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# Golden Retriever Rescue of Wisconsin, Inc.

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**General Obedience Information****GRRoW Hotline: 888-655-4753**

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*The following is provided for general information purposes. It includes training reference material and general guidelines for basic household obedience.*

**1. Measurement.** The AKC CGC Test might be a good starting point against which we can identify areas where our Golden could use work:

**Accepting a Friendly Stranger**

This test demonstrates that the dog will allow a friendly stranger to approach it and speak to its owner in a natural, everyday situation. The evaluator and owner will shake hands and exchange pleasantries. The dog must show no sign of resentment or shyness and must not break position or try to go to the evaluator.

**Sitting Politely for Petting**

This test demonstrates that the dog will allow a friendly stranger to touch it while it is out with its owner. The evaluator pets the dog and then circles dog and owner. The dog must not show shyness or resentment.

**Appearance & Grooming**

This practical test demonstrates that the dog will welcome being groomed and examined and will permit someone other than his owner to do so. It also demonstrates the owner's care, concern and responsibility. The evaluator inspects the dog, then combs or brushes the dog lightly, examines the ears and each front foot.

**Out for a Walk (on a loose leash)**

This test demonstrates that the owner is in control of the dog. The dog must be on the left side of the owner, but need not be in the heel position. There must be a left turn, a right turn and an about turn with at least one stop in between and another at the end.

**Walking Through a Crowd**

This test demonstrates that the dog can move about politely in pedestrian traffic and is under control in public places. The dog may show some interest in the strangers, without appearing over exuberant, shy or resentful.

**Sit and Down on Command/Staying in Place**

This test demonstrates that the dog has training, will respond to the owner's command to sit and down and will remain in place commanded by the owner. The owner may take a reasonable amount of time and use more than one command.

**Coming When Called**

This test demonstrates that the dog will come when called by the handler. The handler will walk 10 feet from the dog; turn to face the dog, and call the dog. The handler may use encouragement to get the dog to come. Handlers may choose to tell dogs to "stay" or "wait" or they may simply walk away, giving no instructions to the dog as the evaluator provides mild distractions (e.g. petting).

### **Reaction to Another Dog**

This test demonstrates that the dog can behave politely around other dogs. Two owners and their dogs approach each other from a distance of about ten yards, stop, shake hands and exchange pleasantries, and continue on for about five yards. The dogs should show no more than a casual interest in each other.

### **Reactions to Distractions**

This test demonstrates that the dog is confident at all times when faced with common distracting situations. The dog may express a natural interest and curiosity and may appear slightly startled, but should not panic, try to run away, show aggressiveness or bark.

### **Supervised Separation**

This test demonstrates that the dog can be left with a trusted person, if necessary, and will maintain its training and good manners. Evaluators are encouraged to say something like, "Would you like me to watch your dog?" and then take hold of the dog's leash. The owner will go out of sight for 3 minutes. The dog does not have to stay in position, but should not continually bark, whine or pace unnecessarily, or show anything stronger than mild agitation or nervousness.

More information on the GCG test can be found at the AKC website [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org).

**2. Methodology.** A well known example of the "building block method" of approaching training of the basic obedience commands sit, down, stay, come is found in "*Training Your Dog : The Step-By-Step Manual*" by Joachim J. Volhard, Gail Tamases Fisher (Hungry Minds, Inc; ISBN: 087605775X). All work is on lead, and progresses from modeling/showing the behavior, motivation and reward, on to correction and proofing.

**Good, clear advice and instructions.** "Sneak-aways" and other attention-getting techniques. Problem-solving: counter surfing, inappropriate barking, digging, chewing; mouthing, jumping. "Trading" as a solution for object possessiveness. Hand-feeding progression for food guarding. Desensitization or other methods for dealing with thunderstorm phobias. Acclimating to a crate, desensitization to being separated.

**The method of correction:** No dog should ever be corrected until you are sure he understands the command. The corollary to this rule is that every dog should be given every opportunity to be successful. Therefore, until the dog begins to sit on his own as soon as he hears the word "sit," don't expect him to sit without some guidance. Until he begins to go down on the command, don't expect him to lie down without guidance.

**Different personality types of dogs.** A fearful dog that is corrected through force will become more fearful. A dominant dog that is corrected too softly will take command of any relationship. Examine drive types when deciding how to handle a particular problem behavior.

**The four drives** outlined by Volhard include **prey, pack, fight, and flight** reactions. The **Prey drive** includes those behaviors that highlight hunting and foraging behaviors. Dogs that hunt and kill their toys (or objects of clothing, pillows, etc.), chase anything that moves, steal food, stalk the cat, and pounce on toys or other animals are probably high in prey drive.

The **Pack drive** involves a dog's affinity for humans or other dogs. A dog with a high pack drive cannot get enough of people; he barks or cries when left alone, solicits play and petting, likes to touch, enjoys grooming, and loves the sound of his master's voice.

The **Fight drive** is defensive and indicates a dog's self-confidence in stressful situations. A dog with a strong fight-defense drive stands his ground, walks high on his toes, guards his territory and his family, may guard his toys and food, tolerates petting and grooming but does not really enjoy these activities, enjoys tug-of-war, and seems ready to fight.

The **Flight drive** is also a defense drive and indicates a dog's lack of self-confidence. A dog with high flight drive is unsure in new situations and may hide behind his person, is stressed when separated from his person, crawls on his belly or urinates when reprimanded, and may bite when cornered.

**3. Fast-track.** For the overly aggressive, and not-so-golden behaved ADULT dog who clearly believes he is "in charge" and needs some consistency from you, in order for him to redefine his position in the pack.

### **How to Become Alpha in 12 Steps**

1. Obedience train on a regular basis. This teaches your dog in a positive manner that you are in control.
2. Food treats are worked for, i.e. obey a command such as sit or down. Same for feeding times. Do not free-feed. Your dog is required to obey a command and then 'released' to eat. Food is left out for 20 minutes. Anything not eaten in 20 minutes is disposed of. (this of course is assuming we are dealing with kibble)
3. Your dog is petted for only five seconds at a time, and only after obeying a command. You will not mindlessly stroke him for minutes on end.
4. When your dog nudges your arm to be petted, he is given a command to obey before the dog is petted, and then only for five seconds.
5. At the end of the 5 seconds, you will say "no more" or "enough", fold up your arms and ignore the dog. You never resume petting until after a lapse of 10 minutes and only by following conditions in #3 and #4 above.
6. Your dog is not permitted to precede you through doorways or up/down stairs. You will use the door to stop his rushing through, leash train on stairs.
7. Your dog is given only one toy to play with freely. All other toys are yours and are played with when you deliver the toy to him, and it/they is/are taken up when you decide play is over.
8. The only games you play with your dog is "fetch" or "find it". No tug o' war, chase, or wrestling games. Physical games encourage your dog to pit his physical strength against yours, growling, and usually end with you getting tired of the game first. This teaches your dog to persevere until he "wins". Fetch or Find It has your dog "working" for you. Another game that works is "Take it To ..." where the dog takes an object from one person and delivers it to the next. Praise is the ultimate reward.
9. The long down (30 minute down-stay) is integral. Practice five times per week. Ideally during family mealtimes.
10. Your dog is required to stand, sit or lay still (settle) during grooming.
11. At any time your dog is in your direct line of travel while you are working (vacuuming, cleaning, getting something from a cabinet etc.), your dog is made to "move". You do not work around your dog. As the pack leader, other pack members must get out of your way.
12. Neuter your dog. (this is not generally a problem as all GRRoW dogs are altered once in the program, if not already)

**4. Consistency.** Decide on what behaviors you wish to encourage and which you wish to discourage. Name them and train them. It has been said that any behavior you can name, you can train!

Some general thoughts on commands/dialog for household manners-type obedience:

**Sit** – This one is obvious. Sit means sit. Say it once, and place the dog into position. Request a sit before feeding time, to leash up, go out or in a door, down stairs, etc. “Sit” can also be a lifesaver toward stopping unwanted behaviors. If you can get a dog to consistently sit on command, you can command the dog to sit in the event you are unable to correct for something else.

**Down** – Down should be used in the context of “lie down and remain in that position until I release you or ask you to do something else”. Down is a good control to use during human mealtimes.

**Stand** – Utilizing the stand command enables easier grooming, control and ease of examination and the vet etc.

**Stay** – Stay is “stay in whatever position you are in until released or until I ask you to do something else”.

**Wait** – Wait is a variation of stay, but usually signals a pause in two consecutive forward motions or commands, such as “wait” (while you are opening the car door) and then “load up” or “get in” to get into the car. Isn’t necessarily a formal stay.

**Come** – Definitely a must. Come means come! Here, right now, and to me! Only use the “come” command when you can enforce the response if it is ignored. To ensure success in training, never use “come” to call you dog for something your dog may perceive as unpleasant! Instead, you would go and get your dog without much ado.

**Off** – Used in the context of “get off” anything or anybody!

**Out** – “Out” of the room.

**Back** – “Back” as in backing up, or “back to the spot you just were”.

**Move** – “Move” out of the way of my forward motion.

**Leave It** – Indicates the dog should not touch, sniff or pick up an object.

**Take It** – Indicates the dog should take an object from me.

**Hold It** – Indicates the dog should hold the item in his mouth until I ask him to “give” or “drop it”.

**Give** – The dog should release the object to your hand.

**Drop It** – Drop the object from his mouth.

**No Bite** – This is used in the context of “Take your mouth OFF” anything, anybody etc. Used for indicating the dog should not chew on an item, should not place his mouth or teeth ON whatever it is he is attempting to, including and not limited to people, clothing, destroying his own toys, chewing on his own self etc.

**Settle** – An informal type “chill out”, or could be used formally as your command of choice to indicate a “time out”.

**Go To Bed** – Part of a routine, generalized to the point you could say “go to bed” at any time and the dog would go directly to his night sleeping spot.

**Kennel** – Command to tell the dog to go into his kennel.

**Outside** – Indicate to the dog we are going outside for elimination purposes.

**Go Hurry** – A phrase that can be used to signal or condition/train the dog to eliminate on command. Others commonly used are “go potty” or “do your business”. It doesn’t really matter what phrase you choose as long as you use the same thing consistently.

**Let’s Go** – Come along with me. Not a formal “heel” command. Used during walks or anytime you just want the dog to ‘come along’.

**Easy** – Take it easy, slow down, proceed carefully. Used during walks or going up or downstairs.

**Go Play** – Indicate to the dog, he is free to leave your side and engage in play, or “let’s go play” to indicate going outside, yet distinguished from going “outside” for the purpose of elimination.

**That’s All** – During play or times of giving attention to your dog, to signal YOU are done playing or giving attention. The dog should cease play or behaviors he uses to gain your attention.

**Teeth** – Used to indicate to the dog his teeth will now be inspected and cleaned, and your fingers will be in his mouth.

**Brush** – Used to indicate to the dog he will be brushed. He is expected to stand, sit or lie still while being groomed.

**Feet** – Used to indicate to the dog his feet will be handled, whether it be for cleaning mud, drying wet feet, trimming nails etc.

**Ears** – Used to indicate to the dog his ears will be handled, for cleaning or inspection etc.

**Shake Off** – Something fun you can train your dog to do when he comes in when its raining or signal the appropriate time for the dog to shake off after a bath!

**Shake** – The dog offers his paw to “shake”.

**Speak** – The dog “speaks” on command. A common way to teach a dog to stop annoying barking behaviors is to teach the dog TO speak, but only on command.

**5. Release.** Choose a “release” word or phrase that can be used to signal the break, or end of a required behavior; or the end of the training session. Examples of commonly chosen release words are “OKAY!” or “FREE!!” Again, it doesn’t matter what it is, but that it is consistently used and expressed with an upbeat, cheery voice inflection and incorporating body language (upraised arms and a happy smiling face) at the same time

