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The Versatile Golden Retriever

By Mike Mathews

So you are interested in acquiring a Golden Retriever because you think it is a friendly and good

looking dog breed and you have heard that it behaves well with children. Well you are right in that the Golden is one of the best family-oriented dogs in the world as well as being one of the best looking and friendliest of the retriever dog breeds.

However, to simply limit the Golden's description to child-friendly and good looking is to do the dog breed a major disservice. The Golden Retriever is one of the most versatile dog breeds known to man. This retriever is a good hunting dog, guide dog for the blind, narcotics dog, as well as an outstanding competitor in agility, retriever field trial, and obedience competitions. The versatile Golden manages all this while being an outstanding family dog. The list of superlatives that can be used to describe this breed are endless, but we can limit ourselves to: gentle, confident, loyal, cheerful, trustworthy, active, friendly, intelligent, eager to please and responsive to training. It is these last three characteristics that enable the Golden to be trained to such a high-level for work and competition. Additional information on activities for dogs can be found in my article Fun Dog Activities at

<http://www.dog-breed-facts.com/articles/fun-dog-activities.html>

The origin of the Golden can be traced back to mid-19th century Britain. A Scotsman, Sir Dudley Marjoribanks later Lord Tweedsmuir, developed the breed both as a land hunting dog and a water retriever. The breeding records show that the Golden has a mixture of sporting dog breeds in its lineage. These breeds include the wavy-coated Retriever, the yellow Tweed Water Spaniel, the Irish Setter and the sandy-colored Bloodhound. The resulting line of Golden Retrievers was officially recognized as a pure-bred breed in Britain in 1913 and by the American Kennel Club (AKC) in 1925. The Golden's water-repellant coat may be a rich shade of gold or a lighter cream color. The coat is easy to care for and only requires weekly combing and brushing except when shedding. Male Golden Retrievers are fairly large and stand 23 to 24 inches tall at shoulder height and weigh from 65 to 75 pounds. Females are smaller and stand 21.5 to 22.5 inches tall at shoulder height and weigh from 55 to 65 pounds. The popularity of the Golden is not due to its prowess as a hunting dog or its ability to be trained to a high-level for work and competition. It is largely based on its popularity as a family-oriented dog breed. The Golden was ranked 2nd out of 154 dog breeds in 2004 AKC registrations.

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It isn't, however, all smiles and chuckles when raising a Golden. The Golden Retriever remains goofy and puppy-like for several years. This can be amusing but it can also be frustrating. Young Golden tend to be overly exuberant and you must supervise young toddlers around them in order to avoid toddler knock down. Therefore Golden should be socialized and obedience trained when they are puppies. On the other hand, young children also must be supervised as the Golden is so docile it will let them do almost anything to it – even dress the dog up like a doll. Golden also have a tendency to mouth everything and everybody so they should be provided with lots of toys to carry around. The friendly Golden, with its constantly wagging tail, will clear coffee tables wherever it walks. Golden should be given regular exercise, not too vigorous, several times a day when they are young. After the Golden is fully grown it can be taken jogging, hiking or biking. These retrievers love to swim whenever possible and if given enough exercise can adapt to most living conditions.

If you are seriously interested in acquiring a Golden Retriever then you should check with your national pure-bred dog organizations such as the American (

<http://www.akc.org>

) or Canadian Kennel (

<http://www.ckc.com>

) Clubs to look for conformation shows in your area. Make sure you talk to owners

and breeders at these shows to see if your lifestyle is really suited to this breed. Additional information on Golden and on specific shows and competitions in your area can be found by checking with the national Golden Retriever Clubs. In the US it is the Golden Retriever Club of America (

<http://www.grca.org>

) and in Canada it is the Golden Retriever Club of Canada (

<http://www.grcc.net>

).

Both of these umbrella organizations will point you to the local chapter closest to your home that will be able to provide you with information on reputable breeders. They can also provide you with information on Golden Retriever rescue organizations in case you wish to obtain an adult dog.

The national Golden Retriever clubs are dedicated to improving the bloodlines of Golden's and eliminating and reducing the incidence of inherited diseases. These clubs will encourage you to ask the breeder for the health clearances appropriate for Golden. Golden are a fairly robust and healthy dog breed that can be expected to live for 10 to 14 years. Unfortunately, because of the dog breeds popularity some backyard breeders and puppy mills are producing defective and even aggressive representatives of the breed. Common health problems include: inherited musculoskeletal disorders

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such as hip dysplasia and elbow dysplasia; eye diseases such as progressive retinal atrophy and juvenile cataracts; sub aortic stenosis (SAS) heart disease and hypothyroidism. Information on these inherited diseases can be found in my article Hereditary diseases at

<http://www.dog-breed-facts.com/articles/hereditary-diseases.html>

. Before you buy that irresistible

Golden puppy, make sure you ask the breeder for the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) results and the Canine Eye Registry (CERF) recent ophthalmologists report for the breeding sire and dam.

I am sure your life will be greatly enhanced with a Golden Retriever as a companion.

Mike Mathews is a contributing writer and editor for the popular dog breed site:

<http://www.dog-breed-facts.com>

. He provides informative, real-world advice and tips on dog breeds,

dog health and dog grooming. As well be sure to check out his free report on Dog Training.

Golden Retriever – A Loving, Large Family Dog

By Dakota Dog

Golden Retrievers are a medium to medium/large dog breed. They reach a height between 20" to 24". If a Golden Retriever could speak, they might say, "What can I do for you?" They are born people pleasers from hunting to tricks to family pet.

The Golden Retriever is AKC recognized with a coat color in varying shades of golden or cream with golden throughout the coat. They get their name, of course, from the color of their coat. They have a medium length, water repellent outer coat and a dense undercoat. Their coat is feathered. They require a daily brushing to prevent knots and they only need an occasional dry shampoo. You should only give them a wet bath if necessary.

Exercise and playful outside and calm indoors, the Golden Retriever is considered to be one of the best large dog breeds to have as a family pet. They are great with children and other dogs. Early socialization is recommended for birds and small non-canine pets because of their hunting history but they tend to get along with other animals as well. They are extremely easy to train, even for the dog novice. They love to learn and they are fast learners. They are best for active families as they need daily time to run and roam outdoors. If you are looking for an excellent hunting companion, the Golden Retriever is an awesome hunting dog.

Originating in the mid 1800s, some sources state England as their country of origin and others state

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Scotland as their county of origin. Lord Tweedmouth at Inverness–Shire, Scotland is said to have extensive records that show he developed the breed. Their ancestry includes the Water Spaniel, Retrievers, Setters and a Bloodhound. They were mainly used for hunting and retrieving and have an excellent sense of smell. They also make excellent therapy and guide dogs.

If you are in search of a large dog that is sweet, calm and affectionate and will be good with families that include other dogs or small children, it is hard to find a more pleasing, gentle large family dog. Exercise and play are important in their daily activities, but they will be just as happy relaxing inside with you at night.

Learn more about the Golden Retriever at

http://www.deardoggy.com/dog_breeds/golden_retriever/

or

to talk with other dog lovers visit us at

<http://www.deardoggy.com/>



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