

# *Congratulations on your* **Finnish Lapphund!**



*The Finnish Lapphund Club of America congratulates you on your new dog or puppy! Known as the smiling breed, a Lapphund will be a wonderful addition to your family.*

## **Brief Breed History**

The Finnish Lapphund (or “Lappie” for short) is an old breed, possibly even as old as the sight hounds of Asia. The breed originated in areas of the Arctic (Sweden, Norway and Finland) generally known as Lapland.

Finnish Lapphunds were originally used as hunting and guard dogs by the nomadic Saami people. As the Saami people became more specialized in reindeer herding, the Lapphunds became their herding dogs. Two types of Lappies were used, a shorter coated dog that is now known as the Laponian Herder and the longer haired Swedish and Finnish Lapphunds. Lappies are still



used by the Saami to herd, often sitting on the back of snow mobiles to bark or to be let off the snow mobile to gather up strays in the woods. As dogs became less necessary for herding the reindeer, they simultaneously became more popular as pets outside their homeland.

The Finnish Lapphund was recognized by the American Kennel Club, for the Miscellaneous Class, in 2008 and officially joined the Herding Group in 2011.

## **Appearance**

Lappies are medium-sized dogs with a thick double coat. They come in a variety of colors and markings ranging from black to pure white, including golden shades and brown. Males range in size from eighteen to twenty-one inches tall and females are sixteen to nineteen inches. As with all American Kennel Club recognized breeds, there is an approved breed standard for the Finnish Lapphund. A breed standard is a detailed description of the characteristics and traits of breed.

It is used as a guide for evaluating dogs that best conform to the ideal of the breed. While no one dog is perfect, all responsible breeders strive to produce dogs that conform to this standard in appearance, body proportions, structure, movement and temperament.

Lappies with serious deviations from these types should never be bred. The complete breed standard for a Finnish Lapphund can be found at

[www.finnishlapphund.org](http://www.finnishlapphund.org)

and

[www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org)

## **Care**

Because of their thick double coat, Lappies require weekly brushing. During heavy shedding seasons, (once or twice a year), your Lappie may need brushing more often than usual. Brushing is especially needed behind



ears, armpits, and in the groin area to avoid matting. Brushing also gives you time to check for lumps, bumps, and other abnormalities to ensure your Lappie stays healthy. Since the Finnish Lapphund breed is not

known for having a “doggy odor,” monthly bathing is generally sufficient.

Crates and kennels are recommended for training because they provide a safe place for your Lappie during travel and while learning house manners. Many types of crates are



available, although collapsible wire crates are often the preferred type for Lappies because puppies cannot chew them, and they provide good ventilation—a requirement for your Lappie’s thick fur.

Lappies are very social, so it’s important the crate or kennel only be used for training and their short-term safety. In addition to playtime with you, it’s important that your Lappie is socialized outside your home. Meeting new people in different places allows your Lappie to feel comfortable in all situations.

## Health

Generally a very healthy breed, Finnish Lapphunds that are used for breeding should be screened for eye diseases and dysplasia in the hips and elbows to rule out rare disorders. Routine vet care is recommended for general health maintenance such as shots, heartworm prevention, and flea and tick prevention.

Spaying/ neutering should not be done until your Lappie is at least eight months old. Early spaying/ neutering can cause avoidable health problems by not allowing your Lappie to physically mature first. The average Lapphund lifespan is twelve to fifteen years.

## Temperament

Finnish Lapphunds are gaining popularity as a wonderful companion breed because they are great all-around dogs. They are intelligent, eager to please, quick to learn, and are not aggressive toward adults, children, or other dogs. These traits make them a great addition to any family.

Lappie behavior is naturally submissive toward people, but shouldn’t be confused with shyness. Lappies are great with children and teaching proper manners will allow them to grow as lifelong buddies.

Although Lappies are not aggressive and won’t go looking for trouble, they are protective and won’t back down when challenged. Introduction to a new home is quite easy for a puppy, because their place in the

“pack” will be clearly defined. Ask your breeder for recommendations when acquiring any mature dog who isn’t spayed or neutered, because they may require specific methods of introduction. Lappies can also be taught to get along with other dogs and cats as they have a pack nature and their family constitutes a pack.

## Training

Herding dogs are intelligent and quick to learn, yet can be independent and strong-willed. Often referred to as a thinking breed, Lapphunds do well in all aspects of performance including obedience, rally, agility, tracking, therapy, herding, conformation, search and rescue, and Canine Good Citizen. Finnish Lapphunds are known for being vocal because they were trained to use their bark as a way to herd reindeer, so expect your Lappie to bark during play or when alerting to noise.



## Home and Exercise

Lapphunds do not do well as a yard dog because they crave companionship and can be a nuisance barker with destructive behavior to landscaping. They are also diggers, although most Lapphunds outgrow this by the time they reach adulthood. Companionship is the best way to decrease unwanted behaviors.

As with any breed, a Lapphund puppy will chew on anything and can get into mischief without adequate supervision. Balls, children’s toys, shoes, furniture, garbage cans and clothes hampers are all fair game in a puppy’s eyes and can lead to major vet expenses. Puppy proofing is needed, just as you would do for a child.

Also, please have a fenced yard before getting your dog. Due to their herding

instincts, Lapphunds will give chase to anything, including squirrels, rabbits, and other wild animals without regard for their surroundings, which can lead to dangerous situations. Ask your breeder regarding the suitability of apartment living for a Lappie.

For more information, please see

[www.finnishlapphund.org](http://www.finnishlapphund.org)

or

[www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org)

