

A Laidback Labrador Retriever

Lab lovers seek to get a new dog, but are worried about the breed's exercise needs.

By Allan Reznik

Q. We had to put our Lab down this past April due to cancer and now we are looking to purchase another dog. My husband would like a dog that requires less exercise since he can't walk that well. I also have a hard time walking although we do ride bikes during the summer months. We have been looking at French and English Bulldogs, but I think deep down we still love the Labs.

Would it be sufficient during the winter months to exercise a dog like a Lab by throwing a ball around? Is it possible to train a Lab to become a more laidback dog?

A. I think your chances of finding a more mellow, laidback Lab are greater with an older dog. Get in touch with Labrador Retriever clubs and rescue groups in your area, let them know your situation and explain that you both love the breed but need a slower, less rambunctious dog.

Sadly, with the recession we're experiencing and the popularity of the breed, many dog lovers who have lost their jobs or homes have had to surrender well-mannered, older Labs to rescue groups.

You might also ask around to see if a teenager or college student in your neighborhood wants to make a little extra money exercising your dog during the winter.

You sound like wonderful, concerned Lab people. Hope you find a special dog that deserves a loving, new home.