

Labrador colours and personality

People often describe yellow Labradors as easy-going, black Labradors as serious workers and chocolate Labradors as the cheeky ones. Those stories can be entertaining, but they are not a reliable way to choose a dog or explain the dog already living with you.

Coat colour is easy to see. Temperament, health, breeding history and how a dog copes with everyday life need a closer look.

Does Labrador coat colour affect personality?

Researchers have examined associations between coat colour and behaviour. Some studies have found differences in owner-reported behaviour between groups, but the results do not provide a simple colour-to-personality rule for an individual Labrador.

It would also be inaccurate to say the subject has never been studied. The useful question is what the findings can tell us, and where their limits are.

What has the research found?

A 2014 UK study used owner questionnaires covering 1,978 Labradors. It found associations involving coat colour, management and working status. The authors noted that experience, training and working-related genetic lines could contribute to the observed differences.

A 2019 Australian study examined owner-reported behaviour in 225 Labradors. Its results did not support the claim that chocolate Labradors were more hyperactive or aggressive than black or yellow Labradors. Some other associations were reported, and the authors called for further validation.

These are group-level findings from questionnaires. They do not establish that changing a coat-colour gene causes a particular personality, or allow us to promise how your puppy will behave.

Look at the individual dog

If you are choosing a puppy, ask the breeder about the parents, the aims of the breeding programme and the puppies' early experiences. Discuss the sort of household and activity you can offer. Colour preference can be part of your choice, but it should not take the place of those conversations.

With an adult dog, ask for the available history and observe how they cope in suitable, manageable situations. A single greeting or a few minutes of play will not tell you everything. Ask about support while they settle into your home.

Work with what your Labrador needs

A busy Labrador may need a better balance of suitable activity, short training sessions and rest. A worried Labrador needs help feeling safe. Neither problem is adequately explained by calling them a typical chocolate, yellow or black Lab.

Reward the behaviours you want to see, keep practice achievable and review the setup when something is difficult. Speak with your vet about sudden behaviour changes or suspected pain, rather than putting it down to personality.

Our [Puppy School](#) and [Puppy Setup sessions](#) can help with the early foundations. For an older dog or a specific behaviour concern, [contact Jordan Dog Training](#) to discuss appropriate support.

Research

- [Lofgren and colleagues \(2014\): Management and personality in Labrador Retriever dogs.](#)
- [van Rooy and Wade \(2019\): Association between coat colour and the behaviour of Australian Labrador retrievers.](#)