

HIGH DESERT LABRADORS

TEMPERAMENT TESTING

We begin making notes of each puppy from the time they're born to get an early indication of their individual traits which can provide clues to subsequent development. Around five weeks of age we begin looking at sociability, emotionality, problem solving ability, group dynamics, motor abilities and more. We typically find that temperament testing gives confirmation of the knowledge we have already gained about each puppy. And, although we're proponents of temperament testing, we realize it is not intended to predict future performance. Rather, it is used to evaluate a puppy's temperament at the time of testing, and helps to evaluate their basic personality. The testing helps to determine which puppies have the most suitable personalities for their future roles and family settings. Please note that there is no "pass" or "fail" on these tests; We only conduct them to give you as much information as possible before you select your pup to ensure the best match for you specific needs and lifestyle.

The tests we use consist of a series of exercises that give information as to a puppy's tendencies. Not all puppies will test the same, and the differences will assist in placing the puppy in the most appropriate environment.

The three basic temperament types are:

- **ACTIVE:** Pups with an active temperament are smart and interactive, which means a lot of work but also a lot of fun. Spirited and intelligent, active pups are well appreciated by those owners who have the time and determination needed to train them.
- **NEUTRAL:** Neutral puppies are relaxed and undemanding — sort of the regular guys of the dog world.
- **PASSIVE:** Passive and shy puppies appreciate love and support but are fearful of change, so they do best in consistent environments.

Testing

Submission/Dominance

Hold on Back: We take the first pup and place him on his back with a hand on his chest, then proceed to count to ten slowly. Most pups will start to struggle between 3 and 5 and that's a good **NEUTRAL**. Pups that hold still past 5 will be **PASSIVE**. Pups that start to struggle as soon as they hit the ground are more **ACTIVE**.

In order to determine more information about their personalities, we use several tests that give us insight into specific area of their temperament...they will be explained individually:

Human interaction

Walk Away: The helper picks up a pup (not affectionately -- just normally) and walks away to a secluded area (about 20 ft), and places the pup on the ground (no talking), and then walks away ~10 ft. We want to see if:

- a) The puppy follows immediately, then he will be a very willing worker! (**ACTIVE/NEUTRAL**)
- b) The pup stays to check things out -- then realizing he is alone, he runs up to the helper, then he will be very easy to socialize and has a human dependence. (**NEUTRAL/PASSIVE**)
- c) The pup looks, sees the helper leave, and proceeds to check out the area he is in, this shows that he is confident; he will be able to take care of himself without too much need for human companionship. (**ACTIVE/NEUTRAL**)

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Beckon: The helper now kneels down on the ground, claps his hands, and calls "puppy, puppy..."

- a) If the pup pays attention quickly-- sees the helper and runs up happily, then he is confident and sociable! (ACTIVE/NEUTRAL)
- b) If the pup hears, sees the helper, thinks about it, and then slowly "slinks" toward him, then he is a submissive, obedient pup. (PASSIVE)
- c) If the pup hears and sees but ignores the call, he is more independent. (ACTIVE)

Sociability

Pet & Talk: The tester now walks up to the pup, kneels and pets the pup, talking softly, to watch the reaction

- a) If the pup jumps all over the helper, licking and playing, then he is happy to accept human companionship and will thrive on praise! (ACTIVE/NEUTRAL)
- b) If the pup prefers to chew on the helper's hands, clothes, feet, or whatever, then he is a more active pup and is trying to take control of the situation. (ACTIVE)
- c) If the pup ignores the human gesture of affection and prefers to sniff the ground or run off and play, then he is more dominant/independent. (ACTIVE)

Elevation/Forgiveness

Dangle Hold: The helper now stands up, picks up the pup (with one hand on either side of the belly, so all four feet are fully off the ground.) It should look like the pup is "standing on air." The helper holds this position to the count of 5 and then places the pup on the ground by her feet and walks away slowly, encouraging the pup to follow:

- a. If the pup holds very still while held up in the air and seems relaxed, then follows immediately when placed on the ground, then he will likely be a NEUTRAL/PASSIVE adult.
- b. If the pup struggles when held up, yet still is willing to follow the helper after being placed on the ground, then he will be a bit more dominant but easy to work with. (ACTIVE/NEUTRAL)
- c. The pup that struggles, bites and fights while he's held up in the air is either scared (PASSIVE) or very ACTIVE. Watch carefully when he is placed on the ground; if he recovers quickly and tries to attack the helper's feet, he's an ACTIVE dog! If he cowers, he's scared and is more PASSIVE.

Retrieve Instincts

Throw Toy: The helper now holds the pup right next to her and shows it the "toy." We usually use a rope or small chew toy. The tester gets the pup's attention, then throws the toy a few feet in front of him/her.

- a. If the pup runs out, grabs the toy and comes back when called—he's terrific! The pup will be a snap to train and will work his heart out for you—he's the type of dog that you "show" and he does! (ACTIVE/NEUTRAL)
- b. If the pup runs up and grabs the toy and drops it—but he's still willing to return to you, he will be a very willing worker and although you might have to show him twice, he will always TRY to please you! (ACTIVE)
- c. The pup that runs up, grabs the toy, looks back at you, and then runs off to play is an independent, ACTIVE pup.
- d. If the pup doesn't pursue the toy at all, he's NEUTRAL or PASSIVE. (Don't be concerned at this age if they don't retrieve even if you plan to use your pup for hunting. It is still very early for this behavior, but it will come!)

REMEMBER: *There is no "pass" or "fail" on these tests!*

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