

Are you a Labrador Retriever person?

Find out if this exuberant dog breed is for you.

If there is one quality that defines the Labrador Retriever, it's an insatiable desire to retrieve. Labs love to fetch and carry something, anything, in their mouths. One cannot help but marvel at the breed's obsession with retrieving. If not a bird, then sticks and socks will do. You can usually identify a Labrador Retriever residence by the number of sticks and branches piled up at the back door! So don't blame your Lab when you can't find your shoes or socks. He can't help it! That compulsion to retrieve is in his genes.

Chewing is a natural by-product of retrieving, and Labrador Retriever puppies are miniature chewing machines. Many chew their way well into adulthood, leaving telltale scars on their owner's furniture and woodwork. A wise owner can minimize this damage by providing appropriate chew toys and teaching the Lab puppy what he may and may not chew. Owners who fail to dog-proof their houses or supervise their puppies tell horror stories about the seemingly indestructible things that their Labs have consumed or destroyed. If you are not willing to train your pup and supervise him, be prepared to face the consequences.

The Labrador Retriever is a highly social fellow and will not thrive without human contact and companionship. He is best suited to an active family that pursues activities that include their dog. He enjoys lively outdoor fun and games, which are excellent outlets for his energy and enthusiasm. Labs are as comfortable in water as they are on land, and swimming is their favorite sport (after retrieving, of course). Long walks once or twice a day are good for dog and human, providing exercise and quality time together and preventing your Lab from becoming bored or under-exercised, and thus destructive.

Labs are great with children, although Lab puppies can be especially exuberant, so both dog and kids must be supervised to prevent mishaps due to both parties' normal rowdiness.

The Labrador Retriever is considered an easy keeper, requiring minimal grooming and coat upkeep. They shed twice a year but drop a little hair all year long. Owners claim that Lab hair is magnetic and clings like glue to clothing and furniture.

Although the Lab excels in a variety of canine disciplines and competitions, he is known to want to do things his way. He is as strong-willed as he is eager to please and thus can be somewhat difficult to train. Manners are best taught during puppyhood before you have 50 pounds of dog dragging you down the street!