

The Newfoundland is a large, strong, heavy coated, active dog equally at home in the water and on land. He is a multipurpose dog, capable of heavy work. His unique gentleness, even temper and devotion make him an ideal companion for child or adult. In Newfoundland he was used as a working dog to pull nets for herring. Elsewhere he patiently did heavy labor of all kinds, powering the blacksmith's bellows and the turner's lathe. The oily nature of his double coat (which effectively keeps him from getting wet to the skin), his webbed feet, his deep, broad chest and wellsprung ribs make him a natural swimmer. He has true lifesaving instincts and is renowned in this role.

What is often said is that the Newfoundland is what placid, he is actually a fairly active dog. He enjoys and needs daily exercise. A Newfoundland puppy should be kept clean and he is given a good level of exercise. Do not leave a Newfoundland in the sun, especially in a parked car, unattended.

The origin of the Newfoundland is not known. It is agreed only that he is one of the older breeds of dogs in existence today. He may not have originated in Newfoundland, though skeletons of giant dogs have been discovered in Indian gravesites in Newfoundland dating from the 5th century, AD. One of the more appealing speculations rests on the legend that when Leif Erikson discovered North America about 1000 AD, he had aboard his boat a large black dog resembling a Newfoundland, called "Oolum." It is recorded that early in the 19th century some Norwegians kept and used Newfoundland-like dogs on the island whose name he bears dates from 1732 when an unknown author wrote, "The Bear Dog of a very large size is very watchful, his business is to guard a court or house, and has a thundering voice." It is possible, too, that some Great Pyrenees were bred to this Newfoundland and their homeland.

The breed as we know it today was developed largely in 19th century England and America. The Newfoundland is an ancestor of the present day Labrador and Chesapeake Bay Retrievers, which follow the Newfoundland in their natural swimming ability. The rough-coated St. Bernard owes its coat to the Newfoundland.

The Standard, as set by the Newfoundland Club of America and approved by the American Kennel Club, calls for a dog which impresses the eye with great strength, dignity and pride. The Newfoundland in motion gives the impression of effortless power. Good proportion is important for a smooth, strong drive. The Newfoundland has a water-resistant double coat. The outer coat is soft and very dense.

While the Newfoundland is found in a variety of coat colors, color is secondary to type, structure and soundness. The recognized colors in the AKC approved Newfoundland Standard are black, brown, gray, and white and black. Black, brown and gray may appear as solid colors or solid colors with white at any, some or all of the following locations: chin, chest, toes, and tip of tail. Also typical is a tinge of bronze on a black or gray coat and lighter furnishings on a brown or gray coat. Brown or gray Newfunds are not considered unusual. A white and black dog has a white base coat with black markings. Typically the head is solid black or black with white on the muzzle, with or without a blaze (a white stripe extending from the muzzle between the eyes onto the head). There is a separate black saddle and black on the rump extending onto a white tail. Clear white or white with minimal ticking on the white and black dog is preferred. Other color combinations of the Newfoundland may occasionally be found, but they are not recognized in the AKC approved breed standard.

A Newfoundland puppy normally grows at a very rapid rate. The average height for adult dogs is 28 inches and for adult bitches, 26 inches. The approximate weight of adult dogs is 130 to 150 pounds, of adult bitches 100 to

120 pounds. Large size is desirable, but never at the expense of balance, structure and correct gait.

Newfunds make good pets with their gentle, loving nature. Since the Newfoundland has historically displayed a keen sense of responsibility, he makes a good choice as a companion for children of any age. However, one should see that a Newfoundland (or any dog) is not abused or harassed by children or adults. A growing puppy may be more subject to injury than its size would lead you to believe. NEVER allow a child to climb on a growing puppy or adult Newfoundland to ride it. While Newfunds are well known for their gentle disposition, personality and temperament can vary throughout this breed just as they do with humans. While the Newfoundland has strong guardian instincts, he is not a watchdog in the typical sense.

Despite his heavy coat, a Newfoundland adapts to warm as well as to cool climates. In warm climates the long outer coat remains, but the undercoat thins out to some degree. The warmer the weather, the more careful one must be to provide plenty of shade and fresh water.

Once the Newfoundland breed has caught your fancy, you should take time to learn as much as you can about the breed before you invest in a cute puppy. There are many ways to further your education: going to dog shows, attending meetings of the nearest regional Newfoundland club, and comparing Newfunds whenever possible. Love does seem to be a warm puppy, but slow down and see if an adult Newfoundland is what you want to live with for the next ten years or so. Acquiring any dog should be a family decision made with the intention of keeping the dog forever. Telling a child, "You can have a dog as long as you take care of it, but if you don't, we'll get rid of it," is not fair to the dog. It is also a poor lesson for the child - it tells him a once loved, living creature can be easily disposed of when it becomes a bit of a bother. If you have any doubt about your ability to afford the dog or to take proper care of it, don't get one.

