

Golden Retriever Training Equipment

Find out the tools you can use to train your golden retriever, and learn how to use them.

COLLAR

A simple buckle collar is fine for most dogs. One who pulls too hard on the leash may require a choke collar. Be cautious with a chain choke collar, as this can damage the Golden's coat around the neck. Only in the most severe cases of a dog's being totally out of control is the use of a pinch collar recommended. However, Golden Retrievers never should be subjected to such a device.

LEAD

A 1- to 2-yard lead is recommended, preferably made of leather, nylon or heavy cloth. A chain lead is not recommended, as many dog owners find that the chain cuts into their hands and that frequently switching the lead back and forth between their hands is painful.

Within the first few days in your new home, introduce the light lead to the puppy. Do not attach the lead and attempt to drag the puppy around the neighborhood. Simply attach the lead to the collar and let the puppy wander around the house. Supervise him so that he doesn't manage to knock over plant stands, small tables or the like. You can play with the puppy while he is trailing the leash behind him. Toss a ball to distract him from the leash, which may be upsetting him. Once he is comfortable with the leash, you can move the game to outside. Within a few days, you can take the end of the lead and walk together around your yard.

TREATS

Have a bag of treats on hand. Something nutritious and easy to swallow works best. Use a soft treat, a chunk of cheese or a piece of cooked chicken rather than a dry biscuit. By the time the dog gets done chewing a dry treat, he will forget why he is being rewarded in the first place! Using food rewards will not teach a dog to beg at the table—the only way to teach a dog to beg at the table is to give him food from the table. In training, rewarding the dog with a food treat will help him associate praise and the treats with learning new behaviors that obviously please his owner.

TRAINING BEGINS: ASK THE DOG A QUESTION

In order to teach your dog anything, you must first get his attention. After all, he cannot learn anything if he is looking away from you with his mind on something else.

To get his attention, ask him "School?" and immediately walk over to him and give him a treat as you tell him, "Good dog." Wait a minute or two and repeat the routine, this time with a treat in your hand as you approach within a foot of the dog. Do not go directly to him, but stop about a foot short of him and hold out the treat as you ask, "School?" He will see you approaching with a treat in your hand and most likely begin walking toward you. As you meet, give him the treat and praise again.

The third time, ask the question, have a treat in your hand and walk only a short distance toward the dog so that he must walk almost all the way to you. As he reaches you, give him the treat and praise again.

By this time, the dog will probably be getting the idea that if he pays attention to you, especially when you ask that question, it will pay off in treats and fun activities for him. In other words, he learns that "school" means doing fun things with you that result in treats and positive attention for him.

Remember that the dog does not understand your verbal language, he only recognizes sounds. Your question translates to a series of sounds for him, and those sounds become the signal to go to you and pay attention; if he does, he will get to interact with you plus receive treats and praise.

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Excerpts from Comprehensive Owner's Guide: Golden Retrievers