is true, that you can find an adult Afghan Hound that acts like a Poodle, but it is not typical for the breed. The Breed Standard says "aloof". That's because, by and large, this breed is known for being, what? You got it, ALOOF. (A Poodle acting like a Poodle is to be expected, and Poodles are delightful dogs, but Poodles and Afghan Hounds are not one and the same). Young Afghan Hounds typically act more outgoing with and interested in strangers than they do as adults.

Afghan Hounds are typically not dogs that enjoy repetition. So? If you are dying to have a dog that will retrieve a ball for hours on end, you may not enjoy having an Afghan Hound. Some AHs, of course, will play fetch. But again, it's not the norm. This is not to say that you cannot compete in Obedience trials with an AH. Yes, you can teach an AH to fetch. But teaching an AH to fetch (when he is not so inclined) is a completely different experience from teaching the average bird dog to fetch. This non-love of repetition must be taken into consideration during training for Agility as well.

Afghan Hounds eat more than smaller dogs. My friends with Italian Greyhounds lament the cost of a good kibble food or a good fresh/raw food. Oh please. Currently, a kibble I like costs \$50 for a 28# bag (weight, not volume). A 28" male (that's an average sized AH) eats 4 cups a day (cup as in volume, not weight). Good luck doing the math, it's beyond me. But it ain't cheap.

Afghan Hounds typically do not like to have their feet touched. This is a consideration for you if you are going to groom your dog. Will you be able to clip it's nails without a helper? Brush it's legs? Wash it's muddy paws before it tracks in dirt onto your carpet (which already has hair on it b/c your vacuum died due to failure to remove the roller brush...).

Afghan Hounds are creatures of comfort. I think this is partially due to a lack of considerable body fat. While your chunky Labrador Retriever may be A-OK sleeping on the hearth in front of the fireplace, I doubt your thin-skinned Afghan Hound will be.

Afghan Hounds are known for getting up on furniture and on beds. It is, of course, theoretically possible to train them to stay off all of your furniture. Good luck with that.

Afghan Hounds have big, hairy foot coat. Usually. It is a great way to bring in mud, grass, and leaves. Two things: yard and flooring. If your back yard (surely you have one by now?) fills with water at the slightest hint of rain, your life may be miserable with a breed with foot coat. Imagine what your yard looks out (before a large dog has put traffic patterns into it) in all seasons. Now imagine part of yard in on your floors. If you have wood floors, dirt and grit CAN ruin the finish on your floor. Some tile types can also be damaged. Be aware that there is a certain amount of maintenance involved in owning a dog with hairy feet. If you fail to do so, you will be looking at refinishing your floors. (Trust me on this one).

These are just a few of the items which I suggest you take into consideration before acquiring an Afghan Hound. Personally, I think they're worth it. Make sure you do too.