

THE GOLDEN RETRIEVER CLUB INC.



HANDBOOK

www.goldenretriever.org.nz

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook, originally published in 1988 by The Golden Retriever Club Inc. of New Zealand, revised in 2015 and 2017, is recommended for prospective owners of Golden Retrievers. Its purpose is to help you determine if the Golden Retriever is the right breed for you, and if it is, how to select one. It contains chapters on choosing a Golden Retriever, choosing a breeder, your puppy's first year and basic training. These chapters should be of interest to anyone wishing to acquire a Golden Retriever.

For those who may like to get more seriously involved with their dogs, we include chapters on hereditary problems, nutrition and we also list a selection of books with additional information on a variety of subjects.

WHAT IS A GOLDEN RETRIEVER

The Golden Retriever was developed in Scotland and England in the late 19th Century for the purpose of retrieving wild fowl on land or in water. Its physical characteristics and its easy-going, trainable nature, make it suitable for many purposes.

The Golden Retriever is a “natural” dog needing no special grooming or clipping (as compared to some terriers, poodles, etc.). Basic grooming for a Golden should take no more than 20 to 30 minutes a week.

The mature male Golden is ideally 56-61 cms (or 22 to 24 inches) at the shoulder, and weighs 32 to 37 kg. Bitches 51-56cms (20 to 22 inches), and weight at 27 to 32 kg.

The Golden has a normal canine structure without distortions of leg, jaw or tail. The build is sturdy and muscular, but neither massive like a Newfoundland, nor refined like a setter. The temperament should be steady, confident, adaptable and kind. The head is broad, with well proportioned, well set on ears, and a kind expression. The coat, which is one of the hallmarks of the breed, is a “double coat” with a thick, weatherproof topcoat, and a dense, soft undercoat. There are featherings of longer hair on the backs of the legs, on the front of the neck and chest, and on the tail. The adult coat may range in colour from cream to dark gold. The physical characteristics of the Golden Retriever are described fully in the breed standard further on in this handbook.

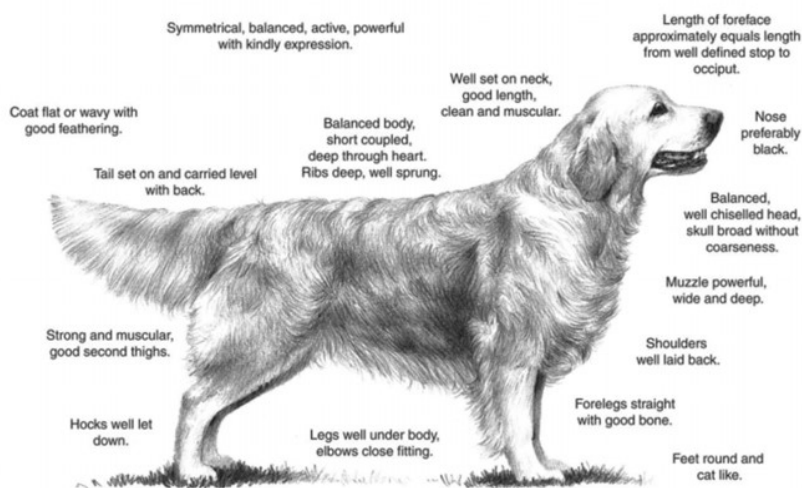


Illustration: Lyn Mansfield

HISTORY OF THE GOLDEN RETRIEVER IN NEW ZEALAND

It appears that the first Golden Retrievers were imported into this country in 1926 or 1927 but from which kennels they came is not known. However some English-bred dogs appear in early pedigrees. Presumably some of the early dogs were imported from Australia but were of English origin.

The Golden Retriever Club was formed in New Zealand in 1948 by R.T. Willan of Christchurch. Mr Willan, whose kennel name was Huntingdon, was president of the club until his death in 1957.

ABOUT THE CLUB

From 1957 the club was inactive for ten years, but in 1967 a surge of popularity for the breed in the Auckland area brought about a revival, this time with an Auckland based committee, and with the club activities centered there for several years. However by 1975 the breed had reached eighteenth place in the Kennel Club's table of registration and it became obvious that there was sufficient interest to justify the formation of other clubs so late in 1976, the Southern Golden Retriever Club in Christchurch and the Central Golden Retriever Club in Wellington emerged. The Golden Retriever Club based in Auckland has its zone of influence from Taupo north.

All three Golden Clubs continue to thrive and encourage participation in all aspects of Golden Retrievers be it pet, showing, obedience, field trialing, agility or tracking.

Each club has about 150 members and twice as many dogs, mainly New Zealand bred now with occasional imports from Great Britain, Australia and Europe. Each club produces a bimonthly newsletter which provides members with up to the minute information on upcoming events, articles of interest such on health or training, in addition to listing the latest results from the many activities Golden Retrievers are involved in. The clubs run championship shows for the purebred pedigree dog and also hold ribbon parades, training and picnic days for the pet owner. The 2013 annual registration figures produced by the New Zealand Kennel Club (NZKC) show Golden Retrievers in 6th place with 41 litters producing 307 puppies in that year. This does not include the many pet litters also produced during this time.

SO YOU WANT TO OWN A GOLDEN

You may be interested in a Golden Retriever for a variety of reasons - as a pet, a hunting dog, an obedience competitor, a show dog, or a combination of these things.

Whatever your objective, you, as the dog's owner, will be responsible for the care and training that will enable your Golden to fulfill its potential.

If you want a watch dog, you should not get a Golden Retriever. Although its size and initial barking might deter an intruder, the typical Golden is adaptable, friendly to everyone, gentle

(although physically active) and committed to carrying things in its mouth — including an intruder's flashlight.

If you are a fastidious housekeeper (or are married to one) you should not get a Golden Retriever. Most Golden Retrievers shed somewhat throughout the year and quite profusely in the spring, in spite of diligent daily brushings. Also, most Golden Retrievers love to get wet, if there is water on your property your Golden will be wet, and possibly muddy — frequently!

If you want a one man dog, prefer cats to dogs, or are not home much, you should not get a Golden Retriever. Golden Retrievers are very people orientated and are not happy as a kennel dog. A Golden needs to be part of the family and included in activities and must have daily human companionship to be happy. As an adult they require at least, and preferably more than 60 minutes of daily exercise with most of that free running.

Most people prefer to get a young puppy and raise it themselves. This can be very rewarding but also time consuming and sometimes very frustrating. Other people prefer a dog that is out of puppyhood and has already been socialised. Our hope is that this handbook will help you understand the Golden Retriever and decide if this is the breed for you.

SHOULD YOU OWN A GOLDEN RETRIEVER

Golden Retrievers make wonderful companions for people of all ages but the introduction of one into the home brings with it a number of responsibilities.

Every responsible breeder and Golden Retriever Club promotes responsible dog ownership. This starts with the actual decision to bring a dog into the household. As a prospective dog owner you should question your desire to own a dog and your ability to look after it for its entire life.

We urge you to think carefully about the following questions.

Can you afford the **money** to provide:

- a proper diet
- annual vaccinations
- unexpected vet bills
- boarding for the dog when necessary.

Can you afford the **time** to provide:

- adequate exercise
- training
- grooming – brushing at least weekly, trimming nails, trimming hair around feet and trimming the tail, cleaning ears when necessary, etc.

- the attention that most dogs demand. A Golden Retriever is very much a family dog and is not suitable for being kennelled or being left on its own. It does best as a loved member of the family.

Is your **property suitable** for a dog:

- do you have adequate fencing
- are you prepared for anything ranging from the odd hole to the total destruction of your prized garden
- can you provide adequate shelter in all weather conditions
- can you protect the dog from the poisons that you use around the house or that grow in your garden.

Are you prepared for the **responsibilities** that you are required to take on by your **council** or by **common courtesy** to others:

- this includes annual registration of your dog with your local council
- micro-chipping
- cleaning up after your dog
- not allowing your dog to become a nuisance to others.

Do you have **children**:

- Will they take on some responsibility for the care of your dog? Are they old/physically strong enough to do this?
- Golden Retrievers are in general excellent with children and most are very tolerant but very young puppies explore with their mouths and can nip and older dogs can be sore and less tolerant. Are you able to supervise/teach your children how to behave around you dog
- Are you getting a dog just for the kids or do you really want one – who will be ultimately responsible for your dog. It is usually Mum.

Are you prepared to take on the dog for its whole lifetime:

- Puppies can be quite demanding and destructive
- Also keep in mind that a dog's expected life span is somewhere between 10 - 15 years and for some animals the latter years may involve the problems of old age such as blindness, deafness, arthritis and/or incontinence.

If you have any doubts about any of the above then you need more time to consider your decision. If you think that you are prepared for dog ownership then read on.

WHAT AGE, GENDER AND BREED OF DOG IS FOR YOU

Let's look at the **AGE** first. Are you thinking of getting a puppy or an adult dog that is looking for a new home?

PUPPIES are very **dependent** creatures. They are also very **inquisitive** and very likely to be **destructive**. Are you prepared for the care of a puppy? House training, chewing, constant feeding and destructiveness? You may end up with some **sleepless nights**. Are you prepared to take the time to teach it to become a member of the family? The end result of a much loved family pet can be very rewarding but you must be prepared for some work and inconvenience along the way.

ADULT DOGS also bring their rewards, without the trials and tribulations of puppyhood. But, be warned, adults come with a whole range of experiences that will have **shaped their behaviour**. Sometimes problem behaviour only becomes evident in certain situations. There are many reasons why people need to rehome their pets and you should examine the situation very closely so that you have some idea of what you are getting. You must be particularly careful if you have children. A dog that has had no experience with young children for most of its life may react very badly to them. In this situation it is better to be safe than sorry.

Think about whether you want a puppy or an adult dog, carefully considering the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Like humans every dog is an individual which develops its own personality depending upon how it is reared.

It is also important to decide whether you want a **MALE** or a **FEMALE**.

Temperamentally, there is very little difference between the male and female Golden Retriever. Neither is harder to house train, and both are equally intelligent and affectionate. Both are excellent with children, and both make excellent companions. Problems of aggressiveness which may occur in males of some breeds rarely occur in the Golden.

Sex related behaviour 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 at stud. Neutering a male may help to alleviate these problems, and will eliminate the risk of testicular cancer, and lower the risk of prostate cancer. However, early neutering can increase the incident of some cancers and some growth related issues. A bitch will come into season sometime after six months and seasons can occur twice yearly. At these times she is particularly attractive to males so unless you intend to mate her she will need to be kept away from males. Unless she was bought specifically for showing or breeding, the oestrus cycle in the female need not be a consideration and you may want to get her spayed. Spaying will eliminate the risk of some health issues but early spaying may increase the incident of some cancers and some growth related issues. Our advice is to consult with the breeder, your vet and/or our club regarding the best time for spaying and neutering.

Now it is time to consider the **BREED** of dog for you.

If you are tossing up between several different breeds – do a little homework on each breed.

CHOOSING A GOLDEN RETRIEVER

What are you looking for in a Golden Retriever? A beautiful animal? A good family pet? A good obedience worker? There are Golden Retrievers that fit each description and some that fit all descriptions. The Golden Retriever Club has many members whose interest in the breed has led them to develop the potential of the Golden Retriever in each of these areas. Goldens also work as service dogs such as guide dogs for the blind, assisting those with epilepsy or mobility challenges, visiting hospitals, search and rescue work, and appear in many commercials and advertisements. There is no question that the Golden Retriever is a versatile and remarkable breed.

Before you even start looking at puppies, take time to learn about the breed, attend dog shows or field trials, go to Golden Retriever Club Ribbon Parades, dog walks and fun days and talk and question Golden owners. They are proud of their dogs and are happy to share their enthusiasm.

Look around. It is much easier to find a “backyard breeder” that knows and cares little about the welfare of the breed than it is to find a reputable breeder. Have patience and never buy impulsively — all puppies are cute. The Golden Retriever Club in your area can supply you with a list of conscientious breeders who will help you in your search even though they may not have anything for sale themselves.

Familiarise yourself with the various hereditary problems which can occur in Goldens. You want a sound, healthy puppy who will grow up to be a proud representative of the breed. Careful selection now will save headache and money later. Remember, you are choosing a companion for the next ten to fifteen years.

CHOOSING A REPUTABLE BREEDER

There are several ways of purchasing a Golden Retriever:

1. Pet Shop

This would be your worst possible choice. Fortunately in New Zealand very few Goldens are sold this way. Any breeder who would sell a litter of puppies to a pet shop has put very little effort into his/her breeding therefore the puppies are probably poorly bred and raised.

2. Backyard Breeder

This is also a poor choice. This is the person who owns a pet and thinks it would be ‘fun’ to have puppies, that it would be a great experience for the children, or that the bitch should be bred from once before she is spayed. Even worse, perhaps it is being done just to make money. This type of breeder generally knows little about the breed and does not have their

dog checked for hereditary problems. Also they are not careful in choosing the right 'mate' for their bitch. Any person considering purchasing a puppy from this type of breeder should arm themselves with a list of questions. Ask for a pedigree of both parents, whether registered or not, ask for proof of vaccination, ask for proof of hip and eye examination of both parents. There are some 'pet' breeders who do take trouble to do their best for the breed, the problem for the novice is how to pick them.

3. Puppy Mill

This is the worst possible choice. Often such people can be found advertising on places such as Trade Me, on the Internet or at some pet shops. Such people care absolutely nothing for the welfare of the puppies or the mother or father. Often the puppies and mother can be found living in squalor, with poor nutrition, health issues and inadequate socialisation. Unfortunately, the demand for Golden Retrievers often exceeds supply thus making it easy for such unscrupulous people to continue this practice. While there are moves underway to monitor and control this type of breeding practice (puppy mill) it still happens. If in doubt, please ask questions, and contact the Golden Retriever Club for advice.

4. Serious Breeder

This would be your best choice. The serious and dedicated breeder regards his or her dogs as more than a hobby. These breeders acknowledge responsibility for each and every puppy produced and stand behind every dog they have bred. The question is "How does one recognise the serious breeder?" Your local club should be able to provide you with a list of names. These breeders should be able to meet several requirements. Do not be afraid to ask questions, and if the answers do not meet your criteria, score them off your list.

The breeder should:

1. Belong to a Golden Retriever Club and the NZKC. The reason for this requirement is that this sort of participation indicates depth of involvement. The breeder is exposed to other points of view, learns more about the breed and modern breeding practices.
2. Be involved in showing his or her dogs in the breed ring, the obedience ring, agility, tracking or field trialing or a combination of all of them. The breeder who does not participate does not know how well or bad their dogs really are and is deprived of the opportunity to share information with others. Showing provides the competition, which encourages breeders to produce better dogs. The breeder who competes wants to prove how good their dogs are and is putting their breeding program on the line. This breeder is not relying on just a pedigree to indicate quality. Even if you do not want a competition animal, you deserve a pet that was the end result of a carefully planned litter, a puppy that receives the same care as a potential champion. The breeder who competes in organised activities is known by others and has a reputation to uphold. This breeder will be as careful and honest in selling you your pet puppy as in selling show stock.

3. Be able to show you a clean environment, healthy, well socialised puppies, and a dam with a good temperament. Because of the dangers of transmitting fatal disease some breeders will not allow you to handle the puppies whilst they are very young.
4. Provide you with written instructions on feeding, training and care, type and dates of vaccinations required and details of worming procedures. If your puppy is registered with the NZKC your breeder should supply you with the registration certificate, together with a four generation pedigree. The sire and dam must have had their hips, elbows and eyes checked, and you should ask to see a copy of these. The breeder is responsible for registration and change of ownership within 14 days.
5. If people are claiming that the puppy is purebred, check that they are telling the truth. Insist on papers with the puppy at time of sale. Even if not for showing a registered purebred puppy should have papers although the papers may have endorsements such as "not to be bred from". NZKC is the only NZ authority for pedigree and registration papers. Without papers, there is no certainty that the puppy is a Golden Retriever.
6. Check you out! A serious breeder will not let one of their puppies go to just anyone. You should be asked such questions as have you had a large dog before? What area do you live in? Do you have a large property? Do you work full time? Where will the dog be housed? By asking these questions the breeder is protecting the breed. No one wants to own a Golden that barks all day and night because it is tied to the clothesline all the time, or wanders into the streets chasing cars, children etc., because it is not fenced in. A breeder may be a bit hesitant to sell you a puppy until they know more about you, what you are looking for in a dog and what lifestyle you have in mind for it.

If your breeder meets all those requirements then you are in good hands. If you get a negative response to any of these requirements think twice and discuss the situation with someone else. DON'T be impulsive and DO ask questions. Most experienced breeders will answer all the questions you want answered about the puppies. No one will ever breed the perfect dog but meeting these requirements shows you that the breeder is doing everything in their power to eradicate problems. It is not possible to guarantee perfection because there can always be the unfortunate throwback which is not the fault of the breeder but a fact of nature.

CHOOSING A PUPPY

Once you have found a breeder that you can trust it is time to think about your puppy. Take your time, you may have to wait weeks, months or even longer for the 'right' litter to be whelped. It may be well worth the wait. Be sure the breeder knows if you want the dog for a particular purpose, other than companionship (such as a show dog, obedience dog or field trialist). Very few litters have more than a few "show prospects" in them but a "pet quality" puppy from a well bred litter has all the potential of growing up to be a sturdy, healthy

Golden of proper size and temperament. Good litters seldom go begging and it is not uncommon for litters to be pre-booked and many breeders having waiting lists, therefore the chance of you getting a "choice" of puppies depends on the size of the litter. If the breeder offers you more than one puppy to select from, take each of the puppies you are considering away from the rest of its littermates and observe its reaction to its environment and to you. Puppies at seven or eight weeks of age should be willing to explore their environment and although a little bit cautious at first, they should investigate new objects and be fairly self-assured. Speak to the puppy and try to see if it has any instinct to watch, chase, carry and possibly even return to you with the ball. Some puppies are slower to develop the retrieving instinct than others but you should not consider a puppy that does not show some interest or awareness of a moving object. See if the puppy exhibits the type of personality you would want to live with. Perhaps the bold, brash puppy that never stops getting into things would be too much for you. And the more easy going fellow who is agreeable and a bit more perceptive to your guidance would be a better choice.

While observing the puppies observe the dam as well. Any shyness or aggression on her part may be inherited by the puppies. A Golden Retriever bitch should be watchful and patient with her puppies and should be happy to show them to you. If the sire is available ask to see him too.

THE OLDER DOG

If you are not prepared to go through the trials and training of a puppy, an older puppy or even a mature dog can be a good alternative especially in households in which the family pet may have to spend much of the day unsupervised. Golden Retrievers are very adaptable and a Golden Retriever of any age with a good temperament can become a member of the family in a very short time. There are many reasons why an older dog can become available.

Breeders sometimes hold onto a puppy until it is old enough to determine its show or breeding potential, or circumstances have changed and a breeder is trying to help rehome a much loved pet. There are many reasons but whatever they may be, the grown dog is available, house trained, knows commands, and has formed behaviour patterns.

If the dog has been loved and well taken care of he will continue to give love and devotion to his new owners because a properly raised Golden loves and needs people. Never be hesitant to take an outgoing, good natured older dog into your home, although it may be confused at first and cause a few problems.

Patience, consistency and reassurance are the key words. The dog's self-confidence will return and it will adapt readily to your routine. Try to find out all you can about the older dog you are considering so that you can determine if his temperament is compatible with yours. Learn as much about his habits, diet, likes, and dislikes, daily routine and past history. It is important all of your family members meet the dog before its adoption and agree that this is the one they want. Try and stay with the dog for the first few days. A long weekend is ideal. Time must be taken to make clear that the dog knows when it is to sleep, relieve itself, where and when it will eat, what it can and cannot do in the house. Give the dog a month to settle and gain confidence. Once you both know what is expected of each other the reward will be a loyal and devoted companion.

















WHEN YOUR PUPPY COMES HOME

Now that you are at home with your puppy, first let it out in the garden. Stay with it, and after it has investigated and relieved itself, let it run into the house with you. It will look into all the nooks and crannies. Be mindful of wet puppy feet slipping on smooth floors and of glass doors that your puppy is not used to. Although everything is strange it will be inquisitive, probably running back to you for assurance. Give it a lot of attention to begin with; encouragement and love will fill any feeling of loneliness. A puppy is often quite thankful to be away from its brothers and sisters and to have some peace. What it will miss is their warmth and company.

Make sure you have a comfortable and warm bed, out of draughts. A wicker basket looks nice but it's not really practical for a young puppy as it will find it nice to chew. A hot water bottle well wrapped in a blanket so that the puppy can cuddle into it should keep it happy for the first few nights. Many people start off by crating their puppies at night to help with toilet training. The crate should be large enough to place a bed at one end and some newspapers at the other. If you decide to use the crating method, the puppy very quickly learns to be clean at night but you will need to have the crate nearby so you can hear if the puppy needs to go out and can immediately take it out. There are a number of excellent articles on crate training but the most important thing is that it is only used in a positive way and the puppy is introduced to it carefully. He or she will soon learn to see it as their safety place.

Puppies (and older dogs) can squeeze through tiny areas including through/under pool fencing, under gates, etc. Please if you have a pool make sure you are with the puppy at all times if in the pool area or put some extra meshing around to prevent puppy from squeezing through the fencing. Likewise, make sure all your fencing and your gate is puppy proofed.

Goldens are very clean but all puppies have accidents. Each time your puppy wakens take him outside. Once he has relieved himself give plenty of praise and allow back inside. Should he begin to 'squat' in the house, quickly pick the puppy up and say "outside" and take to the spot where he can relieve himself. Praise the puppy after it has toileted. A young puppy will have very little control and cannot hold on for long. Teaching and rewarding the puppy for going in the right place and you managing the environment – that is restricting the puppy to a particular room (one that is easy to clean) or a crate if you cannot watch it - is the best way to house train the puppy. Your puppy will soon associate pleasing you with going toilet outside. Never scold by rubbing his nose in the accident or hitting with a rolled newspaper, the deed has been done and he does not know why you are doing this to him. You will only tend to make him timid and nervous.

See that he has his own toys and insist that he can do what he likes with them without hindrance. Shoes, slippers, tea-towels should be out of reach. Playing 'tug of war' can be a useful educational game and one that dogs generally love, but do be gentle and not overdo it as it is possible to ruin a puppy's mouth and some breeders prefer that this game is not played.

Follow the breeder's diet sheet as far as feeding and quantities are concerned. Remembering to increase them as the puppy grows. The times the puppy can be fed can be altered to suit your daily routine, but once you have decided the best time for you - stick

to them. This will also help with toilet training. Your breeder will have advised on vaccinations, flea treatment and worming. Puppies may become infected with serious diseases by sniffing the urine or faeces of infected dogs. Until your puppy has his final injection against distemper, hepatitis, parvo which is usually around 12 weeks, never let your puppy on the ground where other dogs may have eliminated. You may take your puppy for car rides and to visit friends but always carry your puppy from house to car and vice versa and this includes visits to the veterinary clinic until he has had his final injection.

Socialisation (i.e. contact with other dogs, other animals, with other adults, children, bikes, skates, cars, and anything likely to be encountered later in life) in the early months is critical to having a well-adjusted confident dog later. This socialisation needs to be weighed up against the risk of disease. Please use commonsense and discuss with your vet or breeder if unsure if it is safe to take your puppy out. Sometimes going for a walk and carrying the puppy in your arms (before the puppy becomes too heavy to do so), will help with some aspects of this.

Today many veterinary clinics run "puppy socialisation" classes which puppies can attend before they are fully vaccinated. These are excellent and allow pup to meet other people and play with other dogs and importantly learn bite inhibition. These puppies will also not be fully vaccinated, but this is ok in the vet clinic situation.

Routine is the best way to train a puppy, always let him out last thing at night, first thing in the morning and after each meal and many times in between. Always use plenty of praise when he does things right and always be firm (but kind) when he does them wrong. Remember your puppy does not understand the English Language; he only associates the noise you make with the tone of your voice and your body language. Use consistent commands and praise when he reacts favourably. Remember the word 'NO' only tells the dog to stop – it doesn't tell it what it should be doing. Golden Retrievers while they can be quite boisterous are sensitive dogs and in general training is quite easy. Kind and calm training will create a kind and calm dog. It is much quicker to teach your puppy the rules of the house by showing him what you want and then rewarding (praise and a food treat) for doing it right. Your puppy will then want to do what you want it to.

There are a number of excellent books/websites providing training advice and the one this club recommends is available at

www.dogstardaily.com/free-downloads

Of particular interest:- ***Before You Get Your Puppy*** and ***After You Get Your Puppy*** downloads. Dr. Ian Dunbar has made these available free of charge and we strongly encourage you to read these articles.

SOME ESSENTIAL DO'S AND DON'TS

Do not allow small children to “tease” or play roughly with a puppy. Children can be very cruel, so you have to spend as much time training them as you do the pup. Both have to learn to live with each other. Care in this area will be rewarded by both becoming loyal companions.

Do encourage your puppy to “retrieve” by throwing a ball or toy, praise him when he fetches and returns it to you. Encourage him to give to hand. Nothing frustrates more than a dog that fetches and runs away.

Do practice the collar grab with your puppy so if you need to grab the puppy's collar at any time, your puppy associates good things and does not jump away or run out of reach. This is an easy lesson to learn (and comes in very handy) by reaching for the collar, praising dog (or clicking if using a clicker) and then feeding it a tasty treat and releasing. Do this many times every day until the dog starts to lean into you when you reach for the collar.

Do not over exercise your young puppy. Young dogs spend most of their early months growing up and bones are soft and supple. Many an owner has criticised a breeder, who provided a perfectly healthy dog, when it develops a limp, or even worse shows signs of hip dysplasia. When asked when the first sign occurred the owner replied “After only 5 kilometers during last weeks jog”. DO NOT run your dog until at least 12 months of age. For the same reason do not allow your puppy to jump great heights off verandahs, jump off the back of 4 wheel drives, go up and down lots of stairs, jump after Frisbees, etc. A good rule of thumb is 5 minutes exercise for every month of age from puppy to adult (1 year), so if your puppy is 6 months old give it 30 minutes per day exercise - this can be three ten minute walks.

Do allow your puppy lots of time to sleep in their own quiet space. The huge amount of growing that they do in their first year is exhausting!

Do socialise your dog - allow him to meet visitors, to be touched etc.

Do not allow him to jump up on people, be firm but gentle.

Do not scold the puppy for chewing. The first few months are spent growing and losing teeth and as most humans know this can be very painful. Ensure the puppy has his own toys he can chew and make sure he knows that he can do what he wants with them. Never leave a puppy alone with your best furniture. A firm “NO” when he heads for the coffee table then stick one of his own toys in his mouth. Accidents will happen, but be patient.

Do have clean fresh water available for your Golden to drink.

Do not let your dog have access to rat or mouse poison, slug and snail bait, insect bait stations, daffodil bulbs or Karaka berries, as these can kill your dog. Karaka trees are grown in many private gardens and public parks around NZ and the berries are particularly toxic, so please make yourself familiar with what the berries look like and keep your dogs well away. Also be aware of common substances which can be poisonous to dogs e.g. household cleaners, fertilisers and garden chemicals, silica gel packs, ibuprofen, aspirin,

acetaminophen (aka paracetamol) and amphetamines (such as ADD/ADHD drugs). All over-the-counter and prescribed human medicines, and prescribed vet medicines (given to your dog according to your vet's instructions) should be stored safely so your dogs cannot get to these items without you knowing!

Do not feed or let your dog have access to the following human foods which are unsafe for dogs: chocolate, onions and chives, garlic (see note below), any products with xylitol (an artificial sweetener found in sugar free gums, candies, toothpaste and baked goods), sweetcorn cobs (as they can cause blockages in the small intestine that may need to be removed surgically), macadamia nuts, grapes and raisins, alcohol, coffee and pips found in some stone fruit (as the pips contain a substance that degrades to cyanide).

Note: Some people safely give very small amounts of garlic to their dogs; however a large amount of garlic can be toxic so please keep your dog away from your pantry and vegetable garden if you have garlic (or any foods listed above) in those places. For further information about how much garlic your dog can safely have please ask your vet or your dog's breeder for their advice.

Do not shave your dog's coat in hot weather. The double coat is designed by nature to keep your Golden Retriever cool.

TRAINING

It is not our intention to go into great depths on training in this handbook, but stick to basics. Your breeder, obedience club, or the Golden Retriever Club can assist you with advice on training your dog, but two areas which may assist the novice is lead training and car training.

Lead training can be very frustrating. Start by putting a small leather collar around your puppy's neck. Watch him roll and scratch trying to remove it. Do not leave this collar on for too long. Remove it and praise the dog. Replace it again later and continue this until the pup accepts it. You can then attach a small nylon lead; the pup will probably roll on his back and refuse to move. Never drag the puppy, instead face him, encourage him to come towards you, preferably by offering a titbit and run backwards. When it comes towards you make a big fuss of it, do not continue for too long, but make every lesson a happy game. Soon your dog will be happy to have his collar and lead put on, especially if associated with the word "walkies". If you find you are having trouble with a dog pulling there are a number of harness like leads (gentle leader) etc. that will help, but all dogs can learn to walk nicely on lead and collar – given time and patience.

Car training — As soon as possible, take your puppy in the car with you, make him sit on a towel and take only a short trip. Your pup will probably be sick, hence the towel, but if he associates a trip in the car with the joyful visit to friends or once fully vaccinated a run in the park or at the beach, this will soon stop. Increase the length of a trip, soon the car will become a second home and you will not be able to pick up your car keys without him wanting to come. Car seat belts are a great safety feature for dogs, or a metal/fabric crate for you golden to travel in are recommended.

NUTRITION

Your breeder will have provided you with a diet sheet, and you must follow this rigidly to begin with. As your dog grows older his needs and quantities change. Your breeder can advise when this time comes but it may help to understand the dog's nutritional needs.

Classified as carnivorous (feeds on other animals), dogs, and in particular young dogs, do not develop well on meat alone. Meat alone does not provide all the minerals and vitamins necessary for a healthy dog and may result in severe developmental issues.

The dog's ancestors or cousins in the wild, would be eating the entire animal (meat, organs and bones) to ensure it gets all the nutrients necessary.

A varied and complete diet is necessary and compared with an adult dog, a puppy has special needs. Correct feeding is especially important during the first few months of development to not only ensure the puppy gets all the nutrients it needs but also to ensure it grows slowly.

There is a great deal of discussion and debate around the optimum food to provide your dog. There is also a great deal of discussion around feeding bones. Bones provide great enjoyment for dogs but they should never ever be cooked nor should they be small and sharp where they could get lodged in the mouth or throat. We suggest you follow the advice of your breeder and if wanting to change the type of food discuss this with the breeder, your vet, or other experienced Golden Retriever owners. There are many different brands of commercial food around and the quality varies. Some people prefer to feed a home diet or a raw diet. Whatever you choose, a diet lacking in nutrients or one that is unbalanced can lead to health problems. If in doubt check with your breeder, your vet or the Golden Retriever Club.

SPAYING/NEUTERING

There are definitely some benefits with spaying or neutering your animal but there are also some health risks associated with early (before fully mature) spaying or neutering. This club suggests that you discuss this with your breeder and/or your vet. Due to a higher rate of some cancers in dogs/bitches spayed/neutered early, breeders may require that you wait until the bitch/dog is fully mature.

HEREDITARY DEFECTS

Throughout this handbook you will have noticed that we mentioned eye testing and hip dysplasia frequently. These are hereditary defects which affect our Goldens. Dogs which show signs of having any of these ailments should not be bred from, and most certainly not with a mate showing similar ailments. This is the reason we strongly advise you to choose a reputable breeder who is aware of their dogs condition and that of its mate and ancestors.

This handbook is meant to appeal to the “first Golden owner” and offers general advice with only the essential details mentioned, however the Golden Retriever Club considers hereditary defects a very important issue. It is therefore appropriate that we outline these conditions in some detail.

Orthopaedic Problems

There are a number of orthopaedic problems that Goldens can be affected with including hip dysplasia, elbow dysplasia (which covers a number of issues with elbow), and so on.

Hip Dysplasia is considered hereditary malformation of the joint. Mild cases may show no symptoms. In severe cases however, the animal will show lameness, pain, and difficulty in rising from a sitting position. The only certain way of diagnosis is by x-ray. Because of the increasing number of this malformation the Kennel Club has brought into operation a scheme in conjunction with the Veterinary Association in an attempt to improve hips. Under the scheme, x-rays are submitted to a panel or expert for scrutiny and a certificate is issued listing a points score for each hip/elbow. Over the last few years, there appears to be a definite improvement in the hip scores and many Golden Retrievers are showing excellent hip scores.

The Golden Retriever Club does not stipulate any specific hip score or elbow score as being acceptable. Our comment always is the lower the score the better. There can never be any guarantee no matter how good the scores may be, but a responsible breeder will be scoring hips and elbows and checking eyes annually.

Other Orthopaedic Problems including Elbow Dysplasia

There a number of orthopaedic problems besides hip dysplasia which may also occur in the growing dog. Among these are panosteitis, elbow dysplasia, osteochondritis dissecans, luxated patella, and other problems.

It is suspected that while the environment (over supplementation, inappropriate exercise) may contribute, there may well be some hereditary disposition to such conditions, so even though surgery may correct some of these problems, there is some question whether dogs affected with any of these conditions should be considered for breeding.

Nevertheless, when purchasing puppy, it is important to ensure that the parents have been screened by x-ray for elbow dysplasia.

Eye Disease

Hereditary cataracts can be a problem in the Golden Retriever breed. “Cataract” by definition is any opacity within the lens of the eye. At least one type of hereditary cataract appears at an early age in affected Goldens, and while these may or may not interfere with the dog’s vision, some do progress into severe or total loss of vision. There are also non-hereditary cataracts which sometimes occur, and examination by a Board Certified Veterinary Ophthalmologist is necessary to determine if the cataract is or is not of concern from a genetic standpoint. If there is any question, the dog is certainly not to be recommended for breeding.

A few families of Golden Retrievers carry genes for Central Progressive Retinal Atrophy (CPRA) which is progressive deterioration of the light—receptive area (retina) of the eye, and may result in complete blindness at a fairly young age.

There are also other eye defects, such as retina dysplasia, that prevent consideration of a dog as a breeding animal. Eyelid and eyelash problems also may occur in the breed; some with a hereditary basis, and sometimes due to other factors. Entropion and ectropion are the turning in or turning out of the eyelids. Trichiasis and distichiasis involve eyelashes or hairs rubbing on and irritating the eye. Surgery may be needed to correct these problems, and while it is a fairly simple procedure, such dogs should not be bred from and are ineligible to be shown under NZKC rules.

Nuclear sclerosis, the “bluish haze” of the eye seen in older dogs, is a normal part of the age—related change in the lens and is not a problem.

Examination of breeding stock should be done annually, until at least eight years of age and preferably longer, as hereditary eye problems can develop at varying ages. The examination should be made by a Board—Certified Veterinary Ophthalmologist, who has the special equipment and training needed to properly examine the dog's eyes.

Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA)

This is a hereditary eye defect which can affect Golden Retrievers. The retina becomes infected causing eventual blindness. There is a scheme whereby a Vet can issue a letter certifying clarity from this disease. Permanent clearances may be given at 6 to 8 years of age. For your own protection it is advisable to use a Vet who is studying this disease.

Entropion and Trichiasis

It is usually possible to diagnose these conditions when the puppies are still young. Symptoms can become noticeable whilst they are being weaned or later when they are teething. Occasionally these conditions develop in older puppies, but generally before they are a year old. One or both eyes may be affected, the eyes weep continuously. In bad cases the result can be erosion of the cornea. An operation is needed to bring relief, but this is a simple one and when it has been carried out there is no further trouble nor should there be any scarring if done properly.

Epilepsy

There are some Golden Retrievers that are prone to an inherited form of epilepsy which typically presents between one and four. Seizure disorders may also arise from a variety of environmental factors including viral infections, other diseases, and trauma. In some cases, there is no ascertainable cause other than perhaps some inherent factor resulting in a low threshold to the stimuli setting off the seizures. One or perhaps two isolated seizures do not necessarily constitute a problem, but dogs subject to recurring seizures should not be bred. Often the veterinarian can recommend medication which will control the seizures, although medication is not always effective, and many dog owners are not always willing to try and live with this problem.

Heart Conditions

Like humans, dogs can and do suffer from heart problems. Of particular concern in the Golden Retriever is Sub-Aortic Stenosis (SAS), a condition caused by a faulty valve in the aorta. At this point in time SAS is regarded as a hereditary condition. Dogs severely affected by this condition may not survive puppyhood, or, if they survive early life, may suddenly collapse and die prematurely. When choosing a puppy it is important for you to know that its parents have been screened by a specialist veterinary practitioner for hereditary heart conditions.

Hypothyroidism

Although the onset is variable, hypothyroidism most commonly develops in middle-aged dogs between the ages of 4 and 10 years although it can occur in younger dogs and even puppies. It occurs equally in both sexes but spayed females appear to develop it more often than intact females. The Golden Retriever appears to have a predisposition to developing hypothyroidism and some breeders are testing their breeding stock for this condition before breeding. Some of the symptoms are lethargy, hair loss, dry hair, weight gain/obesity, cold intolerance, slow heart rate. Hypothyroidism is easy to diagnose and easy to treat by providing a synthetic thyroid hormone.

Whilst the above may give the impression the Golden is full of health problems and certainly while these may occur, in general most are healthy dogs that live a long life. Basically, all care should be taken to ensure your puppy is bred from stock which is clear from these illnesses. The new owner of a Golden should be aware of the part environment plays in the health of your dog. Over nutrition, over exercise can cause similar problems as some of the above. It is unfair to blame your breeder for supplying an unsound dog, if you have not followed common sense instructions. During the first 12 months of its life a Golden grows very quickly so it is essential that everything is kept in proportion. The introduction of extra vitamins at this stage can promote disproportionate development and can lead to some problems. Remember, BALANCE is the primary objective.

Above all this, the temperament of the Golden Retriever is paramount. It is the Golden Retriever's temperament that has made it so popular as a companion animal and reputable breeders will ensure they only breed from Goldens that have excellent temperaments (kindly, friendly, confident and biddable). While temperament is influenced by many factors, Goldens used for breeding should demonstrate these qualities thus more likely to pass this on to their puppies.

NEW ZEALAND OFFICIAL BREED STANDARD

General Appearance

Symmetrical, balanced, active, powerful, level mover; sound with kindly expression.

Characteristics

Biddable, intelligent and possessing natural working ability.

Temperament

Kindly, friendly and confident.

Head and Skull

Balanced and well chiseled, skull broad without coarseness; well set on neck, muzzle powerful, wide and deep. Length of foreface approximately equals length from well-defined stop to occiput. Nose preferably black.

Eyes: Dark brown set well apart, dark rims.

Ears: Moderate size, set on approximate level with eyes.

Mouth: Jaws strong, with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws.

Neck: Good length, clean and muscular.

Forequarters: Forelegs straight with good bone, shoulders well laid back, long in blade with upper arm of equal length placing legs well under body. Elbows close fitting.

Body: Balanced, short-coupled, deep through heart. Ribs deep, well sprung. Level topline.

Hindquarters: Loin and legs strong and muscular, good second thighs, well bent stifles. Hocks well let down, straight when viewed from rear, neither turning in nor out. Cow-hocks highly undesirable.

Feet: Round and cat-like.

Tail: Set on and carried level with back, reaching to hocks, without curl at tip.

Gait/Movement: Powerful with good drive. Straight and true in front and rear. Stride long and free with no sign of hackney action in front.

Coat: Flat or wavy with good feathering, dense water-resisting undercoat.

Colour: Any shade of gold or cream, neither red nor mahogany. A few white hairs on chest only, permissible.

Size: Height at withers: dogs: 56-61 centimeters (22-24 inches); bitches: 51-56 centimeters (20-22 inches).

Faults: Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog and on the dog's ability to perform its traditional work.

Note: Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

The following is a list of reading material on the Golden Retriever. The club has many of these books available for our members to borrow.

- The Golden Retriever by Joan Tudor, England.
- All about the Golden Retriever by Lucille Sawtell, England.
- Golden Retrievers by Joan Gill, England.
- The Golden Retriever by Jeffrey Pepper, USA.
- The New Complete Golden Retriever by Gertrude Fisher, USA.
- The New Dogsteps - Illustrated Gait at a Glance by Rachael Page Elliot, USA.
- The Golden Retriever Spectrum, Vol 2/3. Pedigrees at a Glance by Julie Amoores, NZ.
- Pet Owners' Guide to the Golden Retriever by Bernard Bareh (Montage Books).
- Golden Retrievers – An Owner's Companion by Lyn Anderson.
- Golden Retrievers Today by Valerie Foss.
- The Ultimate Golden Retriever by Valerie Foss.
- Golden Retrievers, Research into the First Century in the Show Ring by Marilyn Morphet.

CONCLUSION

We hope that this handbook has proved of some value to you and that it contains information which makes it easier for you to choose a fine, healthy puppy. Please do not hesitate to contact The Golden Retriever Club **LIAISON OFFICER** for any further information.

www.goldenretriever.org.nz