

**Living with the Chesapeake Bay Retriever (CBR)**  
by Debra Wiley Cuevas, QuailRidge Chesapeakes

I have lived with many Chesapeake Bay Retrievers since 1985. They are wonderful dogs, loyal, intelligent, loving, protective, versatile and amazingly intuitive companions. They exhibit courage, endurance, persistence, and a terrific sense of humor. Once you have a Chesapeake, it is difficult to replace them with another breed, but they are not for everyone, they require an equally instinctive owner who is willing to be the Alpha.



The CBR is a dog with an instinct to protect loved ones. They bond closely with their family, and are generally neutral around other people and dogs. Their intelligence and ability to reason make them a challenge for the inexperienced dog owner. The first year of their life is crucial, this breed needs structure, socialization, and a solid foundation of obedience training. Obedience training at a young age will establish good behavior and decrease the tendency for willfulness and independence. CBRs need plenty of exercise and thrive in environments where they feel they have a job to do.



The CBR needs to respect its owner, or trouble begins. If the Chesapeake feels the owner is not in charge, they will take charge, or in other words, become the "alpha" and handle things as they see fit. When giving an instruction it is imperative that the owner follow thru, if you are not willing to get up and make the CBR do what you have asked, don't ask, because the dog will quickly recognize an owner that does not follow thru and quickly lose respect for, then ignore the owner.



Typically the CBR is very sensitive to the owner's mood and tone of voice and a slight reprimand is all that is necessary to get them to stop a behavior. (If the owner has the respect of the dog.) In summation in raising a CBR you must be fair, firm, and consistent, you must exercise your intelligence, have the energy to follow thru on commands, and you should be prepared to be the Alpha or Pack Leader in the family.

The Chesapeake has a strong sense of "Right from Wrong" they willingly accept correction when they misbehave and correction is due, but are not willing to accept an unwarranted correction, or an over correction due to loss of temper on the owners part. The handler needs to be confident, exerting a natural authority over the dog. A firm, consistent but kind approach is the most successful way to handle them. Consistent training and lots of positive praise for a job well done makes for a good Chesapeake.



CBR's have complex temperaments, each one an individual. They have a great sense of humor, frequently smile, and will act the clown. These are tough, hardy dogs yet they are also sensitive and will mope when their owners go away for an extended period of time or show too much interest in another dog. They are not a hyperactive dog but do need regular, longer periods of exercise. In the house they are typically very relaxed and calm and will simply find a comfortable place to stay as near to their owner as possible. They are not demanding of attention, but like to keep family in sight.

The Chesapeake is loyal to a fault. They love to be near their family, where you are they will be, by your feet at your computer, on the bath mat while you are in the shower, in the kitchen while making a meal, they are always underfoot, when in public their focus is on you.

The CBR is one of the most protective of the Sporting Breeds. They have a strong instinct to protect loved ones and their property. At about one year of age the dogs begin to take ownership of their people and their property. A CBR thinks "this is my owner, my children, my car and truck, my house and yard." When you are at home or with your CBR they will look to you, when you welcome the visitor, they accept the visitor, most CBRs after they mature will not allow a stranger or visitor onto their property unless the owner is present and has given the clearance.



CBR's have a high pain threshold and are very stoic when injured or ill. With this in mind an owner must exercise common sense and moderation when exercising their dog, hunting, or retrieving with them.

CBR's are tough, strong, persistent, and love to have a job. They have great endurance, and love water as much as life. The CBR is one of the strongest of the canine swimmers. The CBR's love of water is evident starting as a young pup, they will stand in their water dish as they drink from it, splash and play, and empty their dish paddling their feet in it. Their love of retrieving is instinctive, all of this adds up to a great hunting and retrieving machine on land and in water.



CBRs are versatile, Hunting, Agility, Obedience, Therapy, Rescue, Splash Dog, Tracking, Protection, Ranch Dog, Baby Sitter, Boating, Retrieving and the Best Companion are just some of their jobs. The CBR will be your exercise partner, loyal guardian, diligent worker, reliable retriever and all-around top-notch family member and companion.

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Published in Showsight Magazine August, 2011

