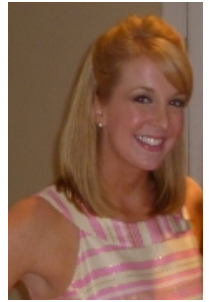


Do Dogs Really Need Sweaters?



by
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You've seen them before – dog owners who enjoy dressing their dog up in bright, playful outfits and accessories (much to the dismay of the dog I am sure). Necessary? Usually not. Cute? Depends who you ask. But there *are* occasions when dressing certain dogs in a sweater or warm coat is a necessity.

I think it goes without saying that if you own a Siberian Husky or Samoyed or any other large breed dog with a thick coat, you shouldn't have to invest in winter gear for your pet. However, there are dogs that would definitely benefit from the extra layer of protection and insulation during these cold New England months.

Some areas of the South Coast dropped down to single digit temperatures during these past few days. Don't you usually bundle up more than usual on those frigid days? In that case, so should certain dogs.

There are generally three types of dogs who would benefit from some type of extra protection from the winter elements:

- Small dogs, generally 25 pounds and under
- Elderly or ill dogs
- Greyhounds, whippets and other similar breeds that have a slender body and short fur

Dogs in these categories all suffer from the fact that they are less able to generate and retain body heat on their own. Adding some extra protection and warmth for these dogs should definitely be considered.



The freezing temperatures and wet snow can really do a number on dogs that fit into any of these categories. For one, snow can stick to your dog's coat unless it is protected by a sweater or coat. My dog, Gadget, is a 17 pound Miniature Schnauzer mix, which means she

has hair, not fur. And boy does snow stick to her! Unless I put her sweater on her before she goes outside, she'll greet me with balls of snow stuck all over her body, and the only way to get those off is to run warm water over her. Trust me; it's easier to just put a sweater on.

My mother's Welsh Corgi, Baxter, on the other hand, is about 30 pounds of snow-loving fun. He needs no sweater because he has a very thick coat of fur and is happy to play in the snow without one.

My younger sister's dog, Lela, on the other hand, is a 12 pound shih tzu that could probably wear a sweater even inside the house.

Dogs with arthritis would also appreciate an added layer during cold months since they already experience joint pain and the cold can only increase their discomfort. And *no* dog should be left outside for extended periods of time during winter months without adequate protection from the elements.

Aside from comforting your dog with a sweater or coat, the protection from the elements may make you a happier owner as well. Imagine not having to dry off your dog after coming in

from the rain or snow?

Consider purchasing a sweater or coat if you own a dog that falls under any of the three mentioned categories this winter. Pet stores large and small, from Petco to Go Fetch! on Kempton Street in New Bedford carry winter gear for your pets.

It doesn't need to be a designer coat or cost a fortune, but the added comfort for your dog and peace of mind for you is worth the investment.

Elizabeth Cincotta is one of the co-founder of the Daily Dog Blog. Leave her a comment here or contact her at Beth@dailydogblog.org.