

Lifestyle Attributes of the Longest Living Dobermans Study

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Purpose

The primary objective of this research is to gather comprehensive data on the lifestyles of Dobermans that have reached exceptionally old age, with the aim of identifying common lifestyle factors that may contribute to extended longevity. This study will be conducted primarily through the use of a comprehensive lifestyle survey, targeting owners of Dobermans that have reached 12 years of age or older. The survey will rely on self-reported data provided by these owners.

Method

A structured survey will be developed to examine the lifestyle factors of Dobermans who lived to 12 years of age or older. The survey will include questions pertaining to their genetic background, spay/neuter age, breeder characteristics, exercise routines, living environment, and dietary habits.

A public call for participation will be disseminated through Doberman Planet's social media platforms and any other relevant outreach channels to invite owners of qualifying Dobermans to complete the survey.

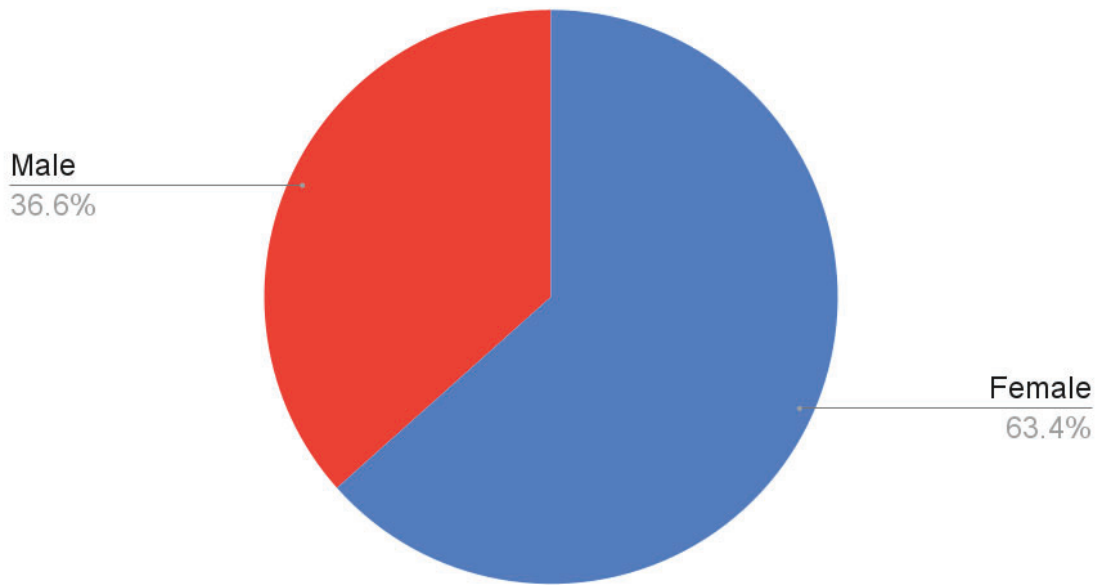
In the event that more than 100 responses are collected from owners of Dobermans that lived to 14 years of age or older, the study will focus exclusively on the responses from this subset, and data from younger subjects will be excluded. This approach ensures that the study captures the most significant lifestyle patterns from the oldest possible population of Doberman Pinschers while maintaining a robust data set.

Survey Results

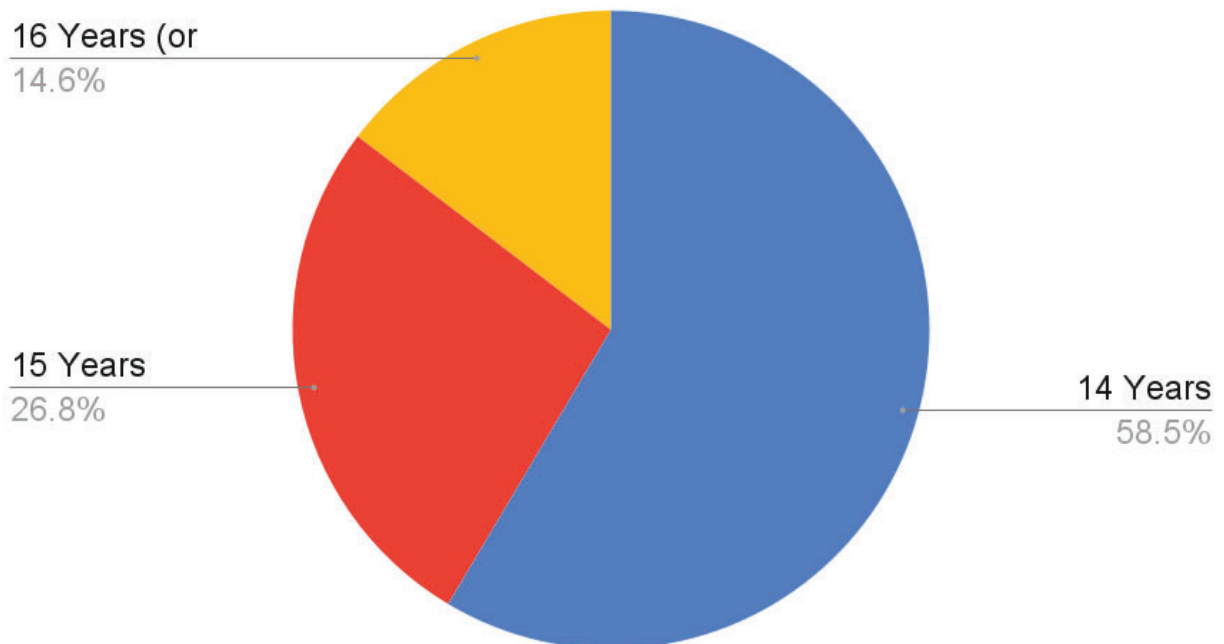
The survey was conducted from August 9, 2024, to August 22, 2024, for a total duration of 13 days, and was made available at the following URL:

<https://www.dobermanplanet.com/longlifesurvey>. A total of 566 survey responses were collected, with 164 of these pertaining to Dobermans who lived to 14 years of age or older. As the threshold described above was met, the study focused exclusively on this subset of Dobermans. The results for each survey question are presented in the following sections.

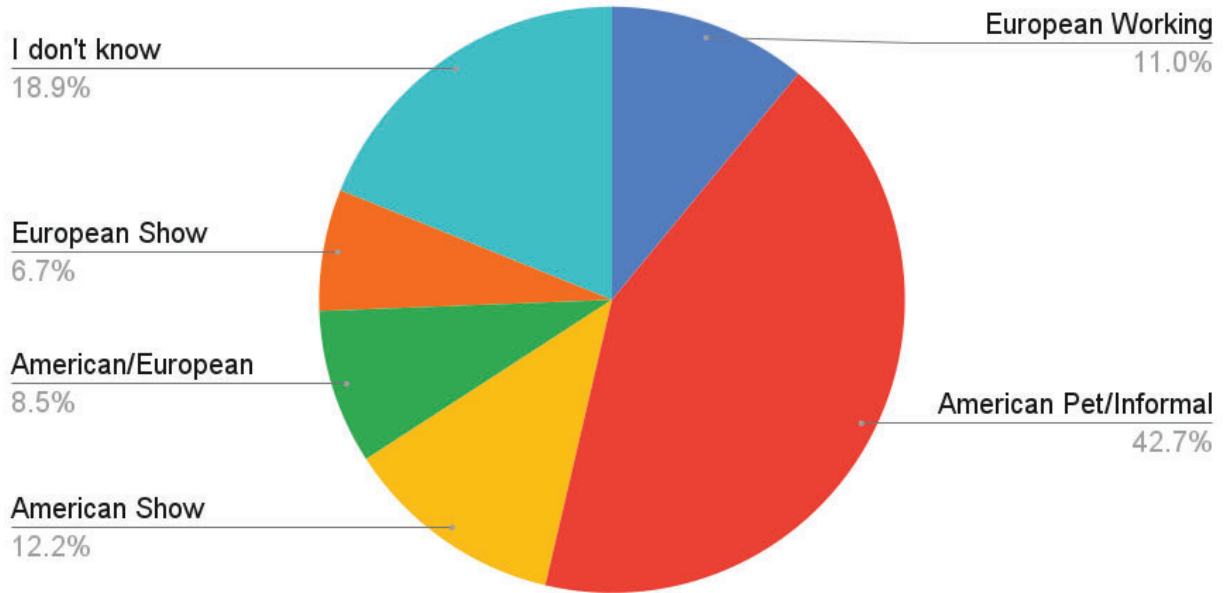
Your Doberman's Sex



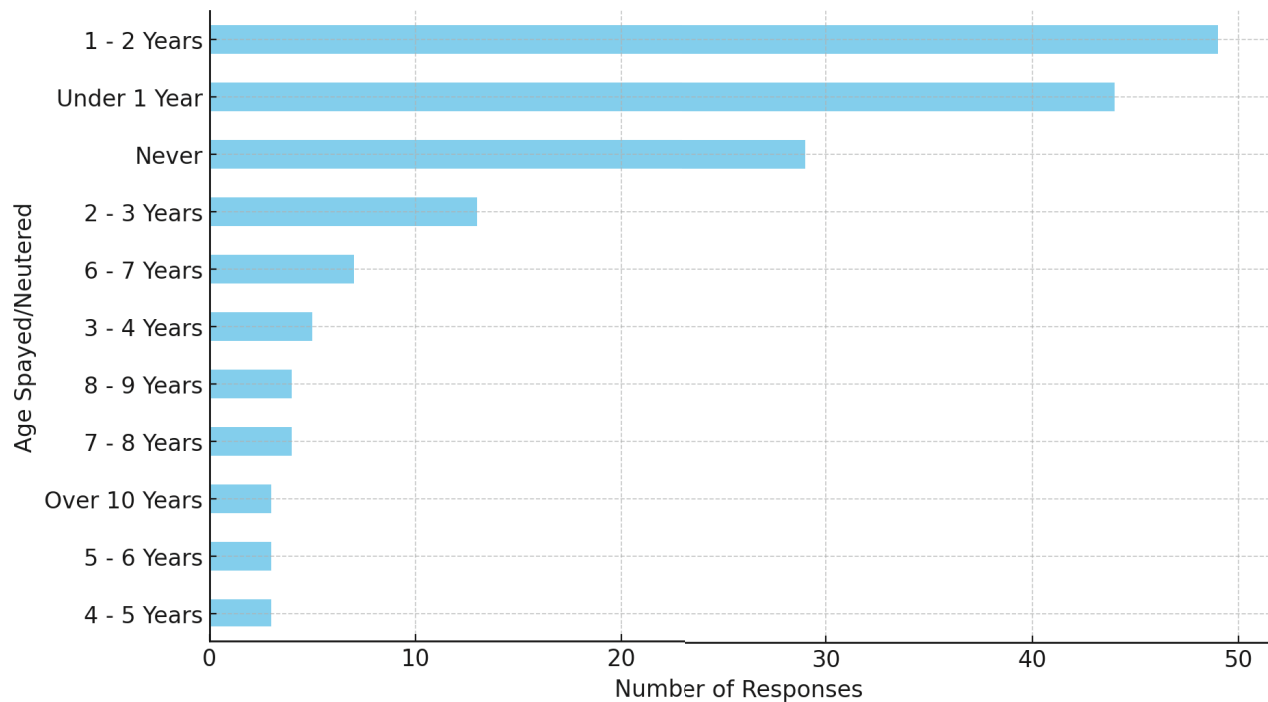
How old was your Doberman when they died?



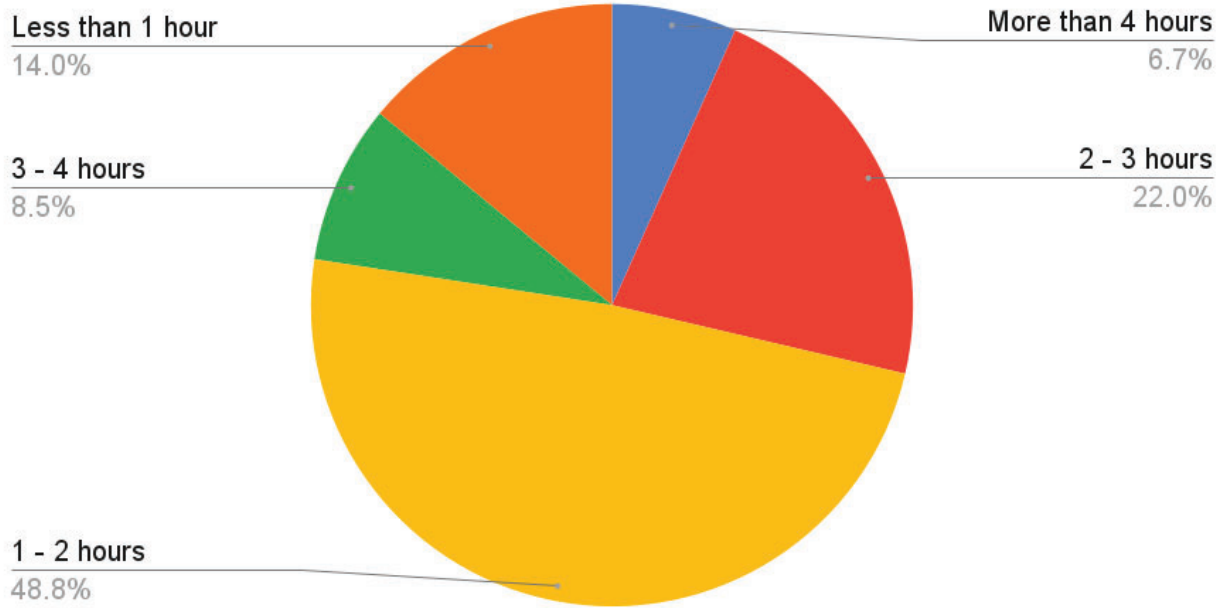
What category below best describes your Doberman's genetic lines?



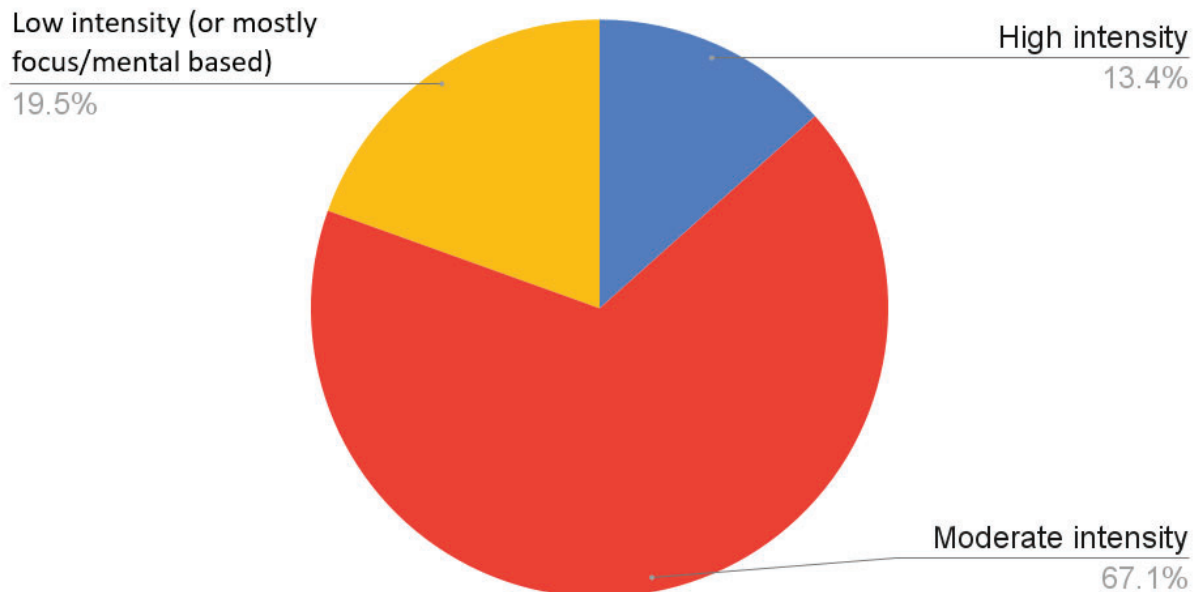
At what age were they spayed/neutered?



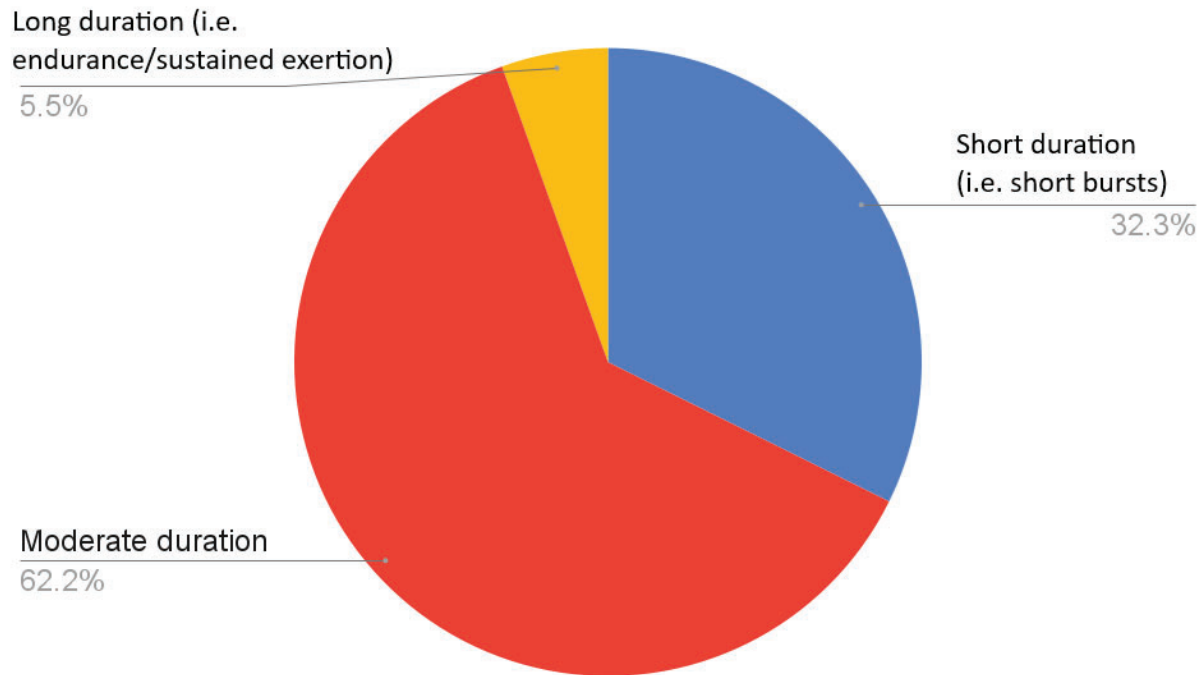
How much exercise would your Doberman typically get (per day)?



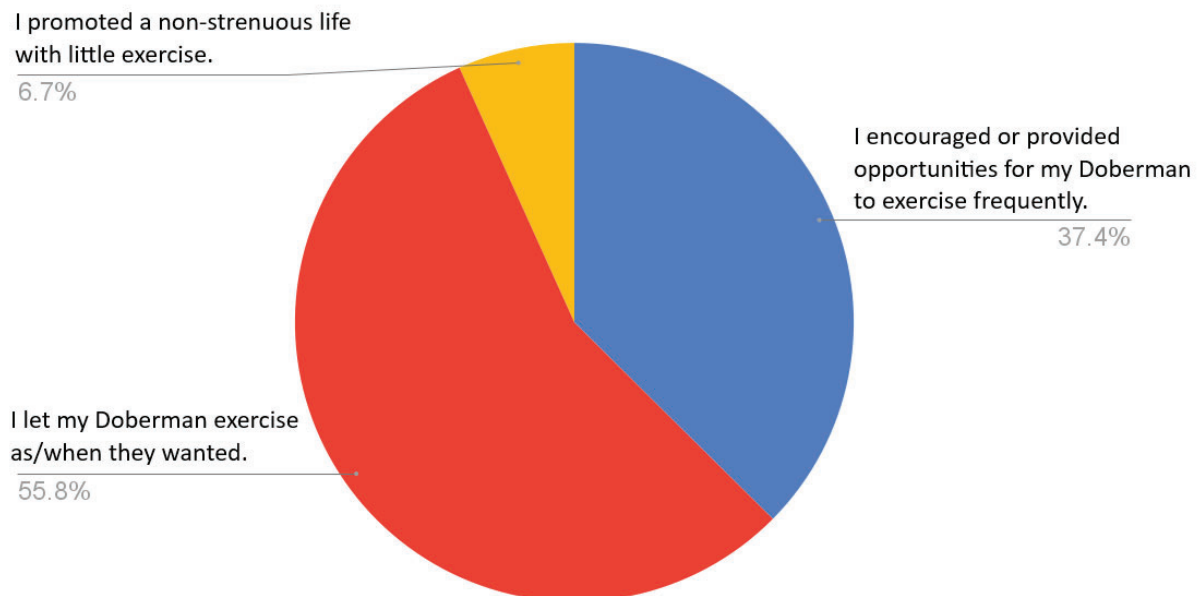
How would you categorize the intensity of most of their exercise?



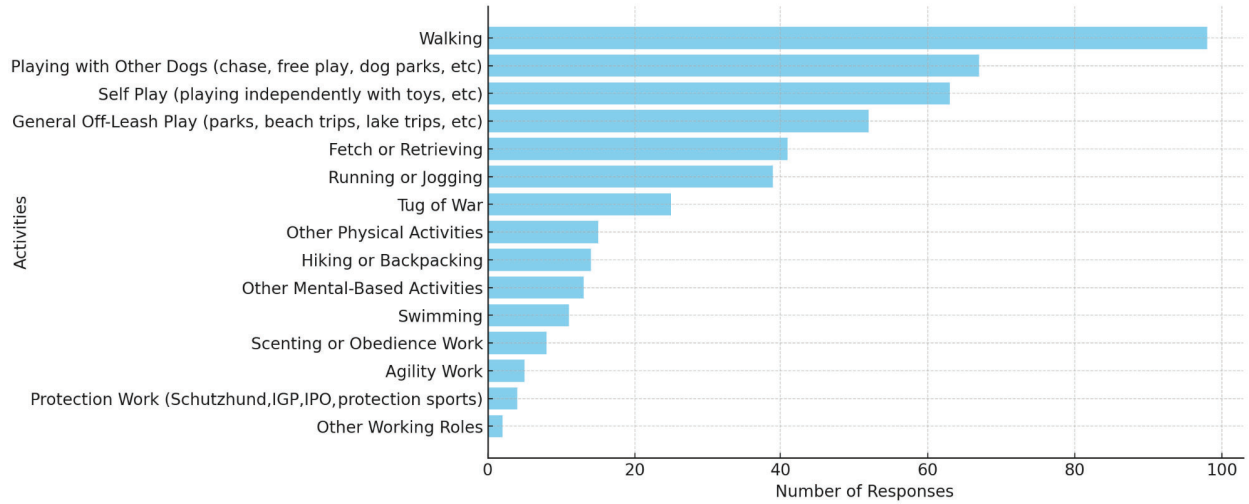
How long were their typical exercise sessions?



How would you describe your approach to exercising your Doberman during their most active years?



What types of activities would your Doberman participate in the most? (Select up to 3)



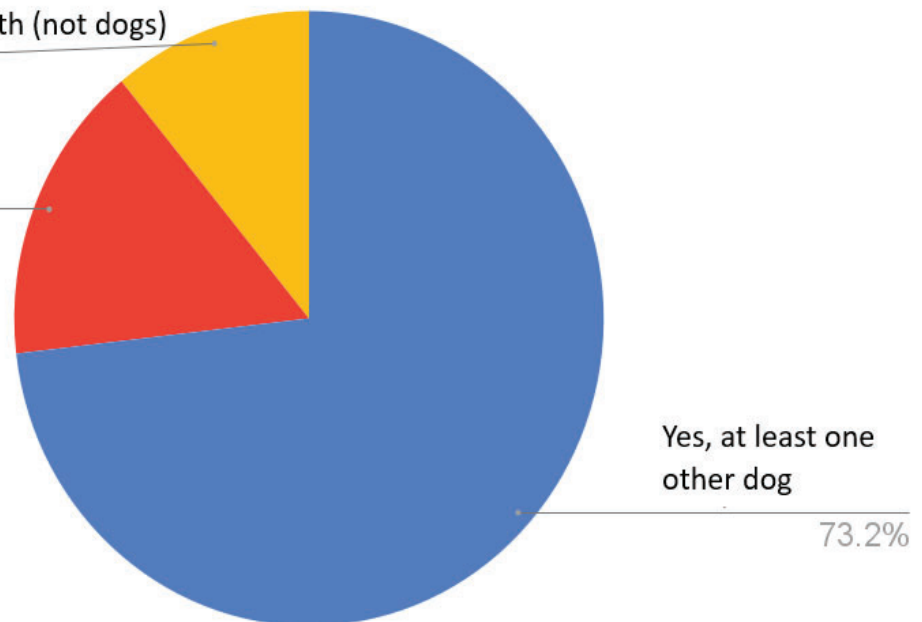
Did your Doberman live and interact with other dogs in the house?

No, but they did live with other animals that they interacted with (not dogs)

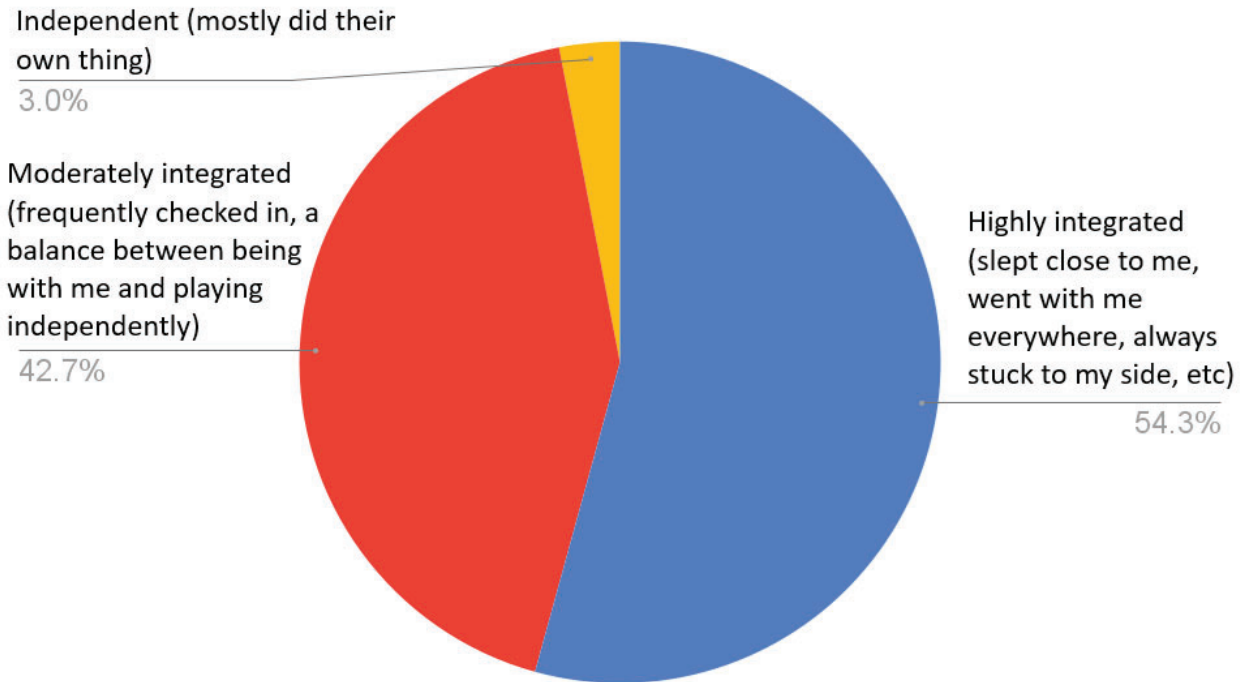
11.0%

No

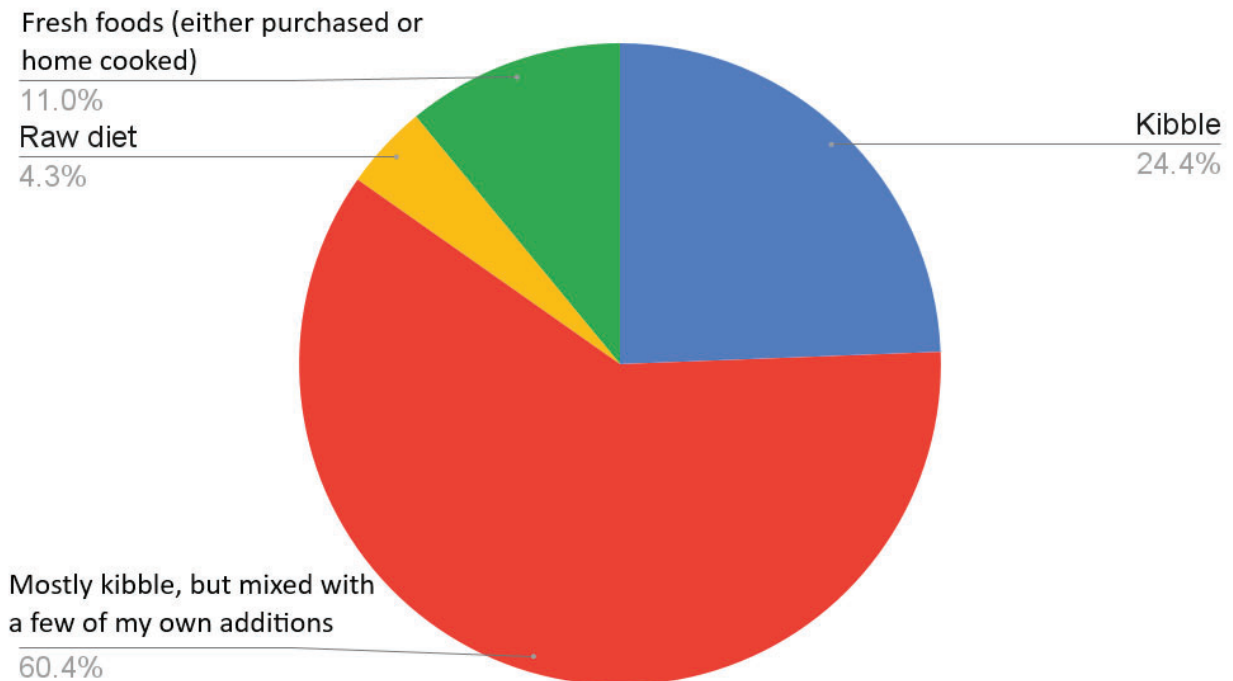
15.9%



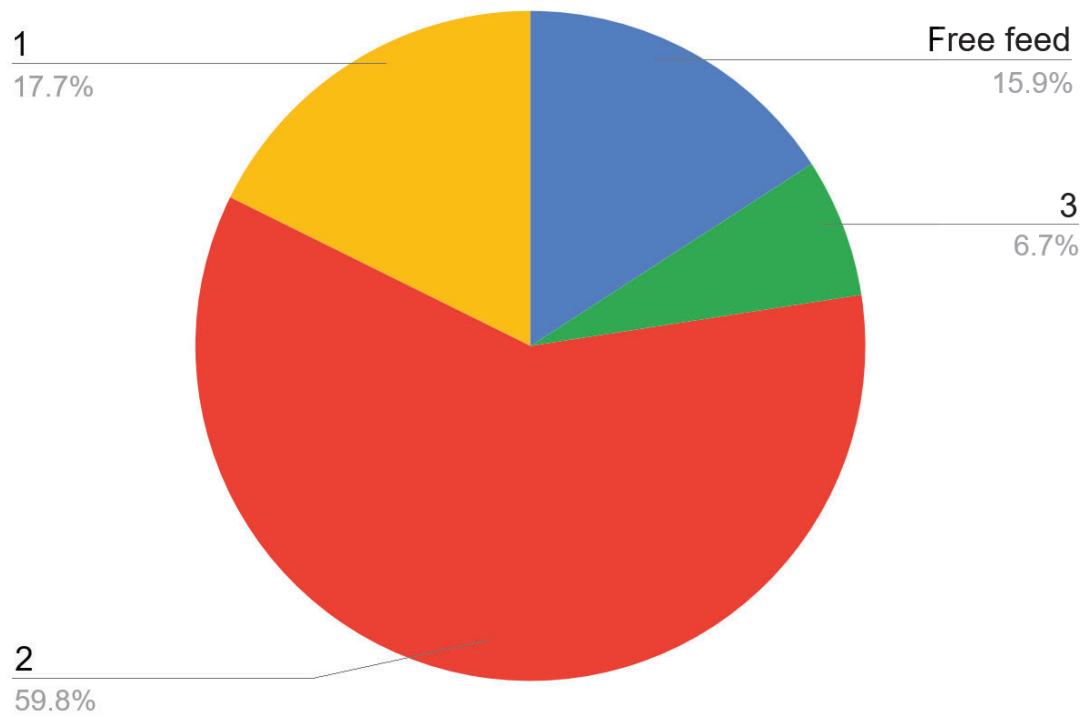
How integrated was your Doberman with your daily activities?



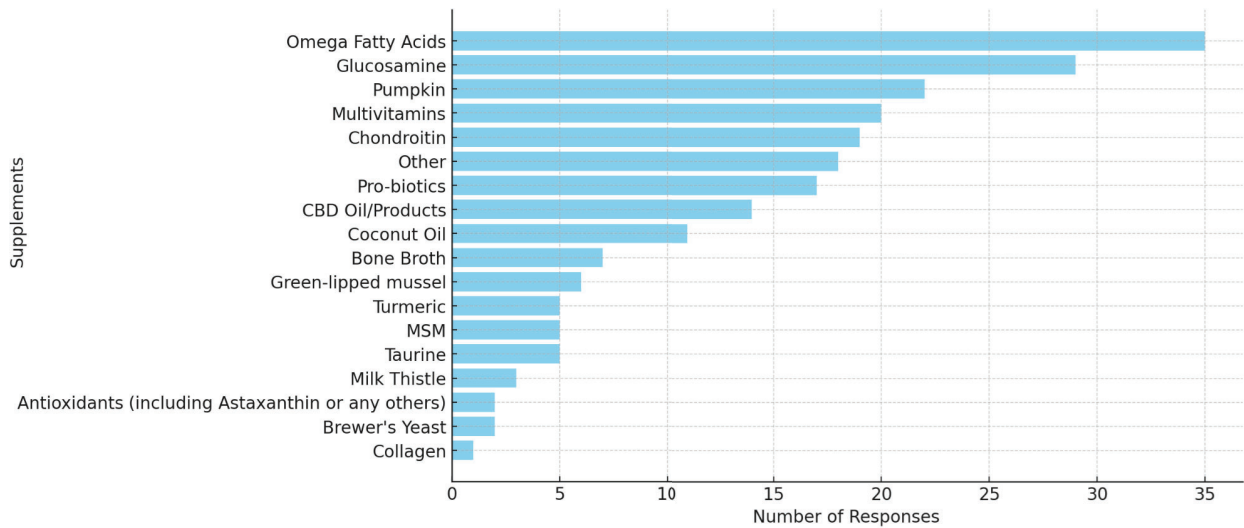
What type of meals did your Doberman eat the most?



How many meals a day did your Doberman have?

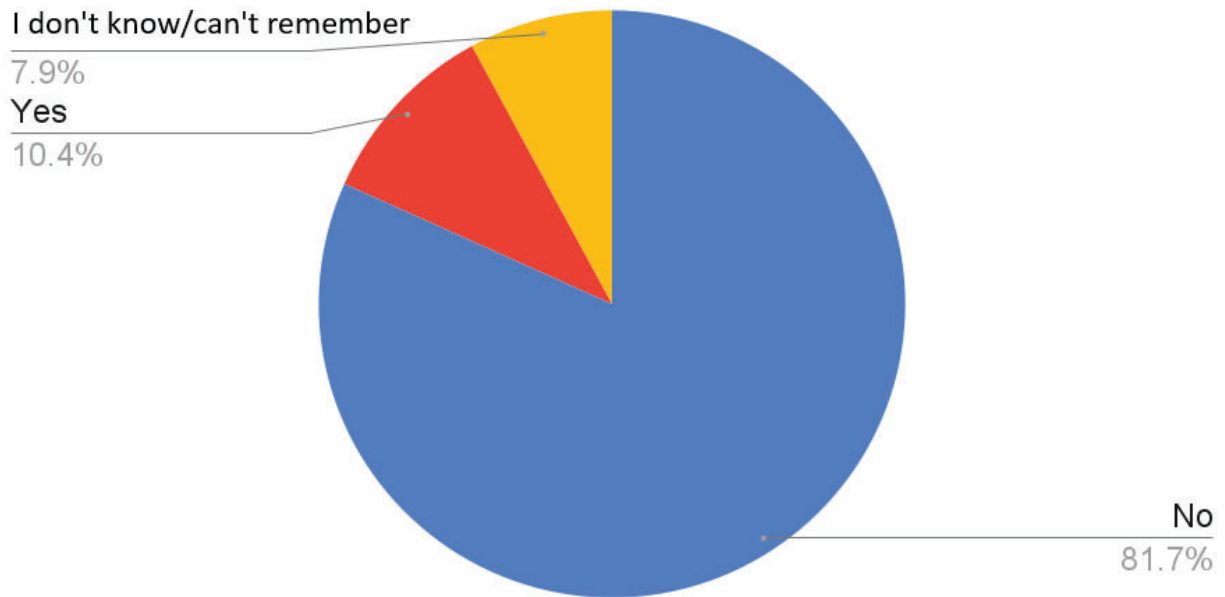


What additives or supplements did you give your Doberman? (Select any that apply)

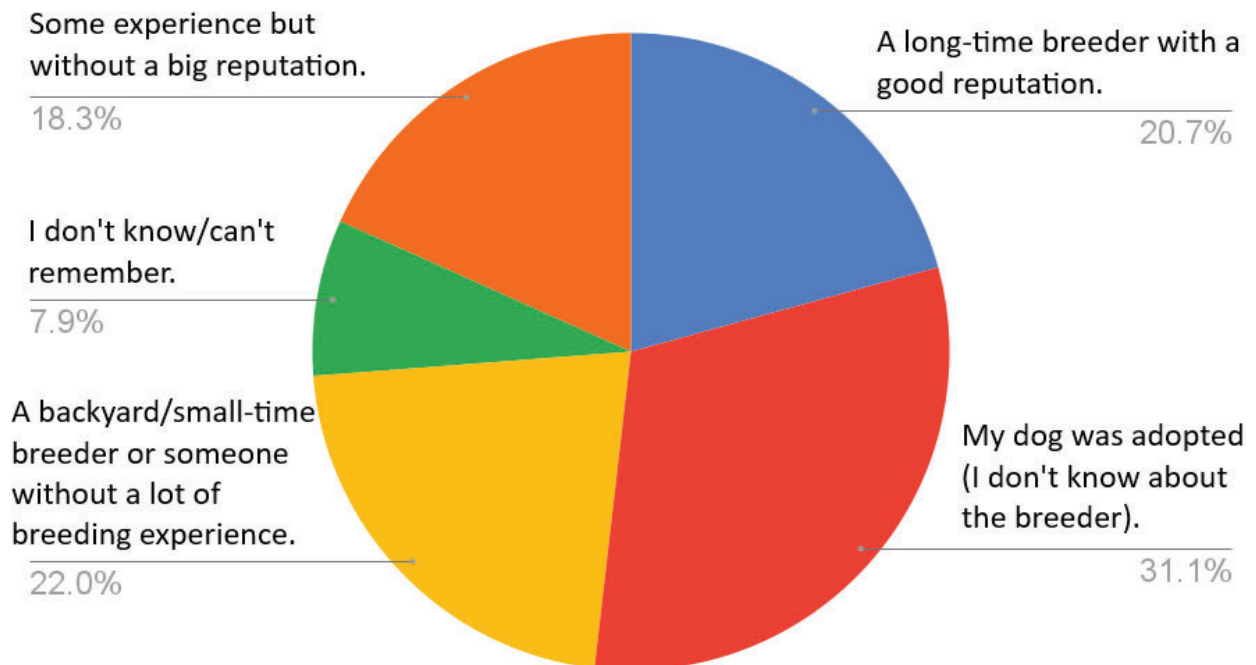


Note: There were 73 no responses in this column.

Did you receive genetic health test results from the breeder or adoption organization?



How would you describe your dog's breeder?



Analysis

Cohorts/Varieties of Dobermans Represented: Notably, American varieties of Dobermans constituted the largest portion of those that lived to 14 years of age or older, representing 42.7% of the dogs represented in this study. The second most common response was "I don't know" at 18.9%, indicating a lack of breed specificity for many respondents. The third most represented category was the "American Show" variety, accounting for 12.2%. It is not until the fourth category that the first European variety, "European Working," is represented, comprising 11% of the long-living Dobermans.

Exercise: A majority of Dobermans that lived to this age engaged in moderate-intensity exercise (67.1%), with 48.8% exercising 1 to 2 hours per day. These exercise sessions were typically of moderate duration, neither short bursts nor endurance exercises, as reported by 62.2% of owners. Most owners allowed their Dobermans to exercise freely, with 55.8% stating that exercise occurred as and when the dogs desired. Walking was the most common activity, followed by playing with other dogs, self-play, and general off-leash activities. Initial analysis does not indicate any significant outliers among the exercise habits of these long-living Dobermans and the results represented appear to be typical behavior for the breed. Note that respondents were asked to reflect on their Doberman's "most active years" for these questions.

Environment: A standout finding is that 73.2% of the Dobermans that lived to 14 years or older lived with at least one other canine, and an additional 11% interacted with other non-canine animals in their home. This means that 84.2% of these Dobermans had regular interactions with other animals. It is unclear whether this social interaction contributed to their longevity, or whether Doberman owners are simply more likely to have other pets in the home. Nonetheless, it is a noteworthy observation. Additionally, only 3% of these long-living Dobermans were described as "independent" in the home, which aligns with the breed's known preference for social interaction and close bonding with their owners.

Diet: It is noteworthy that a significant majority of owners of the longest-living Dobermans either supplemented their dogs' kibble with additional ingredients (60.4%) or provided a fresh food diet (11%). Together, these categories represent 71.4% of owners, while only 24.4% fed primarily kibble throughout the dog's life. Dietary supplements commonly added were Omega Fatty Acids (21.3%), Glucosamine (17.7%), Pumpkin, and Multivitamins. It is also important to note that 44.5% of respondents did not provide an answer regarding additives or supplements, suggesting that these owners may not have provided any.

Breeder Influence: A surprising 81.7% of owners of Dobermans that lived to 14 years or older did not receive health test results from their dog's breeder or adoption organization. The largest proportion of owners, 31.1%, indicated that their dog was adopted and that they had no knowledge of the breeder. The next largest group, 22%, described their dog's breeder as a "backyard/small-time breeder or someone without significant breeding experience." and 20.7% stated that their dog came from a "long-time breeder with a good reputation." This supports the idea that the more varied genetic backgrounds of adopted dogs or those bred by less experienced breeders may result in increased longevity due to increased genetic diversity.

Conclusions

While it may be tempting to construct a 'profile' of long-living Dobermans from this data, it is important to recognize that correlation does not imply causation. For example, the majority of veterinarians and Doberman experts recommend feeding two meals per day as optimal for adult members of the breed. In this study, 59.8% of the dogs did, in fact, consume two meals per day, a significantly higher proportion than the next most common practice of feeding one meal per day (17.7%). However, this does not necessarily suggest that feeding two meals per day is the key to longevity; it may simply reflect the most common feeding practice among adult Doberman owners. In this case, it is likely the latter.

While the findings from this study are compelling, a more comprehensive understanding of longevity factors may require a comparative study targeting Dobermans who passed away at an unusually young age. By comparing these two groups, greater insights could be gained into the potential determinants of lifespan within this breed.

Given the increasingly concerning trend of shortened lifespans in Dobermans—currently averaging 9.1 years ([source](#))—studies such as this are crucial for better understanding the factors that may influence longevity in this breed.

Further analysis of this data can be found at:

<https://www.dobermanplanet.com/lifespan-of-a-doberman-pinscher/>