

All About Golden Retrievers

Golden Retrievers need your companionship.

Golden Retrievers are outgoing dogs. They need to be with, around, near, on the lap, or underfoot of humans, because they thrive on love and attention. In rescued Golden Retrievers, these traits are often even more evident. Because of the situation the rescued Golden Retriever has recently been through, he or she may appear timid and afraid at first and sometimes take a few days to warm up to the new Foster Family. Golden Retrievers cannot be maintained as outside dogs; they are indoor companions. Consider your lifestyle and household schedule—do you travel a lot, do you work long hours, are you busy with your children's activities? In other words, do you have time to give the love and attention a Golden Retriever needs?

Golden Retrievers need lots of exercise.

Golden Retrievers need to have consistent exercise (20-30 minutes twice a day, such as a brisk walk or throwing tennis balls in the yard) or they may have trouble adjusting to the calm house-pet role expected by most owners. Dogs will not exercise by themselves. Their owners must interact with them. As with all dogs, Golden Retrievers that do not get enough exercise can exhibit behavior problems such as excessive barking, inappropriate chewing, unruly behavior, and digging. Fenced areas for safe exercise are a must!

Golden Retrievers need regular grooming.

Golden Retrievers should be brushed every other day and professional grooming costs \$30 to \$50 every 6–8 weeks. Golden Retrievers need to have their toenails cut, their ears cleaned, and their teeth brushed frequently; all tasks are simple for the dog owner to learn to do.

Golden Retrievers need your food and veterinary care.

Feeding one medium-sized dog for a year will cost around \$300. Routine veterinary expenses run over \$200 a year. Golden Retrievers, like all breeds, have certain hereditary conditions. They are prone to skin allergies, hot spots, and ear infections, and occasionally have hypothyroidism (easily treated with daily oral medication) or hip and eye problems. Though many expenses are hidden in the grocery bill (food, dishes, leashes, collars, brushes, shampoos, toys, etc.), they do affect the family budget!

Golden Retrievers are:

- extremely tolerant of children but, like any other dog, will growl and may bite if teased, frustrated, or physically harmed. Golden Retrievers can be good family dogs but no dog should be unsupervised with young children
- medium to large-sized dogs. The breed standard for males is about 24" in height and around 70 pounds; for females, about 22" in height and around 60 pounds. In our experience with Rescue Golden Retrievers, males can weigh up to 105 pounds and females can weigh up to 85 pounds.
- Golden Retrievers have an average life span of 12-13 years, but we have seen Golden Retrievers as old as 16. Consider what your plans might be in five to 12 years. Will you still welcome the responsibility of a highly social dog when you have a family, go back to work, have an "empty nest" when the kids go to college, or when you retire and want to travel?

Golden Retrievers are not for you if:

- You want a fastidiously kept home. Golden Retrievers are a long, double-coated breed and they shed constantly. You will always find dog hair around, especially on rugs, furniture, nicest clothes, and your car. Like any other dog, Golden Retrievers' paws will track dirt, mud, and snow into the house. Golden Retrievers possess active tails, making clean sweeps of coffee tables.
- You object to a dog having your personal or household articles in his mouth. Golden Retrievers are retrievers—genetically programmed to carry laundry, shoes, kids' toys, etc. in their mouths!
- You want a guard dog. Though they may bark defensively, Golden Retrievers would just as soon give the intruder kisses and ask for a belly rub.