

# THE NEWFOUNDLAND AND YOU

A Pamphlet for  
the New and Prospective  
Newfoundland Owner



photo by Peggy Lange

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## THE NEWFOUNDLAND CLUB OF AMERICA And the Regional Clubs

The Newfoundland Club of America (NCA) is composed of people who share a common interest in the welfare of the Newfoundland dog, whether they be owners, prospective owners or just admirers of the qualities of the breed. NCA formulates policies regarding Newfs and publishes a quarterly magazine, *NEWF TIDE*. NCA also maintains a Breeders List, and many regional clubs assist the sale of Newfs through their regional breeders lists. NCA and the regional clubs sponsor other activities, which provide Newf fanciers with channels for appreciation of the Newfoundland's qualities and enhanced enjoyment of their Newfs. Among these activities are conformation shows, obedience trials, tracking and water tests, draft tests, junior showmanship, carting, sledding, backpacking and just plain socializing. The regional clubs meet regularly to hold fun matches, host specialty shows, present educational programs, participate in local community projects, and exchange information with other regional clubs. For further information regarding NCA activities and membership, please contact the American Kennel Club (AKC) for the name and address of the current corresponding secretary of the NCA or visit the NCA's web site at [www.newfdogclub.org](http://www.newfdogclub.org).



photo by Pat Pourchat

*Hansom cab, Newfoundland style*



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## INTRODUCING THE NEWFOUNDLAND

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 the fishermen and to haul wood from the forest. 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 well-sprung ribs make him a natural swimmer. He has true life-saving instincts and is renowned in this role.

Despite his heavy coat, a Newf 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. Do not leave a Newf in the sun, especially in a parked car, unattended.

There are many conflicting stories as to the origin of the Newfoundland. 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 for bear and wolf hunting. The first record of the Newfoundland dog 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 dog by the Basque fishermen sailing between 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 Newf in motion gives the impression of effortless power. Good proportion is important for a



*Cute little Newf pups do become large dogs*



photo by Rudolf Mitterlehner

*Welcome aboard!*

smooth, strong drive. The Newfoundland has a water-resistant double coat. The outer coat is coarse, moderately long and flat. The undercoat is soft and very dense.

While the Newf 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 Newfs 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.

While the Newf at first may appear somewhat placid, he is actually a fairly active dog. He enjoys and needs daily exercise. A Newf may find a small yard a good home, providing it is kept clean and he is given a good level of exercise. Newfs make good pets with their gentle, loving nature. Since the Newf 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 Newf (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 Newf to ride it. While Newfs are well known for their gentle disposition, personality and temperament can vary throughout this breed just as they do with humans. While the Newf has strong guardian instincts, he is not a watchdog in the Schutzhund sense. Harsh treatment and inattention will naturally produce resentment and poor behavior in any dog.

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 Newf club, and comparing Newfs 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.

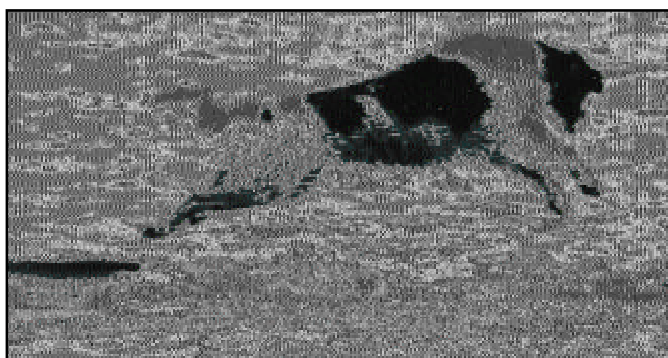
## **SELECTING YOUR NEWFOUNDLAND**

The Newfoundland Club of America and most of the regional clubs provide referrals to Newfoundland breeders. Selecting the right breeder can be the most important step you will take. While we cannot select one specific breeder for you, NCA can provide some suggestions to help you.

An excellent way to begin is to go to a dog show. To find out when and where a show will be held in your area, try the following sources: your regional Newfoundland club; ask a local veterinarian if he has clients who show dogs that you may contact; or contact the American Kennel Club for the name and phone number of a dog show superintendent. About a week before the show, call the superintendent and ask if, when, and how many Newfs will be shown. At the show, let the exhibitors know you are there and - after the judging of Newfs is finished - ask lots of questions. Most of them will be glad to tell you about their dogs and the dogs' breeders. Some may be breeders themselves. Good Newfs are not identical in either appearance or personality, and you will probably prefer some types more than others. Look the dogs over carefully, both during and after judging. That's what the show is for. When your ideas have crystallized to some extent, phone or write a few breeders. Do not be taken in by fancy ads; beware of a breeder who promises very much more or less than others, or whose price quotations are very much higher or lower than others. But remember that Newfoundland puppies can vary in cost depending on age and potential quality.

If possible, visit the breeder personally to select your puppy, even if this means a long drive. A visit will enable you to meet the breeder and see the conditions in the kennel. Although elaborate equipment is not a necessity, the facilities can and should be spotlessly clean. A good breeder will also question you during the visit about your plans and your own facilities for a Newfoundland. He may be rightfully concerned if you do not have a fenced yard, because he doesn't want to hear shortly that your Newf was hit by a car. Also, beware of the breeder who wants to sell you a puppy less than eight weeks of age. Reputable breeders will typically keep the puppies until at least eight weeks of age when they will have been examined by a veterinarian for inherited health defects and conditions. They will have been given at least one series of vaccinations and be declared free of all parasites.

Many Newf owners are delighted with dogs they bought sight unseen from breeders they have never met face-to-face. Indeed, some of the best-known kennels have shipped puppies all over North America and even to remote corners of the world. If a visit to a breeder of interest to you is not practicable, plan to write some letters or spend some time on the phone. A good breeder is proud of his reputation and will be happy to supply you with references to satisfied customers and to persons of long standing as Newf



*Splash!*

fanciers, who know him and his stock. Such persons can also give you valuable information as to the breeder's previous accomplishments, and the primary features he stresses in his breeding program.

You are far less likely to obtain satisfaction in dealing with a commercial outlet or a pet store.

Good breeders will never sell to pet shops or puppy mills. Indeed, these establishments usually obtain stock which cannot be sold on a breeder's reputation. Yet, typically, they charge more for a very mediocre or poor specimen than a good breeder will ask for one of his outstanding prospects. A reputable breeder will follow the development of his stock, while a dealer will have no interest after the completion of the sale. The Newfoundland Club of America prohibits its members from selling to pet shops.

A Newf puppy from an AKC registered litter will be eligible for individual registration with the American Kennel Club, the principal registry for purebred dogs in the U.S. When buying a puppy, one should be given either an AKC registration application with the litter number on it, or the AKC registration certificate with the individual dog's registered name and number on it, properly signed. AKC has available two different registration certificates: Regular AKC registration (white certificate with purple border) and Limited Registration (white certificate with orange border). Regular AKC registration entitles the dog to compete in all AKC events, and the offspring of a dog for which full registration is granted will be eligible for registration. Limited Registration may be used by the breeder to prevent indiscriminate breeding, regardless of that individual Newf's potential for breeding or showing. No offspring of a dog for which Limited Registration has been granted is eligible for registration. Each Limited Registration certificate for such dogs shall carry notice of the limitation, and the limitation shall continue, regardless of any change in ownership, unless and until the owner(s) of the litter at birth shall apply to AKC for removal of the limitation. If for some reason the breeder or seller cannot provide the AKC registration application at the time of sale, demand a written promise of when it will be provided. The breeder should also provide such pertinent data as whelping date, sire, dam, pedigree, immunization and worming records, and recommended diet and feeding schedule.

The pedigree is a four or five-generation history of your dog's ancestry (a family tree). A conscientious breeder who has spent much time studying and working with the breed should offer to explain the qualifications of the parents and why they were a proper mating. It is nice to have a Newf from champion parents, but it is even more important that the parents be of proven breeding quality. Many great breeding quality dogs have never been shown, but do produce quality puppies when properly mated.

AKC registration and/or pedigree in no way indicates the quality of the puppy. Puppies

can be evaluated as possessing show potential or as pet quality. Breeders differ in their approaches to evaluating puppies. A show prospect puppy is one that possesses the potential of meeting the breed standard approved by the AKC, exhibiting virtues of the breed with the absence of faults. Such show prospects may or may not eventually make good breeding stock. A breeding quality dog should generally be a superior representative of the breed, as well as being free of all serious hereditary defects or faults (even if the faults would not be visible in a show ring). A good breeding quality Newfoundland is usually determined only after the dog has matured and has been evaluated for hereditary defects. Pet quality dogs are just as enjoyable as family companions. They are not meant for conformation showing, should not be bred and should be spayed or neutered. Thus, one should not buy a pet quality Newfoundland if one plans to use it for conformation shows or for breeding. However, pet quality Newfords may compete in obedience and in water or draft tests.

The puppy will hopefully mature to a temperament and appearance somewhat similar to his parents. Is that what you want in a dog? Do the parents conform to the standard of the breed? Pick a puppy with a good head, top-line, and movement and, of course, a personality that you like. You must allow for changes, which will occur as the puppy matures. Most Newfords go through some awkward stages, especially during the first year, and at times seem to be all ears, all legs, or awkward because of uneven growth. Be patient most will mature to be beautiful adults. The first year the puppy will get his height, the second year he acquires muscle and rib spring, and the third year he reaches maturity. Remember, there is no sure-fire method of selecting the puppy who will be successful in the show ring. At first glance, all the puppies may look alike to you. But look closely. They are all at least a little different in looks and movement, and each has a personality all his own. Above all, choose a puppy in good health. The breeder can provide assistance in the selection, but quality is only an educated guess when the puppy is but eight weeks old.

Many breeders have sales contracts or agreements. As with any contract or agreement, these should be read carefully and discussed in detail with the breeder before signing. Most breeders will offer a contract or agreement concerning puppies crippled with hip dysplasia or found to have a heart defect. Such contracts or agreements may also cover neutering, or care required to be provided by the buyer. As there is much discussion and controversy concerning this subject, the buyer should discuss these items on an individual basis with the breeder. Newfoundlands are also to some degree subject to heart defects, hereditary in nature. No bloodline is absolutely free of all hereditary problems, but a breeder should be ready to discuss openly any dogs in his kennel and their pedigrees as they are affected by hip dysplasia and heart defects. All breeds have tendencies toward various hereditary defects that require consideration in choosing a puppy. (But do not be misled into believing that mongrels are superior in this respect - they lack only a basis on which the likelihood of hereditary disease can be evaluated.) The AKC requires that breeders keep full and accurate records of their litters. Any breeder should be interested in the progress of all the puppies he sells. If for some reason you find that you are unable to keep your Newfoundland, the first person you should contact is the breeder. The breeder can often help find a new home for the Newfoundland and in any event will want to have the name and address of the new owner. If you are unable to contact the breeder, please contact NCA or the regional club in your area for help in finding a good home for your Newfoundland.



*Tow a boat.* photo by Sondra Burnette

## **CARING FOR THE NEW MEMBER OF THE FAMILY**

The average life span of a Newfoundland is about ten years. With reasonable care and periodic checkups, you will find that a Newf is a strong and robust dog. Problems found in Newf puppies are often caused by the inexperience of new owners. The correct way to start is to buy a healthy puppy

and to keep him that way by regular trips to the veterinarian, good quality food and careful observation for symptoms of diseases or other ailments. A good book on Newfoundlands or a general dog care book is a worthwhile investment.

**VETERINARY CARE:** Find a reputable veterinarian who is experienced in large breeds. Your breeder or regional Newfoundland club may be able to help you find the right veterinarian in your area. Take your puppy to your vet as soon as possible after you get him. Even if he has a recent health certificate, a double check is valuable, and you will get good advice on puppy care, shots, local health problems, etc. Avoid unnecessary contact with other dogs until your puppy's immunities are established. Your Newf may need a booster shot for distemper, hepatitis and leptospirosis, parainfluenza, parvo virus and corona virus. Rabies vaccinations will have to comply with your state's law, or your veterinarian's recommendation. Also, you should have your dog examined for worms (roundworms, whipworms, tapeworms and hookworms) every three months as a puppy and twice a year thereafter. Heartworm is a problem in areas where there are mosquitoes, so you should consult your veterinarian regarding testing for and prevention of this disease. A definite aid to both worm and fly control is to meticulously pick up your dog's stools **every day** - and more often for a puppy. Flea and tick control is essential, as they are a source of many problems. Extermination of these parasites in infested areas, such as bedding, is as important as on the dog itself. Dogs should be treated for fleas and ticks the same day you treat your home, your dog's bedding, yard, etc.

**GROOMING:** In any climate, grooming your Newf not only makes him look nicer by controlling mats and shedding, but also cleans his coat and skin, and reduces odor. Use a long-toothed steel comb and a wire slicker brush with bristles bent at the end. Work against the grain back to front, then reverse. Be sure the hair is brushed down to the skin, being careful not to scratch the skin. Mats of dead hair accumulate behind the ears and inside the hind legs. After the permanent coat develops, shedding occurs but twice a year - spring and fall. Newfs need extra care and observation to combat parasites and skin problems. Grooming is essential. Brushing often means less bathing. When you do give your dog a bath, be sure to remove ALL the soap to avoid skin irritation. Rinse and rinse again. If toenails are not kept at a moderate length through exercise, they should be clipped, but learn how to do it properly before you try it. Consult a local groomer, or your veterinarian for assistance.

**SAFETY AND SHELTER:** Take care to see that growing puppies don't do a lot of jumping, running, or playing on slippery surfaces, or have their limbs pulled. Their fast-



growing joints and bones are still soft and may be permanently damaged. Love is one thing, but excessive handling is another and should be avoided. The only correct way to pick up a puppy is to insert one hand between the front legs, the other hand between the hind legs until they touch and then lift evenly, thus supporting the entire weight of the puppy.

Your new puppy needs a lot of sleep. You will want to avoid heavy exercise (including cart pulling) with a Newf less than 18 months of age. This heavy exercise can damage the puppy's body. Avoid strenuous exercise right after meals and during warm periods. It is wise not to let dogs hang their heads out of car windows as various eye injuries can result.

Most Newfoundlands enjoy swimming. It is excellent exercise for it strengthens muscles without putting weight on the joints. Most Newfs prefer calm waters, such as lakes and streams, to rough pounding ocean surf. Do not let your Newf run loose as he could be hit by a car or stolen and may incur the ill will of neighbors. Remember that the biggest dog in the neighborhood often gets the blame for the deeds of all the other dogs around. In most cities, dogs must be in a confined area and walked on a leash. All dogs enjoy a walk at least once a day. A six-foot leather or cotton web leash and a training collar are required in obedience classes. A slip collar, chain or nylon, of correct length is standard training equipment. Never chain or tie your dog. And never leave a collar on an unattended dog.

A dog sleeping outside should have a well-insulated house or shelter available. A dog sleeping inside needs a draft-free place and a rug or pad to keep him off the hard floors, which can cause calluses. However, many Newfs will select a cool tile floor.

**FEEDING:** It is quite common to hear those who do not know the breed say, "My, but he must eat a lot." Probably because he is so placid, the full-grown Newf is a comparatively small eater. However, when he is growing most rapidly, between the ages of three and eighteen months, the Newf is a heavy eater. At this time he will consume several cups of kibble plus such other materials as your breeder recommends you give him each day. Initially continue feeding your puppy what the breeder was feeding. Do not drastically change your puppy's diet. Dry food (kibble) is less expensive than meat or canned dog food and can provide a good quality diet for an adult dog, so



*A Newf in harness.* photo by Karen Steinrock

one may slowly progress toward such a diet. Adult Newfoundlands will eat about four to eight cups of dry dog food per day (or about one fifty-pound bag of dry food per month). The amount of food an adult Newf requires is not proportional to his weight, but to his size and activity. An eight-week-old puppy will normally eat three times per day; after five or six months the puppy will eat twice a day. Ideally an



photo by Lisa Carter

*Friends*

adult Newf should be fed two small meals a day rather than one large meal. Never fatten a puppy to butterball condition, rather keep it a little on the lean side. Over feeding will not make your puppy larger than his genetic makeup intended him to be. Overweight at any age reduces the life span and may provide fertile ground for other problems. Always remove uneaten food promptly. The amount

of food suggested on dog food labels is generally excessive for large breeds. In short, take care of your new puppy just like you would any new baby in your family.

## **THE NEED FOR TRAINING**

An untrained dog, no matter what its size, is a liability in modern society. For their own safety, all dogs require some form of obedience training. Being intelligent canines, most Newfs are readily trained. The ideal time to begin the training is when the puppy is two months of age - which means you start the day you get the puppy. Between the age of two and four months, the puppy should be taught to walk on a loose lead, come when called and stay when told. If you use praise as a reward and plenty of *encouragement*, the puppy will be a willing and adept student. By starting early, you can teach the puppy the commands you want him to know and avoid the development of bad habits. This type of training can be done at home with the aid of a good book on obedience training. Newfoundlanders should definitely receive early obedience training, or they may outgrow their trainer's ability to handle them before they mature and realize they have gentle qualities. If you intend to water train your puppy, it is advisable to introduce the puppy to water by the age of four months, but do so with care and consideration. If you want your dog to learn to retrieve, you should introduce the puppy to the fundamentals before it is eight months of age.

One person in the family, preferably an adult, should assume the major responsibility for training, but all family members should know the commands, use them consistently and know how to reward the puppy with *praise* and *encouragement* when it has responded to a command. In addition to early training at home, it is advisable to take your puppy to a training class. Almost every training organization will accept puppies at six months of age and some have special programs for puppies between two and four months of age.

A Newf puppy at eight weeks of age can generally be housebroken, if you are willing to be consistent and watchful. However for a few more months accidents can happen, not because of disobedience but because young dogs still do not have muscles that always cooperate. Since puppies sleep most of the time, it is easy to anticipate their needs. As soon as the puppy wakes from a nap, finishes eating, or after vigorous play, take it out

to relieve itself; and any time you observe the puppy circling and sniffing the floor, take it out to relieve itself. You must be vigilant, but once an accident has occurred, scolding the puppy is ineffective. Just clean up the accident and deodorize the spot. Continue to positively reinforce good behavior, ignore accidents and your puppy will be housebroken quickly. Similarly, rubbing its nose in the accident does no good at all, and swatting the puppy with a rolled-up newspaper only creates a dislike for rolled-up newspapers and perhaps paperboys. The destructive potential of puppy teeth is enormous and it is important that a puppy learn the meaning of "No" at once. Provide his own special toys for chewing and say a stern "No" when he picks up anything else.

Remember, CONSISTENCY AND PATIENCE ARE THE KEY TO ALL TRAINING.

### **A FEW THOUGHTS ABOUT BREEDING**

Before considering the breeding of a Newfoundland, you should carefully review the responsibilities you would be taking upon yourself. As mentioned earlier, any breeder of AKC registered dogs has a responsibility to the AKC to keep full and accurate records of all litters. Any breeder also has a responsibility to follow the litters to see that the dogs are in good homes and to evaluate the success of his breeding program. **The only valid reason for breeding is to improve the breed.** In order to accomplish this goal, a mating must follow careful study. A thorough knowledge of the breed and its standard is a starting point. A study of both dogs' ancestries is essential, as is a full evaluation of both dogs' littermates.

It is important not to breed Newfs with serious hereditary faults such as hip dysplasia, heart abnormalities, etc., or with breed standard faults. All dogs should X-ray free of hip dysplasia and be cleared of heart defects before any breeding is considered. Newfoundlands of poor temperament should definitely NOT be bred, regardless of other characteristics.

Finally, do not plan to breed your Newf as a way of picking up pin money. Breeding is strictly a labor of love and an expensive one at that. Ask any breeder! And if you want to show your children the facts of life, we recommend films. **Don't use animals.**



photo by Gregg Szymskie