

“In your opinion, what are some differences between the Texas Heelers (Australian Shepherd x Heeler) versus the Purebred ACD or Heeler?”

One main difference between Texas Heelers and the ACD is the hybrid vigor that comes with an outcross. Since Aussies and Heelers are compatible conformationally, you get a sturdy, balanced dog with the hybrid vigor of the outcross, making the TH less susceptible to concentrated gene pools with potential recessive traits that can be problematic. I would like to mention here that ALT breeds all dogs with the health of the animal as a priority, and the breeding stock is healthy without hip, eye or hearing problems. I also chose Ashley when I selected my pups because of her extensive knowledge of genetics and her attention to breeding dogs with great dispositions and personalities. I personally like the TH cross, and I do hope that if the TH ever becomes a recognized breed, that the requirement will be to continue to cross the ACH with Aussies to produce the Texas Heelers in order to retain the hybrid vigor and healthy pups. All that aside, I find the ACD to be sometimes a bit more instinct-driven, with the TH being perhaps slightly more "laid back". Both are exceptionally smart and loyal, sweet as the dickens and adaptable. My girls (Pebbles and Mica) are EXTREMELY adaptable, they travel exceptionally well and love to meet new people and have new adventures. Although each ACD and each TH has their own individual personality, I have found the TH to be generally a bit more adaptable, but again, each dog is an individual. With Ashley's (ALT Texas Heelers) breeding program, I have personally seen her dogs to be extremely well-socialized, and have known her to take particular care to breed for adaptable personality traits as well as health and intelligence. I can say this having visited ALT Texas Heelers and meeting the dogs, and seeing them in action together. I particularly like that the females will often "baby-sit" each other's litters, and watch out for the whole pack, and not just their own pups. This is a great indicator of well-adapted, well-socialized canines. It's also great to watch some of the ACDs work together to move cattle, and all the dogs seem to love playing with the kids. As to the negatives of owning either type, ACD or TH, I can think of none! – Lisa H, Southern CA

I can answer the negative and positive of owning a Blue Heeler/Border Collie mix and I think it goes for most herding dogs- they are HIGHLY intelligent, like spooky smart- and want nothing more than to please you, thus they make the most wonderful companions and faithful watch dogs. They were bred to herd- so they will want to herd things, this includes you or your children. Heelers also like to nip when they herd. So unless you're working them for what they bred for, this behavior needs to be curbed to something else- like balls. They are HIGH energy. So don't expect a lap dog. A bored herder is a terrorist, so plan on lots of exercise and training. BUT the training is fun and easy because of their intelligence. (This is all my experience.) – Laura L, South Carolina

Never had a Texas Heeler, but my Purebred Heelers (Copper x Duke) are loyal, excellent watchdogs and cow dogs. Fun companions. Good with kids. They CAN be hardheaded and need a firm hand in training sometimes. The pure heelers need lots of exercise. They have tons of energy. – David F, Dalhart, TX

My heeler (AbbyXHitch) is amazingly sweet. She is so loyal, attentive and protective. She is super sassy and hard headed, but that's just in her genes and adds to her personality! – Ashleigh P, Stephenville, TX

I have had pleasure of living with a full ACD and he was very smart, loyal and a tendency to be aggressive. Now having the joy of living with 2 amazing caring, loving, loyal, funny, adaptive and protective (yet I am not afraid to let a 2 year old play with them) Texas Heelers from ALT Texas Heelers. They know their job with livestock yet they love to cuddle on the couch and watch movies with me. – Kelli W, Golden, CO

My heeler, Abby (Abby/hitch), is awesome! She loves to be loved on and likes everyone in their place! She is very protective and loves other dogs! She can be strong headed but that's just the nature of a heeler. –Cindy R, Sherman, TX

My heeler was unique to the breed according to all who dealt with her. She was stubborn to a T and Velcro to the max. She was extremely mild mannered and the sweetest girl anyone met. My Texas Heeler is much easier to train but she has a wild hair to her that my heeler didn't. She is not a lap dog at all and would much rather sleep on the floor than next to me getting belly rubs. It will be interesting to see how she matures since she is about to hit two! – Kasey W, San Antonio, TX

Heelers are a little harder, and a little more intense than TH. (I own both), TH make better dogs for more novice owners as they are a little more mellow and easygoing, but certainly not cheerleaders like Aussies. Heelers are trolls, which I love - best sense of humor in any dog. TH are very outgoing, heelers more reserved - saw this difference even as puppies. Both are excellent, excellent kid dogs if you have high expectations and enforce them early. I was very empathic about teaching mouth control at an early age to my ACD. – Jessica C, Tulsa, OK

ACD: I have had both male and female blue heelers. The males seem to be a bit more stand offish/reserved/stoic. More content to just be. However, they seem to be more of a one person dog, and can be more aggressive/stubborn. Not that they don't do well around people or children, but they seem to listen to one person. The females are a bit more energetic and want to please way more than the males. IMO. Blue heelers are amazing dogs. Very loyal, easily trainable, smart, good work dogs. I do not have much knowledge of Ashley's version Texas Heelers, which is the ACD/Blue Heeler and Australian Shepard Mix. However, other people call ACD/Blue Heeler and Border Collie mixes Texas Heelers as well. These dogs LIVE to work. Insane energy just like purebred BC. Most people use these dogs to work cattle, and call them "stock dogs." If you want a true work dog (literally outside working with you 18-20 hours a day, with zero sense of self preservation (they will literally work themselves to death) and having the best characteristics of BC and ACD these are for you.

I also have had Australian Shepherds. Wonderful dogs. Loyal, joyous, energetic but not crazy. Notice I did not say smart. They are, but nowhere near the ACD. Great companions, but I would say they are way more chill than either the ACD or either version of the Texas Heeler. I feel as though the Texas Heelers (ACD and AS) are the best of both worlds, although I do not have one (YET!). Smart, loyal, energetic, protective, but tempered down a bit. – Gina R, New Jersey

I think my purebred heelers have quite a bit more "edge" to their personality than my Texas heeler. In general the heelers are pushier, more assertive dogs.....whereas it seems like the aussie in my Texas heeler has created a more even tempered dog. I have also noticed that aussie in her causes her to be a bit more "scatterbrained" at times, than the purebred cattle dogs. They have a more laser focus. We have 12 cattle dogs and 1 Texas heeler. – Tracy C, St. Louis, MO

Our ALT Texas Heeler, "Juno", is very friendly and extremely well mannered. It seems she does not have the stubborn tendencies of the ACD that we have experienced. It also appears that "Juno" is less aggressive towards other outside influences like dogs, cars, etc. It could just be from how we treat her in those conditions, but in my opinion, I don't see it that way. I'm not very good with words but please contact me if anyone wants any more info from our experience with texasheelerpuppies.com. – Brandon P, Red Oak, TX

I had a purebred heeler while growing up, and now have a TH from Tina and Hitch. Both are excellent smart breeds! Our TH is very smart, he loves to please you! Very loyal, and as mentioned above spooky smart! However he is very high energy, he can run all day and has amazing athletic skills. If not exercised regularly he can be a little mischievous, not destructive, he'll follow us around and steal things to get our attention to play:) supper sweet and sensitive pup who loves to play wild! He's also very opinionated. –Nicole H, Florida

I have had 1 ACD & I'm on my second TH (both ACD/Aussie), who is only 4 months old. All 3 came from working ranch stock. The ACD & TH went with me every day on my job. They interacted with many ranch dogs and ranchers/public. The ACD was friendly to people. The THs seem to think that even strangers are here on earth for the purpose of petting them. All of them were smart dogs, but I think the TH was perhaps more willing to learn, in order to please me. The TH had way way more energy than the ACD, at age 10 people were still asking us how old our "puppy" was.

The ACD was more reserved, more content to just "be", she liked to be petted but wasn't a big cuddler. She was devoted, but in more of a protective way than an "I want to be your BFF" way.

The TH was more obsessive and quirky, or perhaps as Tracy said, more scatterbrained. She adored us and wanted to do everything with us. She was a first rate cuddler. She followed us from room to room. She was brilliant! 😊
:)

Neither particularly cared for other dogs despite my efforts to socialize them. The TH sulked and pouted if she was required to share anything with another dog.

Results aren't in yet on the 4-month old TH. So far she adores people. Her temperament is a little more mellow but more stubborn (confident) than the previous TH.

Cow dogs of all kinds are very popular where I live. Purebreds more than mixes. I would never use "friendly" to describe any of them. Some are very willing to tolerate visitors and others are nippers/biters. They are devoted to their owners. I prefer the ACD/Aussie mix over a purebred heeler. But that's just my opinion. I think the mix makes a more well-rounded interesting dog. The TH shed about 500 times worse than the ACD ever thought of. – Carol H, Glenrock, WY

We got two ALT Texas Heelers a year and a half ago. While they make great working dogs, people may like to know they make GREAT house dogs. My brother and I bought a brother and sister from the same litter, and both of the dogs live in our condos. Small quarters, but they entertain themselves very well, don't whine or bark, and mine even sleeps in my bed under the covers. – John E, Nashville, TN

You can't go wrong with either. The TH's seem just a little more human in their intelligence. Two ACD's and three TH's have been with me. – George B, Placerville, CA

Our Texas Heeler from you is extremely smart, energetic, loyal, and loving. He loves to snuggle in bed in the mornings. He loves playing with other dogs and children, and learning new tricks and words. Cons would be jealousy and full on stubborn at times. If I show another dog affection he will "hip bump" the other dog until I stop. Couldn't imagine a better companion dog though!
– Erin P, Fort Worth, TX

This is my heeler with ALT Texas Heelers on the left and my TH on the right. The heeler is so loving. Great with children. Loyal and snuggles a lot. She seems to be more loyal to one person more than the other. She is good with strangers and other dogs. I also have a Texas Heeler with ALT Texas Heelers. She is wild! Smart and cunning. She is always running around always up for adventure. She is a bit more shy with strangers. She is fine in public places as long as people don't try and pet her. She is slow to trust. I have no idea why. She has been socialized since she was a baby. She is always thinking. And has the most energy between the two. My heeler will sleep at my feet while my TH has to be worn out to stop. I've come to find that specifics between the two vary. I may have a calm blue heeler who has less of the heeler qualities than some others. She is a bit more insecure so she sticks close. A biker can roll by and she doesn't budge. My TH on the other hand wants to nip and chase. – Vanessa C, Austin, TX

To go with that my Texas Heeler that is her sister loves everyone and their mother sometimes I think more than she loves me. She is more cautious with other dogs that are high energy and taller than her she gets slightly aggressive. Other than that highly intelligent, very loving good with kids even though she had never grew up around them. She's amazing. – Daniella C, South Portland, ME