



Golden Bond Rescue Adoption Packet

Where Am I?

Imagine being alone and air dropped into a strange country where nothing is familiar. You do not know anyone, the rules of acceptable behavior are unknown, and you cannot speak the language. This experience would be confusing, scary, and you are bound to offend a few people before learning the rules of the new environment. Even though he may not show his confusion, this is likely how your new rescue Golden will feel when entering your home. As far as he knows, you are just another person in the parade of people who have passed through his life recently and your home is just another stop before being transferred somewhere else.

The Golden you are adopting has been through a difficult journey that started when his family gave him up or he became lost. He may have been under stress or neglected in his past or frightened by being homeless. His first stop was possibly a shelter, local pound, or the home of a concerned stranger then eventually, a Golden Bond Rescue foster home. Once in our program, he had a complete physical examination and possibly surgery or some other form of medical treatment. In the process of receiving medical care and evaluation he was handled, bathed and petted by many strangers. Once deemed healthy and ready for adoption, he was presented to potential adopters. Though our foster home program is designed to be as positive and low stress an experience as possible, it is still a confusing situation for any dog and produces anxiety. Through it all he has probably been watching and hoping to recognize someone from his past. Finally, you come to meet him and you fall in love. He has, at long last, found a new person of his own, but he does not understand that yet. It is up to you to help him feel loved and secure!

In the process of transforming your dog's confusion into confidence, it is important to look at things from his point of view. Golden retrievers are eager to please their owners once they understand the rules. It is your job to communicate clear rules in a way your dog can understand. Be sensitive to the fact that in your dog's previous life, he may have been allowed to sit on the sofa, beg for food, jump up for attention or play rough. If it is not permitted, teach him, do not blame him. Be kind and patient. Dogs need repetition and consistency in order to learn. Instruct him in a positive way so that he does not feel defensive or confused. Reward him for good behavior with treats, hugs and a happy voice. Corrections for inappropriate behavior should be used sparingly. Golden retrievers are sensitive and most often a calm but firm verbal reprimand is enough. Make him familiar with key words to elicit specific behaviors. Use regular commands like sit, stay, and come, off, give or leave it, car ride, and other terms that will increase communication. We strongly suggest an obedience class! Even if your dog has been previously trained, classes are a great way to develop trust and a bond between you and your new dog. Obedience classes using positive methods are very fun and rewarding! Remember, you can always teach an old dog new tricks. No dog is ever too old to learn. Obedience classes are a great environment for dogs that need to improve social skills with people and dogs. Classes are also a resource for information and support as your dog and you adjust. Ask your Adoption Coordinator to suggest trainers in your local area that use positive methods.



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As your Golden settles in and starts to learn the rules in his new home, he will get more comfortable. The transition time for each dog is different. It may take a few weeks or a few months for him to *completely* adjust to his new life. Like people, dogs deal with changes and stress in many different ways. Some dogs will be overly excited, other dogs a bit depressed by the loss of family and surroundings, some dogs will be needy and clingy, still others might be a bit defensive and worried, and then there are those dogs who take it in stride. No matter what your dog's reaction, remember to go slowly and start teaching new rules from day one. Be respectful of the difficulty of being airdropped into a different world. It will take time for your dog to bond with you so offer love and guidance, but never force yourself on your new dog.

Children must be supervised closely when they are with your new dog. During the time your dog is acclimating to the new environment, contact with children should be limited. Even a dog with child experience can be overwhelmed by new children and get defensive. Keeping the environment quiet for the first week or two will be important. Allow your dog to get comfortable with your home and the new rules before he meets your friends, co-workers and the neighborhood.

Be realistic about your expectations during this transition period. Never assume that your dog can cope with all the new situations in his life without a problem or two. Set up precautionary measures when he is alone in the house, when he first meets new children, when he is around unfamiliar dogs and take him outside more often to help him adjust to a new toileting schedule. Living by the old saying "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" will prove wise during this time.

Be extremely careful when taking your dog out and about for the first month or two. Do not assume he will come to you when called or that he will stay with you on a walk. Use an Easy-Walk Harness or nylon training collar (use caution to make sure it fits correctly) when walking so he can't slip out of his collar if he is panicked. Most importantly, please *do not* allow him off leash in unfenced areas for at least the first month and never until you are absolutely sure he will come when called even when he is distracted. Getting your new dog to come when called takes practice and must always be a positive experience. Food rewards combined with praise work very well. Remember not to let him off leash except in very safe areas that are far from cars and *only* when you have complete control. Rushing ahead before your dog is ready could teach him bad habits or cause a horrible tragedy.

Now that you have had the opportunity to consider this new relationship from the rescue dog's point of view, we know you will do your best to make the strange new land, into a safe happy home.