

GOLDEN RETRIEVER FAQS

1. I just want a pet. Why do I need to talk to a breeder and WHY are dogs from breeders so expensive?

"Just a pet" encompasses an awful lot! You want your pet to be healthy - no crippling hip problems, no potentially fatal heart defects, no chronic skin and ear problems, and most of all - you want that golden temperament that you've heard so much about! There are no guarantees in dog breeding, but as with most other things, a person's skills improve with experience and study. A responsible hobby breeder knows that breeding means much more than putting two intact dogs together and waiting 9 weeks for puppies. It involves carefully researching pedigrees, screening for defects, proper care of the dam (mother) while she's pregnant and skillful handling of the new puppies during the critical first 8 weeks of life.

Finding a responsible breeder who has become a student of the breed and has the level of knowledge necessary to make good decisions significantly raises your chances of finding the healthy, stable pet you are looking for.

As far as expense, you are adding a new member to your family for the next 10-15 years. Now is not the time to penny pinch! The breeder you are seeking will have considerable expense involved in properly raising their dogs. A pet store puppy often costs as much as a well-bred one and a "bargain" puppy from the newspaper is frequently NO bargain when you take into account the possible costs involved with serious medical or temperament problems.

2. What are the main differences between a male and a female?

Temperamentally, there is little difference between the sexes in Golden Retrievers. Neither sex is harder to housetrain, and both are equally intelligent and affectionate. Both are excellent with children, and both make excellent companions. Problems of aggressiveness, which males of other breeds may exhibit, should not occur in the Golden. Sex-related behavior such as mounting and marking may be exhibited by some male Golden Retrievers, particularly if other males are present or if the male has been used for breeding.

3. How do I find a golden retriever puppy?

Golden Retrievers are the second most popular AKC breed and well-bred litters are in high demand. Many breeders have a waiting list but most will be happy to talk with you about any upcoming litters.

Golden Retriever rescue groups also may have a waiting list but all of the Golden Retrievers that come through their programs should be already spayed and neutered, up to date on vaccine and heartworm tested. They have the further advantage of being evaluated by the rescue so that they can be matched with potential adoptive homes based on activity level, age and any training needed.

4. Do Golden Retrievers shed?

Absolutely! Golden Retrievers shed a little all year round and twice a year they lose most of their coat. Anyone intent on a *hair free* home, should reconsider getting a Golden Retriever. Their coat requires brushing of at least once a week. Their hair can be long and can become matted if it isn't properly cared for. A thorough grooming to trim the hair on the paws, tail, and around the ears needs to be done on a monthly basis.

5. I work. How can I properly raise a puppy?

Working should not prohibit you from raising a puppy; however a puppy does demand extra time and attention and you will need to make provisions to care for your puppy. Caring for a puppy brings responsibilities and obligations that need to be considered. A puppy turns into a dog and a Golden Retriever will eventually grow to be between 65-80 lbs. and stand 21-26" high. This puppy will need to be cared for on a daily basis for the next 10-16 years, this will become a family member, (living/breathing) not an item or thing that is disposable.

A puppy needs the following:

- A puppy needs to relieve himself every 2-4 hours, until they are at least 6 months old. Puppies generally defecate 5 to 6 times a day and urinate even more.
- You will need to get up during the night to take your puppy out. An easy way to figure out how many hours a puppy can be expected to control their bladder is to take the puppy's age in months and add 1. A 4-month-old puppy will need to go out every 5 hours.
- Housetraining a puppy can take up to 6 months. With a commitment of every 2-4 hours.
- A puppy will benefit from a socialization class at around 12-14 weeks old and an obedience class after 6 months. Even people who adopt older rescue dogs can benefit from a class to help them teach the dog what is expected of him.
- Puppies require a minimum of three 20-minute low-impact aerobic play sessions per day and older dogs need regular exercise on a daily basis. A tired puppy is a calm puppy.

If the time constraints of raising a puppy seem too much, an older rescue dog may better fit your needs.

GOLDEN RETRIEVER FAQs

6. I have children, how are golden retrievers with children?

Goldens can be wonderful family dogs, however parents need to be aware of a few precautions. First and foremost, children need to be taught how to interact with a dog and goldens are no exception. Each year many children are victims of dog bites and this can be due to ongoing mistreatment of the dog by children or because the dog and family were not properly matched by the breeder or rescue. A responsible breeder or rescue organization will make sure that any puppy they place with children is temperamentally suited for an active family. Many Goldens become homeless due to the fact that an adult has added a Golden to the family for the wrong reasons:

- As a gift to a child with the expectation that the child will be the primary caretaker.
- To play with the children and keep them occupied, giving the adults more free time, without plans to supervise the interactions.

Adding a Golden Retriever to the family can be wonderful, but adults must understand the responsibilities that are involved. The feeding, grooming, exercising, formal obedience lessons, etc are the entire family's responsibility but must be supervised and coordinated by an adult. Being the primary caretaker for a dog is not a job that can be left to the children. You should be certain that your busy life leaves time for an active Golden Retriever before you purchase or adopt one. Recommended reading: "Childproofing Your Dog" by Brian Kilcommons and Sarah Wilson

7. How are goldens with other pets?

Each dog is different and some goldens relish time with another dog and others are more solitary. However, even if the dog is more solitary it is VERY important to socialize your puppy when they are young and continue to do so throughout their lives. Socializing means exposing your puppy to a variety of other puppies and dogs, people, places, things, sights, smells and sounds. Rescue goldens are evaluated with other dogs and cats before they are placed, giving you a good idea if they will get along with any other pets they might be exposed to.

8. Are they easy to train?

Goldens are generally easy to train; however training takes time and repetition. It is highly suggested that you sign up for an obedience class. Methods have changed throughout the years and training in general will help to bond you and your golden. Learning how to communicate with your dog will ensure a successful relationship. Goldens respond very well to positive reinforcement of good behavior. Use treats and praise to train, never harsh punishments.