

20 Jobs Dogs Perform



Most people think of their dogs as companions, pets or even furry children. However dogs have been “employed” in a large variety of fields! These working canines certainly deserve recognition, as they have earned their treats. Whether they were helping humans, hunting or entertaining, dogs have held jobs for centuries. Most breeds were created for the express purpose of performing a task – even if that task is cuddling! Check out this list of jobs that dogs have performed!

1. Service and Assistance Work

Mobility Assistance, Hearing Dogs, Guide Dogs, Seizure Alert, Psychiatric Service, Autism Dogs, and even dogs that can detect peanut allergies all work to improve the lives of their human companions and allow them to live more independently.



2. Therapy Work

Therapy dogs are certified comforters, providing a calming presence to individuals in hospitals, nursing homes and in other stressful situations. Any breed (or mixed breed) can become a certified therapy dog as long as they have a desire to be with humans and can master obedience commands.

3. Search and Rescue

Trained Search and Rescue dogs can detect the scent of missing individuals through the wilderness, in hazardous weather, debris and even underwater. Their ability to smell particles of human scent allow them to track the air as well as the ground and locate people, both living and dead.

4. Herding

Many breeds have worked alongside humans driving various kinds of livestock including cattle, sheep, reindeer and fowl. The most common breeds used for herding are Australian Cattle Dogs, Border Collies, and Kelpies.

5. Sled Dogs

Dog sleds were used to explore impassible terrain in some of the first expeditions to the north and south poles as well as Antarctica. In Alaska sled dogs delivered medications and supplies to isolated towns.

6. Mascots

Dogs have represented groups and organizations from Universities to the Postal Service for hundreds of years. Having a canine as a mascot allowed the public to have a personal connection with the institution. Due to their fantastic faces, Bulldogs have been a much-used breed when it comes to showing school pride!

7. Hunting and Flushing

Various types of dogs have been used for hunting with humans. Sight hounds use the method of “coursing” – running down their prey and killing it swiftly, while scent hounds can trail game for long periods of time usually leaving the kill to the hunter. Setters and Spaniels will flush game from brush, allowing the hunter access to them.

8. Guarding/Watchdog

Dogs can be used to guard just about anything, from a Great Pyrenees watching over livestock, to a Belgian Malinois that is used in the military to keep soldiers and their surroundings safe. Watchdogs use their bark to ward off danger and many breeds, regardless of size, can do this job well!

9. Fighting

Dog fighting is a dark subject, but it has to be included on this list, as the founding dogs of many beloved breeds earned their keep in the fighting pit

10. Racing

Greyhound racing involves the dogs running around a track, chasing after an artificial rabbit. With welfare concerns of the dogs involved becoming more public, the sport of Greyhound racing has gradually been declining. Only 9 states in the US continue to hold races. Adoption of ex-racers has become a popular way for Greyhound lovers to own their favorite breed.

11. Water Rescue

Newfoundlands are powerful dogs that love the water, so when properly trained, they make the ideal water rescue canines. The dogs will swim out to an individual in trouble and grab them with their large (but gentle) mouths and help them safely back to the shore. Their training teaches them how to recognize an unconscious swimmer and how to handle these situations as well.



12. Truffle Sniffing

There is only one breed of dog that is specifically bred to sniff out these rare mushrooms – the Lagotto Romagnolo.

13. Detection Dogs

Dogs use their keen senses of smell to detect everything – from bombs to bedbugs to contraband in prisons (such as cell phones!).

14. Show Dogs

While the life of a well-groomed show dog may look easy to you, these canines have to be on their best behavior while they’re in the ring! Countless hours of working with their handlers along with a patient personality during rigorous pre-show bathing is a must if you’re going to take home the big blue ribbon!

15. Cadaver Detection Dogs

These canines have been trained to alert their handlers at the scent of a decomposing body. These dogs are used together with Search and Rescue canines during disaster situations to locate all the victims.

16. Police Work

Police dogs can play many rolls including enforcing public order, detection, search and rescue and cadaver detection. While many people picture German Shepherds as the typical police k-9, there are many other breeds used today on police forces – Malinois, Labs, Bloodhounds and even Beagles (just to name a few!).



17. War Dogs

Dogs of war have served alongside brave soldiers in every conflict – on both foreign and domestic soil, whether they were officially “enlisted” or not. There is no one job that can be pinned on a war dog as they were used for many purposes – running messages, guarding perimeters, attack work, detection, and of course boosting moral!

18. Carting

Many breeds have been trained to pull carts, but some of the best at this job are Bernese Mountain Dogs, Greater Swiss Mountain Dogs, Huskies or any of the other working breeds.

19. Rat Extermination

The word “Terrier” comes from the Latin meaning “of the earth” – these fearless and feisty small breeds were developed to help keep the land free from pests long ago.

20. Entertainment

Countless dogs have entertained us - on television we have Lassie, Rin Tin Tin and even Eddie from “Frasier”. On the big screen we have “Hooch”, “Beethoven” and so many more. But more appropriately, we have the dogs we share our lives with. Without them, it would be a boring existence!



Information provided by:
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