

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR TRAINING A GOLDEN RETRIEVER PUPPY: BUILDING A WELL-BEHAVED COMPANION



Bringing home a Golden Retriever puppy is exciting, but it also comes with the responsibility of guiding your puppy to become a well-behaved, obedient dog. Golden Retrievers are intelligent and eager to please, making them excellent learners when given consistent, positive training. This guide will take you step by step through the process, starting the day you bring your puppy home and progressing through more advanced obedience work, including the all-important “OK” release command.

Day 1: Setting the Foundation with Crate Training, House Training, Door Manners, and Addressing Common Behaviors

1. Crate Training and House Training

Crate training is an effective tool for house training your puppy. The crate becomes your puppy's safe space and helps establish a potty routine.

How to Crate Train for House Training:

- Introduce the crate: Start by making the crate inviting with a soft blanket and toys. Let your puppy explore it with the door open, rewarding them with a treat every time they enter.
 - Establish a potty routine: Take your puppy outside frequently, especially after meals, naps, and playtime. When they eliminate outside, mark the behavior with "yes" and reward with a treat.
 - Use the crate for short periods: Place your puppy in the crate when you can't supervise them. Puppies typically won't soil their sleeping area, which helps them learn to hold their bladder.
 - Take them out regularly: Young puppies need to go out frequently (every 1-2 hours), especially overnight. As they grow, they can hold it longer.
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2. Door Manners

Start teaching door manners early to prevent your puppy from rushing through doors, which can be dangerous and shows poor impulse control.

- Have your puppy sit and wait before going through doors. This teaches patience and helps you manage their excitement.
 - Lure the puppy into a sit with a treat, mark with "yes," and reward once they sit and wait for your signal to proceed.
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3. Addressing Nipping and Jumping

Golden Retriever puppies, like all puppies, may nip and jump due to excitement or teething. Address these behaviors immediately to prevent them from becoming habits.

- Biting/nipping: When your puppy nips, redirect them to a chew toy. If they bite too hard, let out a high-pitched "ouch" and stop play. They will learn that nipping means playtime ends.

- Jumping: Ignore the jumping and only give attention when all four paws are on the ground. Praise and treat them when they remain calm.
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Step 2: Basic Obedience – The Building Blocks of Good Behavior

Once your puppy understands crate training, door manners, and how to avoid unwanted behaviors, it's time to start on basic obedience commands like sit, down, and stay.

1. Sit

- Lure the puppy into a sitting position by holding a treat above their nose and moving it back towards their head. As soon as they sit, mark with the word “yes” and reward with the treat.
 - Repeat this process consistently, and your puppy will quickly associate the action of sitting with the command
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2. Down

- With the puppy in a standing position, use a treat to lure them into a down by moving the treat from their nose toward the floor. “In the nose, between the toes”
 - As soon as their belly touches the ground, mark with “yes” and reward.
 - Practice this several times a day, keeping sessions short and fun.
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3. Implied Stay (Using “Good”)

Instead of teaching a separate “stay” command, you can use “good” to imply your puppy should continue the current behavior, such as sitting or lying down.

- Once your puppy is sitting or lying down, say “good” to let them know they are doing the right thing.
- Reward them after holding the position for a few seconds and gradually increase the time.

4. The “OK” Command: The Release Cue

It's essential to teach your puppy a release command, which lets them know they are free to move after a command like sit or down. The word “OK” is commonly used for this purpose.

- After your puppy holds the sit or down position for a few seconds, say “OK” to release them.
- Encourage them to move by stepping back or tossing a treat away from them.
- This helps your puppy understand that they must wait until they hear “OK” before they can move out of a command.

Step 3: Introducing the 3 D's – Distance, Duration, and Distraction

Once your puppy has mastered basic commands like sit and down, it's time to introduce the 3 D's: Distance, Duration, and Distraction. These help solidify obedience in more challenging environments.

1. Distance

- Begin by giving your puppy the “sit” or “down” command while you take a few steps back.
- If they stay in position, mark with “yes” and reward. Gradually increase the distance between you and your puppy.

2. Duration

- Work on your puppy holding the “sit” or “down” command for longer periods.
- Start with just a few seconds, then increase the duration before marking with “good” and rewarding. Always use different amounts of time between your “good” commands. Change things up, sometimes don't give a treat with the word “good!”

3. Distraction

- Practice commands in different environments, starting in a quiet room and moving to more distracting places like the yard or park.
 - As distractions increase, keep rewarding your puppy for focusing on you and maintaining the command.
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Step 4: Heel, Recall, and Place – Taking Obedience to the Next Level

Once your puppy is reliably responding to basic commands, it's time to work on more advanced behaviors: heel, recall, and place.

1. Heel

- Start by holding a treat in front of your puppy's nose and lure them to walk beside you.
 - As they walk at your side, say "heel," mark with "yes," and reward them.
 - Gradually build up the distance and practice heeling in different environments.
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2. Recall (Come When Called)

- Use a long lead and practice calling your puppy to you from short distances.
 - When they come, mark with "yes" and reward them with an exciting treat.
 - Keep recall sessions fun and rewarding to encourage your puppy to come quickly.
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3. Place

- Lure your puppy onto a bed or mat, mark with "yes," and reward them for going to the designated spot.

- Gradually extend the amount of time they stay in “place” using the word “good” to imply they should continue holding the position.
 - Use “OK” to release them from the place command once they’ve waited the required time.
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THE PERFECT TRAINING TREATS

WHEN TRAINING YOUR GOLDEN RETRIEVER, IT'S ESSENTIAL TO USE HIGH-QUALITY TREATS TO KEEP THEM MOTIVATED. THE TRAINING TREATS AVAILABLE AT [HIGH DESERT MERCANTILE](#) ARE PERFECT FOR THIS! THEY ARE RAW, SINGLE-INGREDIENT, AND CONTAIN NO PRESERVATIVES. AT ONLY 1 CALORIE PER TREAT, THEY ARE IDEAL FOR FREQUENT REWARDING WITHOUT OVERFEEDING YOUR PUPPY. PLUS, THESE TREATS ARE PACKED WITH NUTRITION, MAKING THEM A HEALTHY CHOICE FOR REINFORCING GOOD BEHAVIOR.

Putting in the Work: The Key to Success

It's important to understand that you WILL put in the work. You'll either put in the work of training your dog or the work of managing unwanted behaviors. Training may seem like a lot of effort initially, but the rewards are well worth it. A well-trained puppy that listens to commands will grow into a happy, well-adjusted adult dog that is a joy to be around. They will be calm in public, listen to you in distracting environments, and form a deeper bond with you because they understand what's expected of them.

A trained dog means less stress for both you and your puppy, allowing you to enjoy each other's company more fully. Whether you're at home, on a walk, or taking a trip, having a well-behaved dog makes every experience more enjoyable. You'll form a strong bond with your Golden Retriever, and they will become the loyal, loving companion they're meant to be.

By following this guide, you'll set your Golden Retriever up for success with a solid foundation in training, allowing them to grow into a well-mannered and happy adult dog. Remember, consistency, positive reinforcement, and the right treats will go a long way in helping your puppy thrive!

