NUZZLEWAY

Labrador Retriever

Your illustrated care guide



Labrador Retriever characteristics and care: an active, people-oriented retriever with exercise, enrichment and double-coat grooming needs.

Breed care, sample timings, life stages and a shared care sheet. Sleep and rest schedule.

General guidance, not an individual treatment plan. Example times are starting points; feeding amounts, exercise limits and medicines must suit the individual dog. Illustrations are editorial, not medical diagrams.

Read the current breed profile

Care for this breed

Use the breed's care notes above as context. Adapt the schedule to age, current weight and body condition, size, fitness, health, mobility, temperament, weather and your household. Sex alone does not determine a routine; neutering, heat, pregnancy and nursing also matter. Review changes with your vet.

Balance movement and recovery

Retrieving games, sniffing and suitable walks can add variety. Match the length and pace to the dog's age, fitness and response, then leave room to rest.

Expect seasonal shedding

A Labrador has a short, dense double coat. Regular brushing helps lift loose hair and gives you a chance to notice skin changes; shaving is not a substitute for coat care.

Make play cooperative

Short, rewarding activities such as a retrieve or food-search game can engage a dog who enjoys working with people. Stop if the dog looks uncomfortable or needs a break.

Schedule dog walks

Try a sniffing walk followed by a few calm retrieves on safe ground. Finish before your Labrador becomes tired; note whether they settle comfortably afterwards.

Published daily exercise reference: More than 120 min/day

This is a broad breed reference, not an individual target. Exercise includes suitable walks and play, not continuous running. The session lengths below are an editorial example for a healthy adult already comfortable with this activity. Adjust for fitness, weather and veterinary advice; never push the dog to finish the clock.

Puppy

Do not use the adult exercise minutes. Plan gentle outings around waking, meals and play, with rest between activities. Ask about growth and safe exposure before public walks; a fixed "5 minutes per month" rule is not supported by scientific evidence.

Senior or reduced mobility

Split the dog's tolerated activity into easier outings. Note stiffness, limping or slower recovery and ask the vet to set durations if these appear. Age alone does not require switching food or dropping all exercise.

Sex and reproductive status

During heat, choose quiet routes and prevent unwanted mating. After neutering, review weight and portions rather than automatically changing walk minutes. Pregnancy and nursing need an individual nutrition and activity plan; male and female dogs do not need different clocks solely because of sex.

Build a daily routine

The adult timetable below does not apply to newborns or frail older dogs. Choose the care guidance for their stage first.

Move these hours to fit your household. Allow quiet recovery before meals; ask your vet about meal-exercise spacing for this dog. Add toilet outings whenever needed. Medication follows its own prescription, not this timetable.

Time	Care	Duration / amount
06:30	Walk / suitable activity	45 min
08:00	Meal	½ of the agreed daily meal ration
13:00	Walk / suitable activity	30 min
18:00	Walk / suitable activity	55 min
20:00	Meal	½ of the agreed daily meal ration
22:30	Last toilet outing	As needed

Schedule dog food and meals

Before walks or training, set aside part of the measured daily food allowance for rewards and search games. Tell every caregiver what is left, so enrichment does not quietly become an extra meal.

For many healthy adults, two meals work as a starting pattern: 08:00 and 20:00, 12 hours apart. Weigh the agreed daily allowance first, reserve any food used for rewards, then divide the meal portion. No single gram amount is correct for every dog of this breed.

General feeding guide for weaned puppies: under 4 months, 4 meals (07:00, 11:00, 15:00, 19:00); 4-6 months, 3 (07:00, 13:00, 19:00); from 6 months, discuss moving to 2. These are example times, not a fasting rule. Confirm the pattern for very small puppies, illness or a prescribed diet.

Sleep and rest schedule

PDSA gives a reference of 14-16 hours or more of sleep in 24 hours, with individual variation. Count daytime naps as well as night sleep; quiet rest is not always sleep.

Example rest windows for a healthy adult

Time window	Opportunity to rest
22:45 - 06:30	Quiet night period
09:00 - 12:00	Undisturbed daytime rest
14:00 - 17:00	Undisturbed daytime rest
20:30 - 21:30	Undisturbed daytime rest

These windows offer 14 h 45 min of quiet time, not guaranteed sleep or a confinement plan. Let the dog sleep outside them too and provide toilet breaks whenever needed. Use a comfortable, accessible bed, a calm location, daylight by day and dim light at night; keep water available.

Puppy

For weaned puppies, AKC describes around 18-20 hours of sleep per day, with naps often lasting 30-120 minutes. Offer quiet time after short activity and a toilet opportunity when they wake. Night toilet breaks may still be needed; do not use the adult timetable or keep a puppy awake to meet it.

Newborn: the first 2 weeks

For a newborn, sleep fits around nursing, warmth and the agreed checks. Orphan feeding continues overnight as prescribed; an adult night block must never delay a feed or a veterinary assessment.

Very senior or frail: comfort comes first

For a very old or frail dog, protect comfortable rest without setting a universal hourly target. Provide an easy-to-reach bed and assistance with toileting. New night pacing, confusion, panting or repeated waking merit a veterinary review of pain, health and sleep-wake changes; do not give sleep medicines yourself.

Share when the dog settled, estimated sleep, awakenings, toilet needs and who helped. Compare with this dog's usual pattern rather than treating time spent in bed as time asleep.

Consult for a persistent or sudden change in sleep, difficulty settling or daytime lethargy. Difficulty waking, collapse or breathing trouble need urgent veterinary attention.

Schedule dog medicine

Only schedule medication prescribed for this dog. Record the name, prescribed dose, route, interval, start and end dates, food instructions and who gave it at what time. Include vet-directed preventive treatments. For a missed dose or a reaction, contact the clinic; do not double a dose or change treatment yourself. Nuzzleway organizes reminders, not prescriptions.

Prescribed interval	Time
24 h	08:00
12 h	08:00 / 20:00
8 h	06:00 / 14:00 / 22:00

Only if the prescription specifies this interval: every 24 hours -> 08:00; every 12 hours -> 08:00 and 20:00; every 8 hours -> 06:00, 14:00 and 22:00. These illustrate spacing, not a choice of treatment. Confirm the starting time, food requirements and what to do after a late, missed or vomited dose with the clinic before setting reminders.

Share the care schedule

Agree who handles each walk, meal and prescribed dose, then share the times and care notes with family or a sitter. Mark what was actually done, with the time and person, so the next caregiver can check before repeating it. Keep the agreed routine and observations together in Nuzzleway and review the plan when the dog's needs change.

Example handover: "18:40 - walk completed by Alex, 25 min, settled comfortably. Dinner not given yet. Check the medication log before any dose." Record actual times and completion, not just reminders.



Newborn: the first 2 weeks

No walks or adult meal schedule. If the mother is present, check that each puppy nurses effectively; do not replace successful nursing with a bottle timetable.

1. If orphaned or not nursing, contact the vet promptly for a canine milk-replacer plan and a demonstration. In the first week, orphaned puppies commonly need feeding every 2-4 hours, including overnight. Only if 3-hour feeds are agreed: 00:00, 03:00, 06:00, 09:00, 12:00, 15:00, 18:00, 21:00. The volume depends on weight and the product.

2. Keep the nest warm, dry and free from draughts, with space away from the heat source. Ask for an age-appropriate temperature; avoid direct heat and burns. A cold or weak puppy needs urgent veterinary guidance before feeding; do not force milk or use a syringe or tube without training.

3. Weigh each puppy in grams daily during these first 2 weeks, at the same time and at a similar point relative to feeding, for example 08:00. Keep individual records, not just a litter average; ask promptly about weight loss or failure to gain.

4. The mother normally helps with toileting. For an orphan, ask the vet to show gentle stimulation with warm, damp cotton after feeding and record urine and stools.

5. Share the overnight rota: who gave each feed, when, how much of the prescribed formula was taken, weight and any change. Arrange the next check before handing over.

Seek urgent veterinary advice for failure to suckle, coldness, marked weakness, persistent crying, diarrhoea or breathing trouble. Do not wait for the next scheduled feed.

Very senior or frail: comfort comes first

There is no single birthday that defines frailty. Difficulty rising, exhaustion, appetite changes or disrupted sleep matter more than applying the breed's adult exercise minutes.

1. Offer toilet opportunities around waking and meals and before bed. Example check-in times: 07:00, 12:00, 18:00 and 22:00, with extra outings as needed. Ask the vet to set tolerated walk lengths; if even a short outing is difficult, agree assistance rather than pushing on.

2. At 08:00 and 20:00, note comfort, food actually eaten, drinking changes, toileting, ease of rising, sleep and interest in favourite activities. These are example observation times, not a limit on checking or care.

3. Use non-slip paths, an accessible supportive bed and easy access to water and food. Keep routes familiar; ask about a fitted support harness if help standing is needed.

4. Record both portions offered and eaten and report weight or muscle loss. Do not automatically reduce food or protein because of age, force-feed or change a prescribed diet. Review all medicines and supplements with the vet; log each actual dose.

5. Agree a plan for pain control, night care and reassessment. If comfortable rest or enjoyable activities are disappearing, discuss quality of life and palliative support with the clinic.

Collapse, breathing difficulty, sudden inability to stand, severe pain or inability to pass urine need immediate veterinary attention. New confusion, appetite loss or repeated falls also deserve prompt assessment, not dismissal as "old age".

Your shared care sheet

Complete this sheet using your dog's current care plan. Record what actually happened so the next carer can take over.

Dog's name

_____

Birth date / age

_____

Sex / neuter status

_____

Current weight / date

_____

Health / mobility needs

_____

Food / agreed daily amount

_____

Medicines / prescription instructions

_____

Vet / emergency phone

_____

Main carer / phone

_____

Planned time	Task / agreed amount	Actual time / completed by	Notes / next step

Sources and further reading

General guidance, not an individual treatment plan. Example times are starting points; feeding amounts, exercise limits and medicines must suit the individual dog. Illustrations are editorial, not medical diagrams.

Read the current breed profile

1. AKC Labrador Retriever profile
https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/dog-breeds/labrador-retriever-right-for-you/

2. AKC Labrador grooming guide
https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/health/how-to-groom-a-labrador-retriever/

3. Royal Kennel Club
https://www.royalkennelclub.com/search/breeds-a-to-z/breeds/gundog/retriever-labrador/

4. AAHA
https://www.aaha.org/resources/2021-aaha-nutrition-and-weight-management-guidelines/home/

5. PDSA
https://www.pdsa.org.uk/pet-help-and-advice/looking-after-your-pet/puppies-dogs/exercising-your-puppy

6. UK Pet Food
https://www.ukpetfood.org/pet-care-advice/advice-for-dogs/feeding-guides-for-dogs-puppies/puppy-nutrition-created-as-a-page.html

7. FDA
https://www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/animal-health-literacy/medications-your-pet-questions-your-vet

8. VCA
https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/feeding-orphaned-puppies

9. Merck Veterinary Manual
https://www.merckvetmanual.com/management-and-nutrition/management-of-the-neonate/management-of-the-neonate-in-dogs-and-cats

10. AAHA
https://www.aaha.org/resources/2023-aaha-senior-care-guidelines-for-dogs-and-cats/evaluating-the-healthy-senior-pet/

11. AAHA
https://www.aaha.org/resources/2023-aaha-senior-care-guidelines-for-dogs-and-cats/nutrition/

12. PDSA
https://www.pdsa.org.uk/what-we-do/blog/dogs-and-sleep-our-top-tips-for-your-furry-friend

13. AKC
https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/health/how-much-do-puppies-sleep/

14. AAHA
https://www.aaha.org/resources/2023-aaha-senior-care-guidelines-for-dogs-and-cats/managing-cognitive-dysfunction-and-behavioral-anxiety/

From this guide to your daily routine

Organize care for Labrador Retriever

Balance movement and recovery

Keep walks, meals and rest together in Nuzzleway, and note how your dog responds.

Open Nuzzleway in the App Store

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Scan to open this breed's app links