

Gorgeous Golden Retriever Grooming

Keep the waves of Golden Retriever hair at bay with these tips.

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Golden Retriever breeder and American Kennel Club judge Marcia Schlehr, can't help chuckling whenever she thinks about her sister, who brought home a Doberman Pinscher because she said her Golden Retrievers shed too much. Sure, you may be knee deep in Golden hair, but it's much easier to clean up than Doberman hair because it doesn't get embedded into everything!

Having trained both Labrador Retrievers and Golden Retrievers to work as guide dogs, Golden Retriever breeder Cherie Berger, agrees: Cleaning up after a Lab is more like cleaning Christmas needles out of the carpet. Cleaning up after a Golden Retriever is like scooping lint out of a clothes dryer.

Nevertheless, Goldens do shed profusely all year round, and even though the hair may be easy to clean up, the job is a constant one. "You will have Golden hair floating about your house. If you find that a problem, then don't get a Golden Retriever," says Jeffrey Pepper, a breeder in Salinas, Calif. "However, you can cut back on the effects of shedding, he adds."

Following are Pepper's tips for gorgeous Golden Retriever grooming: To minimize the presence of Golden hair all over the house, brush Golden Retrievers frequently and thoroughly to catch shedding undercoat. Brush the dog thoroughly, all the way down to the skin, at least once a week, Pepper says.

Accustom Golden Retriever puppies to regular grooming, nail clipping, and teeth cleaning at an early age. If you accustom a puppy to being groomed, brushed, combed, and having his nails trimmed from the start, it becomes a normal part of the routine, and he will get to really enjoy it. "Start with good habits!" Pepper says.

Trim the hair from between your Golden Retriever's foot pads. This will help reduce the amount of dirt and snow he tracks in.

As with any floppy eared dog, to minimize infection, keep your Golden Retriever's ears clean, dry, and free of long inner-ear hair that could trap bacteria.

Once a week, brush your Golden Retriever's teeth using toothpaste made for dogs to keep dental plaque at bay.

Massage your Golden Retriever's body frequently to check for any strange lumps, bumps, skin changes, or pain (such as in hips or elbows). A weekly body check can help you catch any developing health problems early.