

THE LABRADOR RETRIEVER

Background

Labradors originated in Newfoundland, off the coast of Canada, and were taken to England on fishing boats in the early 19th century. Here they were developed and bred as a hunting dog, being used for retrieving game in rugged terrain and icy waters. They were popular as tough, strong dogs with excellent scenting powers and a strong desire to please. Even today, Labrador Retrievers are the most popular breed with shooters, and they also work as police dogs, customs dogs and guide dogs for the blind.

Average Lifespan

When considering a dog, please realise that you are taking it on for its lifetime. Labradors live from between 12 to 15 years of age.

Average Size

Height at shoulder:

Dog 56-57 cms (22-22.5 ins)

Bitch 54.5-56 cms (21.5-22 ins)

Breed Personality / Characteristics / Temperament

Labrador Retrievers are intelligent, active, fun-loving dogs, eager to please and extremely sociable. They want to be everybody's friend, and are not a 'one-person dog'. The breed is wonderful with children, and makes a good watchdog - adopting a big deep bark to notify of any intruders.

Compatibility with other pets

Excellent.

Care Requirements

Labradors need a large, draught-proof kennel, raised several centimetres off the ground. In summer they require plenty of shade.

Like all dogs, Labradors are happiest if kept fit. Adults will benefit from a daily walk of a minimum of thirty minutes, while pups will need overall periods of play. As a Labrador will need some free running, a large backyard is desirable - especially if you live in an area where having a dog off-leash in public parks is not permitted.

Labradors are sociable dogs that really need to be part of a family. If left alone in a backyard most of the time, they may get up to mischief or take to persistent barking.

Labradors can easily be trained to be well behaved indoors, however they shed quite a lot of hair at certain times of the year. As Labradors can also be great diggers and chewers as puppies, it is a good idea to fence an area for the dog if you are attached to your garden. Labradors have a tendency to put on weight, which can cause health problems, so their diet needs to be carefully restricted as they mature. Obesity can predispose them to diabetes, heart disease and arthritis.

Please take note

Conscientious breeders have their dogs x-rayed for Hip Dysplasia (HD) and Osteochondrosis (OCD), their dog's eyes tested annually by a veterinary ophthalmologist to detect any disease at the earliest stages, and do not breed from affected animals.

Ideal Owner/s

Families with a well fenced yard. As Labradors can be exuberant and boisterous as youngsters, it may be difficult for either very young or elderly family members to control them unaided at this age.

In Conclusion

Now you know a little about the Labrador Retriever and have decided this is the dog for you, or you want more information, contact the breed club or Dogs Queensland. They will be able to give you information about available puppies and also suggest dog shows where you can see the breed and speak to breeders. In this way, you will gain a better perspective of the breeds and their needs.

Information supplied from ANKC literature.

