

"Hi! I'm a Golden Retriever!"

People say that I make a wonderful pet, that I am a good family dog: the "perfect dog." They say that I am the best choice for just about everyone. Although I can truly be all of those things that you dream of, read on to find out some facts about me that may make you stop and think about how perfect I might be for you.

Golden Retrievers are very sociable. I was bred to work with people, so it is very important for me to be with my family. You must keep me indoors, housetrain me, and love me. If you take the time to do this, I will become your greatest companion. I will love you, be well-mannered, and play gently with your children. It is your job, and your responsibility, to help me be that way. I am well known for my temperament and trainability. Take me to obedience class and socialize me well. I will repay you with undying devotion.

I do not need acreage to run on. I need, instead, your time and attention. Yes, I need fresh air and exercise, but we can do that together. I love walking, jogging, and playing retriever games. It is a must that you have a secure yard for me to play in. A fence will need to be provided with no way to dig out or jump. I cannot be left outside without being supervised by you. My safety is yours to assure.

I will need excellent veterinary care. No matter the cost, my health is in your hands. I will need to be spayed or neutered to prevent unwanted puppies. I also need to be groomed regularly to keep me looking beautiful and feeling good. I will love your touch as you brush me several times each week, and will look forward to that time together.

I have to be honest with you about some other things as well. I am an intelligent and devoted dog, and I will be destructive if I am bored. If you insist on leaving me outdoors, away from my family, I will destroy your yard. I will dig holes in the ground to find cool earth. Because I am a retriever, I like to have things in my mouth all the time. If you do not provide me with plenty of "legal" toys, I will find my own. I will replant your roses, trim your shrubs, chew the pool cover, and destroy the kids' toys.

When you do finally come out to see me, I will be so glad to have company that I will jump on you, knock over the baby, and ignore your commands to behave. I will be a large dog, despite my cute puppy looks, and this behavior will be unpleasant. I will do this from boredom, not to be spiteful.

If ignored, I will also become an escape artist. I will learn to dig out, or jump, so that I can find companionship. If there are not fences, I will not hang around. I will become a nuisance, and my life will be in danger.

One more thing: my beautiful gold coat must come out at least once a year. When it does, I will shed. I may shed very heavily, and my hair will float across the floor and onto your clothes and furniture. Children with allergies may find my skin and coat to be an irritant.

Am I still the perfect dog for you? If you can give me your time, and your love, all of my potential failings will seem unimportant. My big smile and adoring looks will show you that I truly am worth the effort.

If you are looking for a Golden Retriever puppy, you need to be an educated consumer. Because of the popularity of the breed, you will need to do some homework before purchasing your puppy. The Golden Retriever Club of America has a wonderful booklet called "Acquiring a Golden Retriever". It is quick and easy to read, and will teach you all you need to know. It also includes a breeder's questionnaire to make your research easier. The text of this booklet is available on GRCA's website, or you may request a copy from one of GRCA's public information officers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT GOLDEN RETRIEVERS, CONTACT YOUR
LOCAL GOLDEN RETRIEVER CLUB OR
THE GOLDEN RETRIEVER CLUB OF AMERICA, INC.,
PO BOX 20434, OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73156,
OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT <http://www.grca.org>