

## **Welcome**

Thank you for purchasing a Great Pyrenees puppy from LadyHawke Kennels. We sincerely hope that your new puppy will be all you ever wished for. To help make dog ownership a positive and rewarding experience for both you and your new puppy we have written this book which will serve as a guide throughout your first year. Even if you have owned dogs in the past, perhaps even Great Pyrenees, we urge you to read this book. We are certain that each and every one of you will be enriched by the approach we suggest in these pages.

This book is not meant to be a comprehensive source of answers to all your questions and concerns. Further it is not our intent that this book serve as a substitute for advice and answers directly from us, your breeder. Rather, this book has been written to let you know our approach and recommendations for raising a Great Pyrenees puppy through its first year based upon our experience, knowledge, and research.



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## **The First Few Days**

### **Riding in the car**

By the time you read this, you will almost surely have experienced a ride home with your new puppy. It may seem useless then to devote a chapter to this topic but since more rides together are imminent for you and puppy a bit of information now could help eliminate problems in the future. Let's begin at the beginning; preparing your vehicle to safely carry puppy. Although your puppy is fairly small now it will grow to be a dog of approximately 100 pounds or more. You will need a vehicle large enough to not only carry a Great Pyrenees but its crate as well. Think of a crate as your puppy's seat belt. Several companies make nice crates and we recommend a metal folding crate in either black or silver finish (note: the gold finish tends to tarnish). Choose a crate that is at least 42" long x 28" wide x 30" high. Some companies provide a crate divider which is very handy because it allows you to make the crate small and cozy for your young puppy and gradually expand its space as the puppy grows. A crate that is too large may not give puppy the "secure den" that it seeks while one that is too small is just plain uncomfortable.

When taking a ride with puppy its best to use a crate although a vehicle barrier is an acceptable alternative. When using a crate, place it into the vehicle and secure it so it does not slide around while traveling. Then load puppy into the crate. When loading puppy into the crate do not force him into it and then slam the gate shut. Rather, allow puppy to explore the crate (you can do this in the house or back yard well in advance of your trip) and become comfortable with it. As puppy crosses the threshold into the crate we use the command "kennel up" and point inside the crate. Later, this command will help make loading easier for both you and your Pyr. Remember to remove all collars before closing and securing the gate. This simple step will eliminate the possibility that your Pyr could accidentally strangle itself and die.

At first, make trips short (just 10-15 minutes each way) and always make them pleasant. Make sure you have cold clean water with you and a bowl for puppy to drink from.

When you arrive at your destination here are a few tips to make unloading easy: 1) with collar and attached lead (we recommend a 6' lead) in hand, open the gate. 2) As it is quite likely that puppy will be ready to burst out of the gate and explore the new surroundings, be ready to calmly catch him and put on his collar correctly. 3) Next, carry puppy out of the vehicle and set him securely on the ground. Do not allow him to jump out of the vehicle as this could cause permanent damage to his front legs and shoulders.

If puppy is a bit anxious about the trip, he may *not* be ready to burst out of the crate. In fact, he may not want to leave the crate at all. In such a case, use this opportunity to establish your leadership role and build puppy's confidence in you by kindly and calmly re-assuring him and encouraging him. Remember make this and all trips, pleasant for puppy. After puppy does what you ask, you can reward him with a small treat and lots of praise.

### **The First Few Nights**

We have learned that Great Pyrenees are extremely hardy dogs, even as puppies! We have further learned that most Pys seem to enjoy living outdoors better than living indoors. This does not mean that they cannot be house dogs, nor does it mean that they should be permanently banished from the house. Simply use your judgment and discretion. If you would like to invite puppy indoors for some socialization and visiting that is just fine. We do this all the time.

Whether puppy sleeps indoors or out, the first couple of nights may require some extra TLC on your part. Some puppies will miss their dam and litter mates and seek comfort from you by yipping and whining. This

can be a very difficult period. On one hand you need puppy to acclimate to his new home and begin maturing and building his self-confidence. For this reason, you will want to curtail babysitting at night. On the other hand, you want to build rapport with puppy as his new leader. For this reason you will need to fill your role as leader and re-assure puppy that all is well and there is nothing to fear. To accomplish this you need to project the energy of a confident leader.

Recall all the changes that have just occurred in puppy's life thus far. Bringing the crate next to your bed can be very helpful. Puppy can hear you and you can comfort him by simply placing a hand on the crate. You will not be creating habits that are impossible to break but simply helping puppy adjust.

## **Meal Time**

Your young puppy will be growing extremely fast at this time in his life. He not only needs correct nutrition, but also a routine feeding schedule. Feed puppy three times per day with equal servings given at each meal. Three feedings is important since puppy's stomach is small and he will not be able to eat a full day's ration all at one time.

### **Your puppy's feeding prescription**

Amount to feed: 2 cups puppy food, 3 times per day (total ration is 6 cups per day).

Preparation: Scoop food into a clean stainless steel bowl.

For breakfast and lunch: Add enough warm water to soften the kibbles (but not so much water that the kibbles are floating in a soup). Cover with paper toweling and allow it to soak for 15 minutes. Offer to puppy and allow him 15 minutes to eat, and then remove the bowl.

For dinner: Add 1 spoonful of plain yogurt to the meal and mix. Offer to puppy and allow him 15 minutes to eat, and then remove the bowl.

### **Transitions**

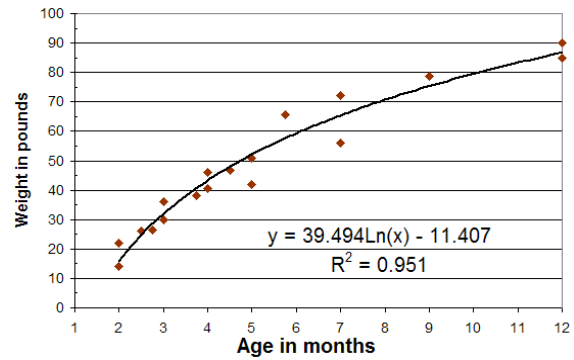
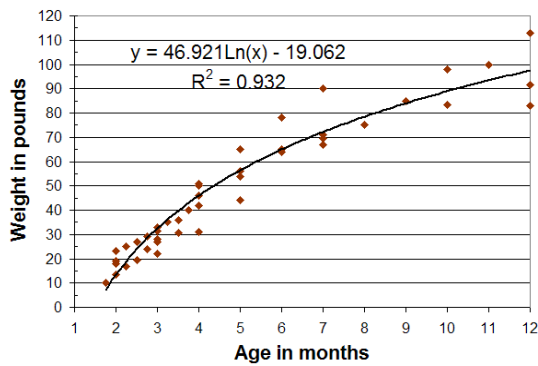
You should eliminate soaked meals over the next few weeks (try to have puppy off soaked meals by the time he is 14 weeks old). To help with this transition, you may add yogurt to two of the three meals.

The mid-day meal should also be eliminated as puppy matures. However, there is no good rule as to when it should be eliminated. This is really up to puppy and he will tell you when he is ready. How? If you feed puppy two large meals and he simply cannot finish either one, then he is telling you he is not ready. On the other hand, if he cleans them up within 15 minutes, then he is ready to switch to two meals per day. Note: Make sure your young Pyr is still getting his full daily ration!

Adjust the amount fed as puppy grows. Use the guidelines on the packaging to determine the ration.

By six months of age, your young Pyr will be ready to switch to adult dog food. We recommend a high quality food like Natural Balance® or Eukanuba® premium dog food.

Monitor puppy's growth diligently. It is important that your puppy does not grow too fast as this may lead to skeletal problems in the future. To help you understand if your Pyr is growing too fast --or too slow-- we have developed growth curves, one for males (left) and the other for females (right). As long as your puppy's weight is near the growth curve line he is probably growing correctly. However, if you still have questions or concerns do not hesitate to ask us or your veterinarian!



**Great Pyrenees Growth Curve Lines (male left and female right)**

### Feeding Do's and Don'ts

- Do ensure your Pyr always has fresh, clean water available.
- Do feed a high-quality diet. It is cheapest in the long run when one considers stool clean-up, veterinary expenses, and your Pyr's quality of life.
- Do NOT supplement your Pyr's diet with table scraps, cottage cheese, or yogurt (except as directed in this guide). This can alter the balance of a high-quality diet and actually degrade it.
- Do NOT feed cooked bones to your Pyr.
- Do NOT offer raw bones to your Pyr until he is at least one-year old.
- Do NOT feed rawhides.

## **Your Puppy's Home**

You will need to consider and decide upon where puppy will live. Many Great Pyrenees owners –ourselves included—believe Pyr's do best living outdoors. Outdoor life suits them and it allows your Pyr to grow a thick and luxurious coat of fur and enjoy fresh air. Your puppy will need shelter (a dog house such as the Igloo extra large or one you build yourself) and a fenced run (approximately 10x12ft). Do not keep puppy on a chain or rope as there are numerous behavioral problems associated with this.

A crate is another necessity. A crate is a great way for your puppy to find his own space within the home. It will give him a place to sleep, keep him out from underfoot and prevent wandering about the house when you are not able to watch him closely. In addition, crates can help make housebreaking much easier. Bear in mind that a dog does not have the ability to control its bladder until it is about 4 months old. To make this period easiest for both you and puppy, put yourself and puppy on a schedule of eating, pottyng, and playful exercise. As soon as puppy wakes in the morning take him outside to potty. Praise him but do not distract him from his duties. This can be followed by a play session and then breakfast and water. Encourage pottyng after meal time –we take puppy to the same general area in the yard and say “make potty”—and once again praise him for doing a good job. This time is then followed with a nap. Each cycle of activity will span 4-6 hours depending on the age of puppy. Remember, do not scold puppy for accidents as he is not able to control himself yet.

You will also need to have a fenced yard as a Great Pyrenees should NEVER be allowed off leash outside fenced areas. In addition, spend some time puppy-proofing your yard before allowing him to run freely.

**Puppy-Proofing Tips**

- Make certain there are no easy escape routes (do the gates close solidly? are there holes under the fence?)
- Remove all trash, wires, rope, and string that may be laying in the yard.
- Keep the yard clear of animal droppings.
- Discard all choking hazards (be careful with decorative bark chips and rocks).
- Learn about the plants growing in your yard and neighborhood. Some may be deadly to puppy.
- Look for narrow alleys that puppy could explore and get stuck inside (areas between the fence and kennel, sheds, and other structures). If you find such areas, close them up securely.
- Do not allow puppy to chew on anything other than acceptable toys (we recommend Nylabone® for good sturdy chewing)
- It may seem silly, but a good way to spot puppy dangers is to crawl around your yard and home on hands-and-knees and view things from his perspective.

We encourage you to bring puppy into your home as much as you wish especially during its first year. Your Pyr puppy needs to bond to something and you and your family are the perfect choice.

Great Pyrenees are guardian dogs and one way they perform this duty is by barking. They will bark at strange noises, strange objects etc. They are trying to alert you to what they perceive as a potential danger. Puppy is apt to bark at many things that are not a danger. At this time, firmly reassure puppy all is OK and instruct him to "Stop that Noise!" As puppy matures he will become a better judge of danger, however he may not mature enough before your neighbors lose their patience with your puppy. In such a case you will need a solution to the problem. One fairly easy solution is to bring puppy indoors when he is most vocal (usually at night).

**When Training Should Start**

I feel strongly that training any dog starts by teaching the dog what “NO” means. It may sound cruel that the first thing your dog must understand is a negative command but it is true. “NO” is not a shout or a scream but rather a firm command that tells puppy whatever it is doing is not good or perhaps dangerous... he does not need to know why, he simply needs to know not to do what he is doing. By this definition, I guess you have probably started training puppy already.

Leash training is next and it starts with a short walk (maybe no longer than your driveway). We recommend using a soft-slip collar like those sold by White Pine Outfitters (5/8” width) as they are lightweight and gentle on puppy’s coat (<http://www.whitepineoutfitters.com/>). The walk and basic leash training is not a formal training session and teaching puppy to heel is discouraged at this point. Simply allow puppy to get the feel of the collar...attached to the leash...and attached to you... with you in control of the entire situation. In the beginning I allow puppy to walk where he chooses with gentle corrections to keep him on some sort of pathway. This is a great time to practice “NO” and in a little while, the command “Leave it”. The command “Leave it” is very useful and should be applied with “NO” whenever puppy is investigating something he should not investigate or when he has spent enough time sniffing an interesting patch of grass and needs to be moving along.

Formal socialization is next. I cannot stress enough the importance of this type of training and highly encourage you to attend a puppy kindergarten class. This is not an obedience class or a social hour, but a time when you and your puppy can practice meeting and greeting strangers in a controlled environment. It is also a time for puppy to meet other puppies and this too is important. You will want puppy’s experiences with other dogs to be positive especially during his formative first year. There is no guarantee that visiting

your friend's adult dog will be pleasant and once puppy has learned to fear other dogs it is very difficult to change his mind.

Any aggressiveness exhibited in a Pyr must be dealt with immediately. Bear in mind that Great Pyrenees are not supposed to be aggressive, especially toward people. They should not be food aggressive, toy aggressive, etc. While they are guardian dogs they are not attack dogs.

The next step is to teach your Pyr some manners. Understand that jumping on people should never be encouraged even when puppy is very young. Rather, jumping up should be strictly forbidden from the start. Whenever puppy jumps up, grasp his front paws and place them back on the ground. Firmly tell puppy "NO...Down"<sup>1</sup> When puppy has all four paws back on the ground and is not jumping—even for one second—praise him for being such a good dog! You will find that praise is one of the greatest training rewards for your dog.

Other commands we feel all Pyr's should know are: sit, stand, stay, come, heel, and "stop that noise". These are not all simple commands. Remember, the Great Pyrenees was bred for hundreds of years to be independent. As a result, obedience training and basic manners—while very important—can be quite challenging. A reasonable goal for yourself and puppy is to complete "manners training" by his first birthday.

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<sup>1</sup> We use "Down" to tell our dogs not to jump. We use "Charge" to tell our dogs to "lie down". Many people use the word "Off" and that is fine too. What is most important is to be consistent with the command and expected behavior/action and to make sure no two commands sound similar

## Your First Trip to the Vet

We have given puppy the best care possible while he lived at LadyHawke Kennels. Since you have taken him into your family and your home we strongly encourage you to have puppy examined by a vet and begin building a working relationship with your vet. Plan to make an appointment with your veterinarian within one week of puppy arriving at your home. This appointment is a “well-puppy exam”. Please ask your vet to:

- Check the microchip in your puppy to ensure a) it is still in place, b) it is functioning, and c) it is the same number given on the inside cover of this book
- Check if puppy has worms (you will need a fresh stool sample). If worms are present<sup>2</sup>, your vet will prescribe a wormer such as Nemex®.
- Check and evaluate the health of puppy.
- Recommend a vaccination schedule appropriate for your region. Follow this schedule closely.

Based upon your purchase agreement with LadyHawke Kennels, you may be required to spay or neuter puppy. Ask your veterinarian when he typically performs this procedure. If he cannot perform the required procedure before puppy is 6-months old, find another vet who can.

Even if you are not required to spay or neuter puppy, you should still consider it. In fact, if you are not planning to show puppy in conformation events you *should* spay or neuter puppy at the earliest age possible.

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<sup>2</sup> Worms, especially round worms are common in puppies (and unfortunately many adult dogs too). In fact they are normal. Puppy has been wormed at LadyHawke Kennels but some may have managed to survive. In this case you will need to worm puppy to ensure all worms and their larvae have been rid from puppy's system.

**Other considerations...**

- Do not allow your vet to remove any of the dew claws on your Pyr. Double-dew claws on both the hind legs are part of the breed and must be left intact.
- Do not dock puppy's tail. The beautiful plumed tail of a Great Pyrenees is also part of the breed.
- While not a veterinary procedure, shaving a Great Pyrenees' coat should not be done to cool them. The heavy white coat actually helps protect Pyr's from the heat (by insulating them and reflecting solar energy), rain, snow, ice, and cold.
- Do not take puppy to areas frequented by other dogs (parks, hiking trails) until he is fully vaccinated. When you visit the vet's office do not allow puppy to play in nearby grassy areas or lick/eat things it may find there. In fact, consider carrying him into the office.
- If your Pyr ever requires the use of anesthesia for a veterinary procedure, please discuss the type of anesthesia to be used with your vet. Anesthesia can be dangerous for Great Pyrenees because 1) they have a very slow metabolism, and 2) many people (including vets) tend to overestimate the dog's weight (amount of anesthesia is frequently determined by body weight). Please refer to the companion CD and read the article by Dr. Robert Brown. We further recommend making a copy of this available to your vet<sup>3</sup>.

**A Word about Parasites...**

Parasites can be a problem in any dog. We have discussed internal parasites (worms) earlier (see page 13) but have not mentioned external parasites. External parasites (specifically ticks and fleas) are not only a

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<sup>3</sup> Much is expected of veterinarians today. What we, Great Pyrenees owners fail to realize is that our vet may not be thoroughly familiar with our breed. We do not feel it is insulting to offer Dr. Brown's paper to our vet but rather an act of responsibility and concern for our dogs.

nuisance they can also spread diseases. To help your dog live free of external parasites discuss various strategies with your vet. In problematic regions of the US, the best strategy may be Revolution© or a similar product.

**Seek Veterinary Care immediately if...**

- Puppy has diarrhea.
- Puppy is coughing.
- Puppy has blood in the stool or urine.
- Puppy vomits and cannot hold down food.
- Puppy does not eat for 24 hours or more.
- Puppy seems to have a stomach ache or seems bloated. Bloat is a life-threatening condition. If your Pyr ever seems to have a bad stomach-ache and is in pain, you must rush him to a vet immediately.

## **As your Puppy Grows and Matures**

### **Keeping your Pyr healthy**

To keep puppy healthy we encourage you to follow your vet's recommended vaccination schedule. Further, if you are planning to take puppy to another state make sure your vet knows about this as additional vaccinations may be needed. After puppy has had its initial series of vaccinations<sup>4</sup> feel free to take puppy out "visiting" and socializing.

At approximately 6 months of age, puppy will be ready to change his diet to an adult dog food. This is an important transition that helps ensure your Pyr does not grow too rapidly (cf. page 7). We recommend Natural Balance®, Eukanuba® or other premium dog food for the life of your Pyr.

As your Pyr begins teething it is important to offer him acceptable chew toys such as those made by Nylabone® and Kong®. Even at a very young age, Great Pyrenees have incredibly powerful jaws and are capable of destroying cheap toys quickly. The problem with this is not the destruction of the toy but the possible harm swallowing parts of the toy can do to puppy.

As your Pyr grows and matures you will notice a change in his appetite. What once was a puppy that seemed anxious to eat will become a young dog that may be rather finicky. This change seems to take place around 9-10 months of age. Do not supplement his diet to entice him to eat and do not allow him free access to food thinking "he will eat when he feels like it". Stick with your feeding prescription and allow 15-30 minutes to eat before removing the bowl. Monitor puppy's weight using the growth curves (cf. page 8).

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<sup>4</sup> We also recommend visiting the vet annually for "wellness check-ups" and vaccination boosters.

At about this same time (9-10 months) your Pyr may experience Panosteitis (aka “Pano” or “wandering lameness”). This condition is self-limiting but during a Pyr’s bout with it, the condition appears debilitating. If your Pyr exhibits pano, you will notice lameness in any leg, the lameness may move from one leg to another. Typically, puppy will feel poorly and drastically reduce his food intake. Pano cannot be treated directly; however pain relievers can be administered if your vet recommends it<sup>5</sup>. The good thing about pano is that it will go away in about two weeks. The bad thing about pano is if you assume any and all lameness is pano –and because it is self-limiting you decide not to visit your vet—you could potentially overlook more serious conditions like OCD or Luxating Patella. Both of which are not self-limiting and require veterinary care.

### **Training and Socialization**

As a breed, Great Pyrenees form close social bonds to whatever they associate with (people, sheep, etc.) between the ages of 4-12 months. This is a critical period in their life and as such can be taken advantage of by good dog owners. During this time period you should try to:

- Expose puppy to a wide variety of stimuli (but only when you accompany puppy and assume the role of “the confident leader”), such as:  
Stairs, parks, hikes, parades, ballgames, livestock, and other dogs (the latter is best done in a classroom setting).

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<sup>5</sup> While not medically proven, some Pyr owners have reported that dogs who suffer from panosteitis seem to respond favorably to Brewer’s Yeast with Garlic given at the appropriate rate. This can be purchased at most good pet stores or on the Internet.

Most importantly, expose puppy to lots of other people. Invite puppy to “meet and greet” when you are entertaining guests, take puppy shopping (both Petco and Petsmart allow dogs in their stores), or to a farmer’s market, outdoor flea market, or just take a stroll downtown. In all these situations make sure puppy is on leash and pay close attention to puppy to ensure the experience is not overwhelming, overly stressful, or frightening. Remember to comfort, encourage, and praise puppy in all new situations by embodying the persona of the confident leader. Make these experiences good memories for you and puppy.

- Help puppy become accustomed to nail trimming and grooming early. Groom puppy every 2-3 days including a good brushing of the tail. Frequent nail trimming is also recommended as grooming and trimming the nails of an adult Pyr who is unaccustomed to the procedure is extremely difficult.
- Complete a class in basic obedience (after puppy kindergarten).
- Complete a Canine Good Citizen (CGC) class.
- At 18 months of age (or older) consider having your Pyr temperament tested by the American Temperament Testing Society (ATTS). If you do so, please let us know the results as this information is valuable for planning the future of LadyHawke Kennels.

## **The Adult Pyr**

Great Pyrenees' grow slowly. They will reach adult height by one year but continue to fill out and gain musculature and mass until about three or four years of age. As time passes you will also notice your Pyr becoming more and more tranquil. It may seem nothing gets his attention, but rest assured, your Pyr is attentive and knows more about what is going on than you may guess.

When your Pyr reaches two, he should be evaluated for hip dysplasia –a debilitating disease. For generations, the parents and grandparents of your Pyr have been screened for hip dysplasia. However, since this disease is not fully understood genetically --there is some concern about the role your dog's environment (food, exercise, etc) plays in the exhibition of the disease-- we recommend all LadyHawke Great Pyrenees be evaluated. There are two evaluation methods to consider (both of which must be performed by trained veterinarians), 1) OFA and 2) PennHip. Neither evaluation will guarantee your Pyr will not exhibit hip dysplasia, however, both offer some indication of the probability of your dog having hip dysplasia. Hip dysplasia may be the primary health problem facing the breed and we are committed to producing great dogs at LadyHawke Kennels. Information and documentation about the soundness of our dogs is vital to our breeding program. As a way of saying thanks to you –the responsible pet owner—we offer a \$25 rebate for all PennHip evaluations sent to us<sup>6</sup>.

As your Pyr grows it is important to continue monitoring his weight. This is most easily done by feeling his ribs. If you cannot feel his ribs, he is overweight. Likewise, if his ribs are prominent, he is too thin. To help you understand how the ribs should feel, place your hand on a table with fingers and palm flat. Feel your knuckles with the other hand. This is how a slightly overweight dog's ribs will feel. Next, close your hand

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<sup>6</sup> See the card at the back of this book for details about this offer. We recommend and request PennHip results.

into a loose fist. This is how the ribs should feel for a trim dog in proper condition. Lastly, make a tight fist. As you may have guessed, this is how an underweight dog's ribs will feel. Note, do not forget to work your hands under the coat when assessing your dog's condition in this manner.

Vaccinations are just as important as maintaining proper nutritional status and weight. At a minimum, an annual "well-dog" visit is necessary to give your Pyr a check-up and all necessary boosters.

Lastly, before we close this short book, we would appreciate additional information about your LadyHawke Great Pyrenees' puppy. Please complete the cards in the back of the book and send them to us so we can use this valuable information to improve our breeding program. Alternatively, you can use the card forms found on the CD and simply e-mail them to us at [sdk-weber@msn.com](mailto: sdk-weber@msn.com).

### **Keeping us in the loop...**

- Report the growth of your puppy (through 12 months)
- Spay/Neuter information
- Hip evaluation results (PennHip can be performed at a very early age)
- Temperament test results
- Anything else you care to share as puppy grows.

Finally, thank you once again for purchasing a Great Pyrenees puppy from LadyHawke Kennels. We are certain that together, you and your puppy will experience a life-time of joy and wonderful memories. Please keep in touch with us, and ask advice whenever needed.

**Further Reading**

Fennell, J. 2004. The Dog Listener. Harper Collins. 369pp.  
 Strang, P. 1991. The New Complete Great Pyrenees. Howell Book House. 256pp.  
 Walker, J. H. 1999. Great Pyrenees: A Complete Pet Owner’s Manual. Barron’s Educational Series. 88pp.

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