

obedience, hunt tests, rally, tracking, agility, and therapy work. My Chesapeakes have been the joy of my life.

A Chesapeake is neither a Labrador nor Golden with a different coat. He has his own personality and traits. Chessies sometimes have a reputation for being stubborn, hardheaded, and aggressive—but these are all labels the Chesapeake does not deserve, and ones that are given by people who don't understand the breed or how best to train them.

A Chesapeake thrives in a family situation. He may be content outdoors or in a kennel, but he would rather be indoors with the family, sharing all the activities his owners enjoy. He bonds with his owner and will work his heart out for the ones he loves.

A Chesapeake does not do as well as a Labrador will with a professional handler. It takes a professional trainer who understands the breed to succeed with his training. It is difficult to train him with force. Excessive force will make him react with either "flight" (shut down, leave) or "fight" (object with a growl or bite). Hence the labels "stubborn" and "aggressive." He just wants to understand what you want.

When the dog is trained with force, often he exhibits avoidance responses. *If you are going to punish me when I go for a bird, I won't look at the gunners. If you are going to punish me, I will lie down and not go. You can kill me, but I won't do something that I don't understand.* When a Chesapeake "knows" what you want of him, he'll work with enthusiasm.

The Chesapeake is first of all a water dog. He was originally bred to retrieve all day in the icy waters of the Chesapeake Bay. When offered to work or play in water, he exhibits all the joy he can show. His mighty leap into a lake can exceed 20 feet. On occasion it can be difficult to convince him to come out of the water. In hunt tests and field trials, he excels on the water tests.

The Chesapeake is intelligent, learning skills quickly with praise and positive methods. He is not a Golden

Retriever who will accept doing one exercise over and over in obedience. He gets bored with repetition. He can be very creative when faced with having to do multiple fronts and finishes. However, he can be as accurate as any other breed, working with ears up, tail wagging, and pure delight in his eyes.

*Working* is the key word for a Chesapeake. He needs a job—be it hunting, competing in obedience, tracking a stranger, leaping and weaving in the agility ring, hiking the trails with his owner, or any recreational activity his owner enjoys. He is not a dog for a family that wants a "couch potato." Now he will gladly lounge on the sofa, or by the fire, but he has to get his energy worn down and his brain challenged as well.

When thinking of owning a Chessie, ask the key questions that will help with the decision: Why do you want this dog? What activities do you enjoy where you could include him? How much time do you have to spend working with him?

Once you own a Chesapeake Bay Retriever, you own a dog of a lifetime.

—Audrey Austin,

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American Chesapeake Club website:

[AmChessieClub.org](http://AmChessieClub.org)

## Curly-Coated Retrievers

### Stepping Into Performance

I decided today to address some of my thoughts regarding a discussion recently on the Curly network. The subject was that some people would like our breed to become more recognized and wonder how this could be accomplished.

First I want to say that I do not ever want to see the Curly become extremely popular. They are delightful to live with, but I do not feel this breed is for everyone—just as many breeds are not. Some Curlies do take longer to mature, so patience is needed. The owner must also have a good sense of humor when a Curly does his "independent thinking." They are very inter-

esting to train but are not a "yes dog."

I can understand why some people would like to see more dogs doing fieldwork and other performance activities, but such pursuits often take a great deal of time. When I first owned Curlies in the 1970s, there were only three or four breeders in the United States; now there are many. Sometimes there were only two or three Curlies who attended our once-a-year fieldwork certificate test, and the whole setup was nothing like it is today.

I very much agree that the more Curlies get out and take part in obedience, rally, tracking, and agility trials, the more people will start to inquire about our breed.

One very nice fact is that the majority of top field-working Curlies, and some of those also in other performance work, are breed champions. Some of our top-performing Curlies out there did not come from breeding stock with working titles. Many breeders do not have the time or desire to take part in performance, instead concentrating on breeding skills. Others who breed do have titles on their dogs, which is a big plus. However, over the years I have seen some very nice-working Curlies who had no titles behind them other than a [conformation] champion or two and still did very well for their owners.

The owners of Curlies who are highly field-motivated and actually hunt a great deal are often performing their jobs quietly, and one never hears about them at all. When I was sent to different areas of the country while in the military over the years, I met many Curlies who were fine pets whose owners hunted with them regularly.

By attending some of the working seminars that have been available lately, owners will continue to train those activities, and recognition will come. When people see us out there "doing it all," Curlies will become more visible and interesting.

While attending a field seminar recently, an owner of Flat-Coated Retrievers turned to me and said, "This

is the most Curlies I have ever seen anywhere.” Yes, there were seven Curlies on the grounds. Five were there with their owners, and two were on the field truck of the person giving the seminar. Those two were “in training.”

Let’s step out of the breed ring (although I think very highly of conformation) and also train for some of the very interesting and worthwhile performance activities that abound. And while we are doing this, Curlies will have their time of recognition.

—Ann Shinkle, [annshinkle@aol.com](mailto:annshinkle@aol.com)

Curly-Coated Retriever Club of America website: [ccra.org](http://ccra.org)

## Flat-Coated Retrievers

### Starting the Multipurpose Puppy

When you first bring your puppy home, it’s usually a month or two before you can expose him to the public and to other dogs. Begin your young puppy’s training in your house and yard by playing with him for just a few minutes at a time, at a miniature of what he will be trained to do all through his life. You can separate the activities from one another in the puppy’s mind by using different equipment, different locations, and different treats. Be sure to raise the puppy with confinement to a safe place like a crate when not closely supervised. You don’t want to waste time and confuse the puppy by allowing him to enjoy misbehavior in your absence that you will later have to work to change.

In the new home, the young puppy should be separated from other dogs overnight, for play, for lessons, and when socializing with people. Be sure that your puppy’s strongest bond is to you.

For retrieving, start with white training dummies or toys that are easily spotted. The young puppy cannot see very well or very far. Tease him, throwing the object 10 or 15 feet, and when he picks it up, call and run from him to get him to come back to you quickly. Pet him and tease with another toy or dummy;

don’t compete with him for his.

Have him retrieve no more than three or four times at first, to keep him fast and responsive. If the breeder had the puppy retrieving birds (pigeons are OK), the puppy shouldn’t see another bird until under control through obedience training. If the breeder hasn’t done this, a week or two of retrieving a frozen pigeon is enough that the Flat-Coat will not forget what a bird is. Dragging a dead pigeon can teach the puppy to trail, and hiding it can teach him to “find.” Be careful to not do too much work with birds before the puppy is under control, or his attitude can become too playful. He can also become too attached to birds and lose interest in dummies.

In the new home, the Flat-Coat puppy should be dragging around a lead attached to his collar, under supervision. Once he is walking on a lead outdoors (with no force, just treats and toys) start him on *hold it*, which means stand. For conformation, walk the puppy forward on your left side, bring your right hand out in front of his nose with a treat as you stop and say “hold it,” and let the puppy have the treat.

After the puppy gets used to standing, touch him all over as you calmly pet and praise him. Also, get your puppy used to standing on a high surface for quiet petting, touching, and grooming. Gradually walk faster so that the puppy trots, and briefly practice small circles, down and back, triangles, and L-shaped conformation patterns. Keep a light feel of the lead to encourage him to move ahead of you.

To get your puppy moving on your right for the L pattern and for agility, move him at a walk on your left side, with a fence or building on your right. Stop and face the puppy, transferring the lead from your left to right hand, then tease the puppy with a treat in your left hand, and encourage him to move along on your right for 10 or 20 feet. Then switch to your left again, and repeat back and forth half a dozen times, with praise.

Begin obedience training indoors,

using treats and clear signals for *sit*, *down*, and *come*. One of the hardest things to teach a dog to do is to move away from the owner, as with the *go out* in Utility. Train your puppy to go away from you to his bed or his crate for a treat or a biscuit, and gradually increase the distance as he gets older.

Obedience, field, and agility all require your puppy to take direction. Once he has been retrieving for two weeks and is coming back and dropping his toy or dummy well, start him on taking direction. Use toys or dummies that are white or easily spotted, and do not have your puppy stay. With your back against a fence or building, keep your puppy in front of you, and tease him with the dummy or toy in your right hand and toss it underhanded to your right. When the puppy returns and drops that object, tease him with the object in your left hand and toss it to your left. This will get him used to moving to your right or left with the movement of that arm. Next, tease the puppy and throw overhead well behind him, using the word *back*. Keep the distance within 20 feet and no more than two or three throws in each direction for one training session.

Get your puppy used to different surfaces underfoot. To teach him where his feet are, tease him with a treat to have him walk on leash on an 8-inch by 12-foot (or longer) board that is on bricks slightly above the ground and very stable. If you are familiar with training on weave-poles, line up toilet plungers or stakes to take him through like weave poles. Then lay them on the ground closer together, and have the puppy walk over them. Do not work your puppy on weave-poles if you are not experienced.

You can also prepare your puppy for agility by encouraging him to come to you through a cardboard box and step over bars in place of jumping. Young puppies shouldn’t be jumping off of or over anything or running down stairs because of their soft joints and growth plates.

Keep everything playful and fun. If