



AMERICAN SHORTHAIR

General Description

The American Shorthair, our native shorthair breed, is one of the most adaptable breeds for any type of household; for a single person living alone, the American is an excellent companion; for a senior citizen the American is a calm, devoted pet; for a family with children, the good natured, playful American, known to be excellent with children, fits right in; for a busy household, the non-demanding American keeps itself entertained, ready for the time they have for relaxation. Apartment living suits them as well as a house. One of the natural breeds, the American Shorthair is a medium size cat, muscular with a firm, well-balanced body. They have easy care short, lustrous coat in a range of colors and patterns.



History

Although not listed on ships rosters, the American Shorthair came with early settlers to this country bringing their diverse backgrounds to form an "American" cat. They were "working cats" protecting the ships' stores on the long journeys. These early American cats were strong, hardy cats that earned their living status here with their hunting skills but were soon noticed for their intelligence and many varied colors and patterns.

In early cat exhibitions in the 1900 the shorthair cats then known as Domestic Shorthairs were represented. As more shorthair breeds were imported, dedicated breeders of the domestics began selective breeding to develop a cat of specific type. Although the American Shorthair is a natural breed, it is the process of selective breeding that has developed the American as we know it today. It was not until the early 1960s that the breed was renamed American Shorthair and began its rise in recognition and as a contender on the show circuit.



Personality

Americans are good-natured, easy-going cats, popular with families, as they are known to be very tolerant of children. They can be calm but are also playful even into old age. Female cats tend to be busier than the males; males are more easygoing. In general they are intelligent cats and quite interested in everything around them. Many Americans retain their hunting instincts with any insects that should venture into the house. They also like to watch birds and other activity from a windowsill. They enjoy the company of their people but retain their independence. Many are lap cats, while some prefer just to be nearby.

Traits

The standard relies heavily on the term medium. It is not a large, heavy boned cat as is the British. It is a very balanced medium size, medium boned cat, with a firm muscular feel to the body, well proportioned in all parts. The head is slightly longer than wide and with an open, sweet expression. Eyes are wide-set, medium to large in size proportionate with the size of head, rounded, which means the upper lid is shaped like half an almond and the lower lid is a fully rounded curve--the eyes should not be round as are the Exotic Shorthairs. The muzzle is medium-short with a full strong chin giving it a squarish appearance; ears are medium in size and slightly rounded at the tip set twice the distance between eyes. There are a number of different looks found in the Americans that are acceptable by the standard. Females are smaller than males with the balance of the cat being of most importance.

The coat is short, hard in texture, lustrous, dense enough to give a natural protective appearance. The color of the cat seems to affect the texture to some degree with the ideal coat most often found in the brown tabbies. Color and pattern are weighed equally with clarity of the marking in the patterns most desirable. Tabby and Tabby with white, usually with the classic pattern, have been the most popular for showing. The coat requires little extra care so unless being shown, a bath is rarely necessary; a weekly combing to remove dead hair will suffice. When bathed for a show care must be taken or the coat ends up too soft or fluffy.

Americans do not really mature until they are around three or four years old. The features of the breed are then at their best.