

Homeward Bound Golden Retriever Rescue

Golden Rule Dog Training



Bringing Home Your New Puppy

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Checklist for puppy proofing your home

Before you bring your new puppy home, you will need to “puppy proof” your house to avoid any dangerous areas or materials you may not think would be harmful. Puppies are full of enthusiasm and will get into things you never dreamed they could! The following are specific things to look for when you puppy proof your house.

Puppy proof inside your home

- Put away floor plants, decorations, shoes, and clothing**
Keep loose articles off the floor. You may think it's cute to see your new puppy chewing on an old shoe, but it won't be funny when he grabs a new one. He doesn't know the difference, so don't establish bad habits that will be hard to break.
- Secure tablecloths, runners, or other hanging material**
A quick pull on one of these can bring everything from the table down on your puppy. Tape or tack them down or remove them altogether.
- Put away objects on coffee tables, end tables, and low furniture**
Puppies can and will put their paws on things until they're properly trained. Make sure there's nothing dangerous for them to knock over. Also make sure there are no heavy items that could fall over on top of the puppy.
- Put away anything breakable, particularly if it's at tail level**
Tails wag. Expensive things get broken. Make sure all breakables are put away or placed up high..
- Lock up cupboards and secure hazardous materials**
This includes stowing cleaning products, medications, paint products, plant food or fertilizer, and anything that could be poisonous to your puppy.
- Secure phone wires and electric cords**
You can wrap them in plastic sheathing, tie them up or pull them through pvc tubing.

- Have children put away toys and any parts or accessories**
If the toys are smaller than your puppy, they should be put away. All small pieces of plastic toys, dolls and their little shoes, etc. need to be kept out of reach. There have been cases of puppies swallowing these toys, or even the tip of a sippy cup have ended in their intestines and resulted in an expensive hospital visit. Putting all toys away will keep your child from losing their favorite toys and keeping the dog safe is a great incentive for kids to clean up after themselves.
- Protect anything made of wood including table and chair legs**
Your puppy knows instinctively that wood is good for chewing. Use thick plastic sheeting or pvc tubing to hide chair and table legs. Start right away telling your puppy no if you catch them in the act, then redirect them to an appropriate chew toy.
- Check every nook and cranny for danger items**
This includes under and behind furniture and tables or any other dark place a puppy would like to go.

Watch your new puppy carefully and see what he gets into so there are no surprises.

Puppy proof the yard

- Clean up the yard**
Put away garden hoses, tools, and plastic toys. Look for anything your puppy can fall into or put in his mouth and secure it somewhere safe.
- Block access to the pool and other hazardous areas**
Fence off any area you don't want your puppy to be in and make sure he can't squeeze through the grating. Even a golden that loves to swim can drown in a pool if he doesn't know where the steps are to get out. When he is a few months old introduce him to the pool slowly making sure he knows how and where to get out of the pool.
- Put away chemicals and potential poisons**
This includes lawn fertilizers, insecticides, and paint products. Also, put all garden tools away that can be dangerous to the puppy.
- Check fencing for escape routes**
Make sure there's nowhere for your puppy to crawl under. Check for gaps around gates and fence sections and make sure your puppy can't get his head stuck in them.

Taking the time to puppy proof your house and yard is a simple way to create a safe, friendly environment for the newest member of your pack.

Setting rules for dogs and kids

A study by the American Animal Hospital Association found what most people already knew to be true: parents are the primary caretakers of their children's pets. But it doesn't have to stay that way. If you set a few rules for dogs and kids before bringing home a puppy, you can get your kids to do some of the work, ease your dog's transition into his new family, and keep everyone safe.

Make a dog care schedule





A schedule helps your dog and kids understand your expectations. Your dog can get to know his new pack quickly when there's a routine, and your kids will know what they need to do to care for him. Determine who's responsible for the following tasks and when they should be done each day.

A routine that you and your family can stick to is helpful in the overall raising of your puppy; a schedule including when you feed is important to your puppy's health as well as prevent begging or eating food too fast.

Puppies less than six months old should be fed three times a day, dogs between six and twelve months should be fed twice daily, and dogs older than a year should also be fed twice a day.

Set activity zones

Designated zones help establish your dog's routine and eliminate confusion about what your kids are allowed to do with him and where. Assign the activities that make up your dog's day to particular areas in and around your house. Also, let the kids know which rooms the dog is allowed into and which are off-limits. Important places to note include:

-  Where the dog sleeps
-  Where he eats
-  Where he goes to the bathroom
-  Where he should be kept when he can't be supervised

For your dog's safety, take time to [puppy proof your house](#) (as stated above) and these areas before you bring him home.

Teach kids respect for dogs

Once your kids have been assigned their tasks and understand the basic rules of dog care, they should be taught how to treat dogs with respect. Make it clear that roughhousing, ear-pulling, poking, smothering hugs, patting them on the head and other such behavior can hurt the dog or cause him to bite. You can use a stuffed animal to explain to younger children how to pet and hold a puppy without traumatizing the dog.

By setting the rules before you adopt a dog for kids, you can commit them to doing some of the work in caring for their pet, make your dog feel welcome in his new pack, and keep everyone safe.

Dog bite prevention

Dog bites are the second leading cause of injuries in children and over 75% of bite cases involve dogs that belong to the victim's family or a friend. If you bring home a puppy or dog, take the necessary steps to protect your kids with dog bite prevention: supervise them when they play with the dog, teach them dog etiquette to keep the family pet from biting unexpectedly, and show them what to do if they come across a stray dog.

Never leave kids alone with a dog

Even if you think your pet is the sweetest animal in the world, ***never leave a child unsupervised with a puppy or dog***. Kids can be curious and may pull the dog's ears or poke at him if you're not around. Having your children and the dog in sight is not enough. Always be in a position to intervene immediately if anything happens, for the safety of your kids and the dog.

Teach dog etiquette

After supervision, the most important step in dog bite prevention is to teach your kids how to behave around a puppy or dog. Have your children follow the rules below to keep a dog from biting unexpectedly:

Never grab an object away from a dog

Dogs can be protective of their toys and may bite if you try to take them. If you want the toy, use an obedience command or treat to distract the dog. It's better to outsmart him than to provoke an unnecessary dog bite.

Never bother a dog when he's sleeping or eating

Give a dog plenty of space when he's napping and leave the food dish alone while the dog eats.

Never sneak up on a dog

Always let your puppy or dog know that you're nearby before you pet him. Let the dog smell your open hand and then slowly reach out to him.

 **Never bark or growl at a dog or stare into his eyes**

These are aggressive behaviors to a dog and could cause him to bite.

 **Tell an adult if a dog shows any signs of aggression**

This includes growling, nipping, or biting.


If your kids warn you of aggressive tendencies in your dog, don't ignore the situation. The longer you wait to deal with the behavior, the more dangerous your dog will become.

Stray dogs

Once your kids understand the rules of dog etiquette for the family pet, they should learn to protect themselves from stray dogs. The simplest means of dog bite prevention in these cases is to advise your children to avoid dogs they don't know. If they're approached by a strange dog, they should never make sudden movements, scream, or try to run away. Tell them to do the following instead:

 **If you're standing**

Keep your hands at your sides and avoid eye contact with the dog. Slowly back away until there's a safe distance between you and the dog.

 **If you're on the ground**

Curl into a ball with your knees pulled close to your chest and hold your hands over your ears. Lie still and be quiet until the dog leaves.

Equipment You Will Need

Collar and Leash

While most new dog owners pick a leash and collar based on appearance, you should take into consideration the functionality of the equipment and the type of training you plan to do with your dog. We recommend a Martingale collar. We sell them at Homeward Bound, but you can also find them on-line and in pet stores. These collars do not have a buckle or snap and fit over the dog's head. The advantage is when the dog pulls; the collar puts pressure all the way around the neck and not just in the front. Regular collars will tighten in the front which may cause injuries to the neck. In addition, the dog can not slip out of the collar or back out of it. Puppies can squirm out of a collar and get away from you; this collar prevents that from happening. You should always be able to put 4 fingers between the neck and the collar to ensure it is not too tight. As the puppy grows check the fit often.

We also recommend a 1" nylon leash that has a loop at the base and a regular handle. This allows you to pull the dog close to you if needed for safety. We also sell these at Homeward Bound and they are available at pet stores and on line.

Toys

Puppies like to mouth and chew on things, so have a few chew-approved items around. You don't want to come home to teeth marks on your chair legs or the shredded remains of new running shoes.

We use Kong's®. They now have puppy Kong's made for teething puppies. They are light pink or light blue. If you put a little peanut butter in them it will keep them busy for awhile. You can also put peanut butter in them and then freeze them! It is great for teething and it takes them longer to get the peanut butter out. You can find these in any pet store or on line.

The Kong's® are one of the safe toys to leave your puppy with while being crated. A Nylabone is also safe to have a puppy chew on, but many dogs do not like these. Do not give your puppy or dog any bones, raw hides, or stuffed toys without supervision! They can choke on the bones and

rawhides and ripping the stuffing out of a plush toy is great fun, but if they eat the batting inside, they can choke as well.

The Crate

Crate training is the easiest way to foster good house training habits. A crate can also serve as a safe, comfortable place to keep your puppy while you're away from home or when you travel with him. If you only want to purchase one crate, get a metal one that has a divider; you can use the smaller space and as the puppy grows, remove the divider. The crate has to be big enough for the dog to stand up, stretch and turn around in.

Puppies can not be left in a crate all day! Even for dogs, we do not recommend any longer than 4 hours. Puppy pads can be used in potty training, but that should only be used when really necessary. Have a neighbor or family member come over and let the puppy/dog out every few hours if needed.

Grooming Tools

These are puppy products that are often overlooked, but they're a necessity for nearly all dogs. Even if your puppy will be professionally groomed, you should buy a brush and nail clippers. Regular grooming sessions not only keep your dog's coat healthy, they help build his trust in you as pack leader.

As your puppy gets older, we recommend using clippers to remove any mats instead of scissors; scissors can slip and puncture the dog causing injury. Keeping your golden brushed daily prevents matting and helps with any shedding your dog will have; some dogs shed more than others, but golden's do shed!

De-matting tools and strippers help to remove mats. Mars Coat Kings Comb (stripper) is a good tool; we use these at the ranch to remove the mats. If the dogs have dense mats, we use the clippers.

Goldens have such beautiful coats, it takes work to keep them looking good, but well worth the time!

Name Tag

No puppy or dog should be without an id tag. Make sure you have their name and at least two phone numbers where you can be reached. Homeward Bound microchips all dogs before leaving the ranch. All you need to do is call the number given to change all the pertinent information to your information and he is registered!

First night home with puppy

The first night home with your new puppy can be a trying experience for both of you. It's the first time your puppy has spent the night away from his mother and littermates. Because dogs are pack animals, your puppy knows instinctively that being separated from the pack is dangerous. Whining and crying at night is your puppy's way of calling for his pack to find him. Of course it does nothing to comfort you.

With a little preparation and patience, you can make the most of the first night with your puppy.

What to do before bedtime

Take up any food or water after six or seven o'clock p.m. to make sure your puppy is running on empty when it's time to sleep. Otherwise, you'll be making trips to the bathroom all night, or worse, your puppy will eliminate in the house.

Shortly before you go to bed, spend some time playing with your puppy. You want him to be tired enough to sleep soundly. Definitely don't let him nap within an hour or two of bedtime or else your puppy will be ready to play when you're ready to sleep.

☐ Just before bed, take your puppy outside to his potty area and wait for him to go. When he does his business, say “potty” and praise him and bring him back inside. This reinforces good behavior and begins the house training process.

Where the puppy should sleep

You should let your puppy sleep in your bedroom to reduce the chances of whining or crying at night. Also, the constant contact throughout the night will help your puppy adjust to you and establish you as pack leader. One note of caution: ***Don't let the puppy sleep in the bed with you.*** He'll eventually expect to be allowed in the bed, and it can lead to numerous behavioral problems as your puppy grows.

You should put the crate in your room and use that to confine him while he sleeps. This is safer for the puppy and for you to get some rest! Puppies usually won't soil the area where they sleep, but if he has the opportunity to wander he may get up and go during the night. Use a puppy pad in case he has to go potty, also put in a t-shirt you have worn for him to get used to your scent. This is comforting to the puppy and will help him settle in for the night. Some use a larger stuffed animal for the puppy to rest against and take up space in the crate. Puppies like to snuggle and that is what they are used to with their litter mates, so this is very comforting to them. Just be careful the puppy does not get smothered.

Households with multiple pets should let their animals sleep together, but only after properly introducing a new puppy to your dog, cat, or other pets.

Stop puppy crying at night

If and when your puppy starts crying at night, you need to decide if he has to go to the bathroom or if he's looking for attention. If he's been quiet for a few hours and suddenly starts to cry or whine, he may need to go out. Puppies have small bladders, so you'll likely have to take him out at least once during the night. A good rule of thumb is to add one to your puppy's age in months and that's generally how long he can go without a trip outside. So a two-month-old puppy can wait three hours. That means your puppy will probably need to go out at least twice during the night.

If your puppy is crying and you're sure it's not for need of relieving himself, reach down and soothe him a little. Don't be too doting or coddle your puppy. This will only reinforce the behavior and he'll cry even more. If he continues to whine, a gruff “Quiet” and a quick, but gentle, shake by the scruff should settle the matter. If all else fails, ignore him. Tough love may be difficult, but eventually your puppy will learn that crying at night gets him nowhere. The more persistent you are in your approach, the quicker the situation will be resolved. If you're stern one minute and sympathetic the next, your puppy will only be confused and his behavior will continue.

In the morning

Get up right away and take your puppy outside to his potty area. Carry him. Don't let him walk there or he may be tempted to go before he gets outside. Let him empty everything out, and praise him when he's finished “good potty”!

As with any new baby, you may not get much sleep the first night with puppy. If you're patient and understanding, your puppy will learn what you expect of him when it's time to sleep. You both should wake up rested and ready for the day after a few nights together.

Your puppy's nutrition and diet

The most important time to look after your dog's diet and nutritional needs is when he's a puppy. By the time your puppy is two months old he enters a period of extreme development. His skeleton and muscles seem to add bulk over night and he starts to build an effective immune system. These changes require the perfect balance of nutrients. Any deficiencies at this point can severely affect his future health. That's why he needs a nutritious diet that's specifically formulated for puppies.

Keep the following points in mind as you research the right diet for your puppy.

Feed a high-quality food designed for growth

The puppy's diet should consist of a high-quality dog food designed specifically for growing puppies. You can feed puppy food up to 8 months of age. You should make sure that the manufacturer of the puppy food you choose has conducted feeding trials to ensure that the balance of nutrients is right for the growth stage of development. Check the label for a statement that the food has been tested in accordance with the procedures established by the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO). We do not recommend any food with Corn, wheat or soy.

Establish a regular feeding schedule

Now is the time to setup a regular feeding schedule for your puppy. If you teach him proper eating habits now, you'll ensure that your puppy has the proper nutrition to keep him healthy well into old age. Check the package for puppy food you have chosen for the recommended feeding.

We do not recommend "free feeding" which is defined by filling up a bowl with food and allowing the puppy or dog to graze all day. This can cause obesity, so we recommend feeding the designated amount of food, leaving it for 15 to 20 minutes, and then picking the bowl up off the floor. This tells the dog they need to eat in a specific amount of time, and as the pack leader you control his resources.

Most goldens weigh between 50 and 75 lbs. when full grown. At that point, one cup of kibble in the morning and again in the evening is enough food for your dog.

Do not over feed your puppy

Just like people, dogs that are overweight as puppies are more likely to develop health problems as they age. Obese puppies are particularly prone to bone disorders like hip dysplasia. Their skeletons are growing so quickly that any excess weight can cause serious imbalances. This is another reason to avoid free-feeding your puppy and get him to eat on a proper schedule. You need to find the right amount of food to keep your puppy lean and energetic.

House training your puppy

Many owners dread housebreaking their puppy, but with a little knowledge it can be relatively painless. You can anticipate your puppy's needs and reduce the chance of accidents with a simple schedule and a watchful eye.

Schedule puppy's activities

The most important detail in housebreaking is to make a schedule and stick to it. This both minimizes the opportunity for accidents and builds your pup's confidence. If you keep track of when food and water goes in, you can predict when it needs to come back out. As the days go by you'll notice your puppy can hold himself for longer periods, which means more praise and trust from you.

The best housebreaking schedule sets times for when puppy gets food and water, when he plays or goes for walks, and, of course, bathroom breaks. Plan each activity for the same time every day. Because dogs are creatures of habit, the more regimented the schedule the easier it will be for your puppy to learn what you expect from him.

How often to go out

In the beginning stages of housebreaking your puppy, you should take him out in the morning when he wakes up, every hour-and-a-half during the day, and in the evening before bed. Later on, your pup should only need to go out in the morning, evening, and after meals or long play sessions. The following is a simple formula to remember:

Puppy's age plus one

Add one to your puppy's age in months to get the number of hours he should be able to wait before going out. So a puppy that's two months old can wait about three hours; you'll need to take him outside at least once during the night.

To avoid accidents while housebreaking, pay attention to how your puppy signals he needs to go out. Signs may include sniffing or scratching at the ground or door, pacing, or whining. Once you're keyed in to these behaviors, you can extend the periods between bathroom breaks.

Taking puppy outside

Potty training takes patience, so never scold a puppy for any accidents. It is important to have a trusting relationship and deal with a few accidents than to have the puppy be afraid of you. That will have an adverse effect on his progress.

Take puppy to the designated potty area

Always use the same route to get there and don't let him out on his own. You want to be sure he goes in the same place every time and that you're there to give praise.

Repeat a housebreaking command as he starts to go

When it looks like your puppy is about to go, softly repeat a command like "potty" or "do it". Don't stop repeating the command until puppy actually starts to go.

Switch to gentle praise

Quietly switch from the command to gentle praise once he starts to eliminate and continue to praise until he's done. It may take a few times for your puppy to be completely empty, particularly in the mornings. Wait until you're certain he's finished, and then give him some hearty praise and head back to the house.

If this method is used consistently when housebreaking your puppy, you'll eventually be able to make him go on command.

How to deal with accidents

You should expect a few accidents during the housebreaking process. Whatever you do, **do not punish your puppy!** Don't rub his nose in the mess and don't discipline after he's already eliminated in the house because you think he knows what he did. This will only confuse and intimidate your puppy. This is an archaic method that is considered cruel and ineffective.

Catching him in the act

Clap your hands or slap the wall. Make any loud noise you can to interrupt the behavior. Then scoop your puppy up and take him outside to the soiling area. When he's done, praise him as usual.

For all other times

Clean up the mess and figure out where YOU went wrong in housebreaking puppy. Did you ignore the schedule, give him water late at night, or miss the signs that he needed to go out? If you can see where you failed your pup, you can be better prepared to help him succeed. Clean up messes with a product designed for pet accidents. Never use household cleaners or those containing ammonia, which can't remove the odor. Your puppy may revisit the area if it's not properly cleaned.

Learning how to housebreak a puppy is a pretty simple task if you stay alert and stick to your schedule. With consistency and plenty of praise, your puppy will be housebroken in no time.

More on Crate Training

Introducing the Crate to Your Puppy

If your puppy seems fearful of the crate, or ignores it, occasionally throughout the day, drop small pieces of kibble or dog biscuits in the crate. While investigating his new crate, the pup will discover edible treasures, thereby reinforcing his positive associations with the crate. You can also use a special treat, one that he only gets when in his crate. This provides a positive association with the crate and makes it a pleasant experience.

In the beginning, praise and pet your pup when he enters. **Do not try to push, pull or force the puppy into the crate!** Only use positive methods when introducing the crate (see best steps below). Make sure there is a soft blanket for the puppy to lie on and a t-shirt with your scent. The crate should not be too big or have a lot of extra room. The puppy needs to feel safe. You can add a ticking clock at night time to help him fall asleep. Wire crates are available with a divider so the puppy can grow into the size of the crate.

Try a game!

Drop a small dog biscuit into the crate. Then call your puppy and say to him, "Where's the biscuit? It's in your room." Using only a friendly, upbeat and encouraging voice, direct your pup toward his crate. When the puppy discovers the treat, give enthusiastic praise. The biscuit will automatically serve as a primary reward. Your pup should be free to leave its crate at all times during this game. Later on, your puppy's toy or ball can be substituted for the treat.

Best Steps for Success

Please crate your pup for short periods of time **while you are home with him**. In fact, crate training is best accomplished while you are in the room with your dog. Getting him used to your absence from the room in which he is crated is a good first step. This prevents an association being made with the crate and you leaving him/her alone. Make sure there is **water** available; a small hamster-type water dispenser with ice water should be attached to the crate if your puppy is to be confined for more than two hours in the crate.

Bedding

Place a towel or blanket inside the crate to create a soft, comfortable bed for the puppy. If the puppy chews the towel, remove it to prevent the pup from swallowing or choking on the pieces. Although most puppies prefer lying on soft bedding, some may prefer to rest on a hard, flat surface, and may push the towel to one end of the crate to avoid it. If the puppy urinates on the towel, remove bedding until the pup no longer eliminates in the crate. You could also place a puppy pad at the back end of the crate for the puppy to use to relieve himself (sold at pet stores).

Type of Crate

The wire crates that collapse work the best, if you need the dog to feel safe, put a sheet or large towel over the crate. Most dogs which have been introduced to the kennel crate while still young grow up to prefer their crate to rest in or "hang-out" in. Therefore, **a crate (or any other area of confinement) should NEVER be used for the purpose of punishment.**

Last word on puppies

Puppies are adorable, but they are also a lot of work. Please be prepared and take the time to raise your puppy in a healthy and positive way. Golden Retrievers are happy and sweet dogs by nature, but they also need a lot of attention. Please consider putting your puppy through obedience training early on; he can learn at an early age who is the leader and what is role is in the family, which will make his life with you a rewarding experience.

Congratulations on your new addition!

References:

RaisingSpot.com
American Dog Trainers Network