

“No, They Won’t...”

“They make excellent watchdogs.”

Oh, they’ll watch all right—from under the bed as someone walks off with your stereo. Wolfdogs are most often mixed with Husky or Malamute. Neither of those breeds are meant to guard or alert. Combine that with the fact that wolves are naturally afraid of people, and you’ve got some pretty poor guard/watchdogs (especially high content wolfdogs). Sure, it’s possible that a wolf mixed with a lot of, say, German Shepherd could be a watchdog. Then again, if that’s your goal, why not get a German Shepherd?

“They can’t live in the house.”

Sure they can. Plenty of low contents and some mid content wolfdogs live in the house. Many higher content wolfdogs start out in the house and end up outdoors; some wolfdogs prefer it that way. Whether your wolfdog shares your home is a question of what you are willing to live with.

A high content wolfdog may be harder to housebreak than a doggie-dog. Also, many wolfdogs are destructive in the house. I have heard first-hand stories of wolfdogs eating through drywall, shredding couches and tearing up linoleum. People who live with high contents indoors have usually made some concessions in their lifestyle. Of course, wolfdogs are not all like this, and proper exercise will go a long way towards taking the edge off some of that destructo energy. Whatever the wolf content, I don’t know of many wolfdog owners who leave their four-footed darlings in the house unattended for any length of time.

Wolfdogs A-Z

“They’ll kill children.”/“They’re great with children.”

The sad fact is that dogs of just about every breed have killed children. Many of those deaths could have been prevented by proper containment of the animal and/or supervision of both animal and child. *Children should never be left unsupervised with any canine, wolfdog or not.* I have seen pure wolves stalk children through the fence at Wolf Park in Indiana. As the wolves follow the kids back and forth, the parents comment on how cute it is. It’s not. I have seen wolfdogs in private ownership show predatory behavior toward children. I have also seen wolfdogs playing nicely with children, everyone obviously having fun. It is my personal feeling that wolfdogs do not belong in homes with small children. A lot of doggie-dogs don’t either. We can not say across the board that all wolfdogs will injure children, nor that all wolfdogs are great with children. We do know that wolves have a well developed prey drive, and that prey drive is triggered by movement and sounds such as crying. In my opinion, in a home with children, that should be given careful consideration. In the end, it all boils down to knowing your particular animal, training both wolfdog and child on proper interactions, and never, ever leaving them together unsupervised.

“He doesn’t know whether he’s wolf or dog.”

This one in particular drives me crazy. It is usually followed closely by, “The wolf part is battling the dog part.” I can’t tell you how many times I’ve heard otherwise intelligent people use that as the reason they believe wolfdogs are “unpredictable”—as though these animals are in a perpetual state of existential angst, agonizing over what species they are. *Hmm, the dog part of me wants to play with that bunny, but my wolfy instincts tell me to*

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kill it. Whatever shall I do? I don’t think so. The cold, hard truth is that, “He’s unpredictable” often translates to “He’s had no training,” “He’s undersocialized,” or “I have no clue how to read canine body language.” The dog is not the one who’s confused here. It would benefit us all to become well versed in canine body language, learn positive training techniques, and give our woofers lots of love and the best care we can. I don’t think an animal given those things will have any identity crisis. Do you?

Am I wolf
or dog?

