

## SPORTING GROUP

cred to be one. It also *is not* a wire coat. The hair shaft of the Shorthair coat is relatively consistent in length—with the exception of under the tail, where it is slightly longer; and on the head and ears, where it is shorter and a bit softer.

If one gently pulls some of the Shorthair's body hair (dark or white) and rolls it between the thumb and forefinger, the texture should be readily apparent: round and smooth, yet with resistance; not soft. It is this attribute that gives the coat its identifying feel under hand.

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## Chesapeake Bay Retrievers

### FUN WITH YOUR CHESAPEAKE

Chesapeakes were bred for stamina, drive, and desire to work. So what do you do with your Chessie in today's non-hunting environment? There are field trials that are hardcore competitions demanding total commitment. The AKC offers hunt tests that are designed to replicate hunting conditions, and the American Chesapeake Club offers a Working Dog program to encourage the natural working and retrieving abilities of the breed to earn hunting

certificates from the ACC.

However, if you are not a hunter and have little interest in hunting training, what do you do with your high-drive dog who is rearranging the furniture, digging holes to China, and making you crazy demanding constant attention? Fortunately there are other fun venues that can help him become easier to live with and will enhance his bond with you.

All dogs need basic obedience. They should all learn to sit, down, stay, come, and walk on a leash—especially high-drive dogs. There are obedience competitions that further the basics and also advance to more complicated skills such as retrieving a dumbbell, jumping, taking direction, and identifying articles by scent.

The sport of rally obedience has the dog and handler follow a course with a series of signs that instruct performance of specific commands, with the handler allowed to encourage the dog with voice and hand signals. Obedience competition with positive reinforcement can keep your Chesapeake mentally and physically stimulated.

The sport of agility is lots of fun. Running, jumping, tunneling, weaving, and climbing an A-frame, a teeter-totter, and a dog walk will bring the dog's enjoyment to a new level. Agility training keeps that Chessie challenged and engaged, while the owner gets

lots of exercise as well.

A natural sport for a Chessie is the search-and-rescue game of tracking a stranger's scent to find articles the person dropped. In a field, plowing through cover, or through a park or college campus, the Chesapeake's nose goes to the ground as he finds that particular scent to earn tracking titles.

The fairly new sport of Nose Work is taken from detection-dog work. Finding hidden scents on cars, in rooms, in containers, and out in the open taps into the Chessie's natural scenting abilities.

Another game made for Chesapeakes is dock diving. Give your dog a chance to leap off a dock for a retrieve, and measure how far he can go. He will astound you with his physical ability and his love of water.

And there are other canine sports available that encourage his prey drive, where he can chase a lure around a course or climb bales of hay to find hidden rats.

This intelligent breed welcomes anything you ask. You will be answered with bright eyes, a wagging tail, and a "let's go!" attitude. A tired Chesapeake is a happy Chesapeake and a very happy owner.

—Audrey Austin,  
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American Chesapeake Club,  
<http://www.amchessieclub.org>

## Curly-Coated Retrievers

Kathi Kostynick is our guest columnist this month. Kathi has been showing and training Curly-Coated Retrievers since the early 1980s, and she now shares with us some outstanding grooming tips.

### CURLY GROOMING ERRORS

There has always been a wide range of opinion on how and how much to groom a Curly. Some folks are fine with no grooming at all, while others wouldn't dream of having their Curly seen in anything less than a perfect show groom. The Curly is basically a wash-and-drip-dry breed, but nature can always use a helping hand.

The Curly is a silhouette breed, and their outline is truly distinctive. When scissoring a Curly, one must take care not to destroy the overall balance of the dog's appearance. I have seen some lovely dogs trotting around the show ring with what I call a "buffalo hump." Curlies are prone to growing thick hair over the withers; failing to scissor off this excess hair and artfully blending it with the neck and shoulders can easily ruin the appearance of the topline and the dog's overall look.

Neatly grooming the ears and tail is a skill all Curly owners should be encouraged to master. Straggly hair on the ears and raggedy flags on the tail give a messy appearance. Stephanie

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Doerr, a professional groomer since 1978 and Curly owner since 1981, notices that people may leave the ear hair “too long or too raggedy.” She astutely points out that hair on tails can be an issue, with dogs either left with too much or too little, “creating a whip tail.” I would add that too many people grooming Curlies don’t seem to grasp that they can control the hair at root of the tail. Failing to do so can leave a tail looking like a stick poking out of a big fur pillow. The tail should be tapered to a graceful point and not chopped off bluntly.

One must remember that grooming is the practice of three-dimensional design. Both leaving too much hair on or taking off too much should be avoided. (However, one can never be in error trimming the excess hair off the prepuce of both adult and puppy males. This is not only a matter of a nice look but basic good hygiene.)

Naturally, the better the coat, the less grooming needs to be done. Brushing or combing is not necessary unless the dog is blowing coat. Most Curlies can use an occasional swipe under each ear with a wire slicker to avoid matting, which can occur in that area. As a matte breed and one requiring crisp curls, there’s no need to spend money on grooming products or supplements that tout a shiny and silky coat.

Whatever the amount of grooming one

wishes to put into the dog, having a clean Curly adds to his appearance and the health of his skin. —K.K.

Thanks, Kathi, for such an interesting article, and I know that I learned one very good tip from you regarding the proper grooming of a Curly-Coated Retriever.

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## 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, in 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, locations, and 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 light-colored 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 walk-

ing on a lead outdoors (with no force, just treats and toys) start him on *hold it*, which means for him to 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