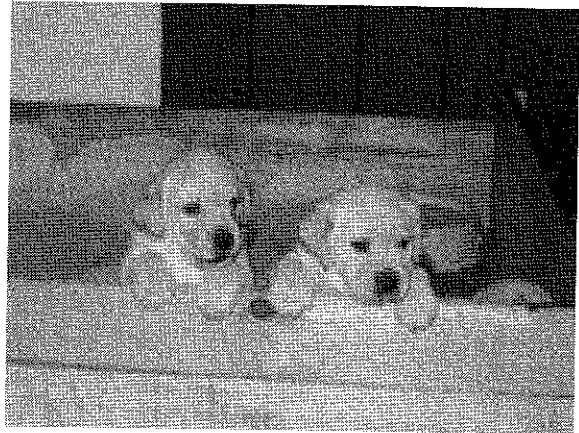


**Fairleigh Pet Center**  
1212 Bardstown Rd.  
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## **PUPPY – GETTING STARTED OFF RIGHT**

When you bring a new puppy into your home there will be a period of adjustment. Your goals are to help your puppy to quickly bond to its new family, and to minimize the stress associated with leaving its mother, littermates, and former home. If there are already dogs in the new home the transition may be a little easier as the puppy is able to identify with its own kind. Obtaining two puppies would be another option. However, most puppies, especially those obtained before 12 weeks of age, will form attachments almost immediately to the people and any other pets in the new home, provided that there are no unpleasant consequences associated with each new person and experience.

Dogs are a highly social “grouping-living” species that in the wild is often referred to as a pack. Packs have a leader that the other members follow and look to for “direction.” In fact, each individual in the pack generally develops a relationship with each other pack member. When puppies enter our homes the family becomes the new social group. It is essential that all owners take a leadership role over the puppy and gain a position of leadership in the family pack. Allowing behaviors that are pushy, disobedient or inappropriate may lead to problems that become increasingly difficult to correct. Control must be achieved by the proper use and timing of rewards and by directing the puppy to display appropriate responses rather than through physical techniques that can lead to fear and anxiety.



### ***When is the best time to begin training my puppy?***

Formal dog training has traditionally been delayed until 6 months of age. Actually, this juvenile stage is a poor time to begin training. The dog is beginning to solidify adult behavioral patterns, challenge behavior is emerging, and behaviors that they have learned in puppyhood may need to be changed. Therefore, it is best to begin teaching puppies from the time they are obtained. One important task to begin early is to establish you as the leader. This can be done by rewarding desirable responses, training the dog to obey commands, avoiding the reinforcement of behaviors that are initiated by your dog and training the dog to accept some simple body handling techniques.

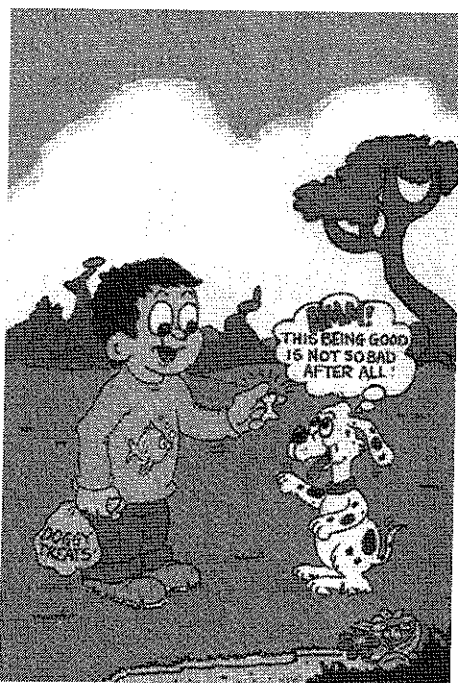
### ***Are physical exercises necessary for gaining control?***

Although there are many physical techniques that have been advocated for gaining control, it is the owners' attitudes, actions, and responses to the new puppy (along with the puppy's genetics) that are most important in the puppy becoming either well-mannered and responsive, or assertive, stubborn, disobedient and “domineering”.

Dog training literature has often discussed using scruff shakes and rollover techniques to discipline puppies. However, these physical techniques do not mimic how dogs would communicate with each other and such handling by a human could lead to fear, anxiety and even retaliation. Training is intended to teach the dog what you want, rather than discipline what you don't want. This makes a positive learning environment for the puppy to grow up in. There may be a number of advantages to teaching your puppy to assume subordinate postures (on their side, on their back, hands on neck, hand stroking the top of the head, hand grasping muzzle) but this does not mean that they teach your dog to be subordinate in its relationship to you. Having an obedient, well behaved, dog that enjoys handling and accepts restraint should be a focus of puppy training, but needs to be accomplished through reward based training, avoiding punishment and confrontational based training techniques and gradually accustoming your dog to enjoy handling. (See new puppy handling).

### ***How can I gain control without physical exercises?***

The best way for each family member to take control is to teach your puppy that each reward must be earned. This is also the best way to insure that undesirable puppy behaviors are not inadvertently reinforced. The puppy should learn to display subordinate, deferential postures through reward training, rather than through any type of force. Begin with some basic obedience training, teaching the puppy to 'sit', 'stay' and 'lie down' for rewards. Practice short sessions, multiple times each day. Whenever the puppy is to receive anything of value (affection, attention, food, play and walks) the puppy should first be taught to earn its reward by performing a simple obedience task such as 'sit' or 'stay'. Teach the puppy that rewards of any sort will never be given on demand. Also known as 'nothing in life is free', a term coined by veterinary behaviorist, Victoria Voith, or "learn to earn" as described by William Campbell, the puppy must be taught that vocalization, nipping, mouthing, overly rambunctious, or demanding behaviors of any sort will never earn rewards. In fact, these behaviors should be met by inattention, by



confining the puppy for a few minutes until it settles down, or with training devices and commands that get the puppy to exhibit the desired response. Another option is to immediately control and calm the puppy with a head collar (See our handout on Biting – play biting and mouthing in puppies for details). Rewards should be given as soon as the puppy is performing an appropriate response (See handout on puppy training sit and down).

Set limits on the puppy so that it does not learn that it can control you. Having the puppy sleep in its own bed or own cage rather than on your bed or couch, helps to prevent the dog from gaining control or becoming possessive of your resources. When the puppy is taken for walks it should be taught to follow. This should begin at the front door where the puppy should be taught to sit, wait, and follow, and never allowed to lead or pull you through the doorway.

### ***How do I prevent my puppy from doing damage or getting into mischief?***

The rule of thumb for dog training is "set the dog up for success". Supervise the puppy at all times until it has learned what it is allowed to chew, and where it is supposed to eliminate.

Keeping the puppy on a 10-foot remote leash is an excellent way to keep it in sight, and to train it not to wander off. This is particularly helpful with a highly investigative puppy or for a very busy household.

At any time that the puppy cannot be supervised, such as throughout the night or when you need to go out, house it in a secure area. An escape-proof crate, a dog run, or collapsible pen are simple, highly effective, and most important, safe. The puppy could also be confined to a room that has been carefully dog-proofed. When selecting your dog's confinement area it is useful to consider a number of factors. The dog will adapt fastest to the new area if it is associated with rewards. Have the puppy enter the area for all its treats, toys, and perhaps food and water. The area should have some warm, dry, comfortable bedding, and should never be used for punishment (although it can, and should, be used to prevent problems). Housing the puppy in isolated areas where there is minimal human contact, such as in a laundry room or basement, should be avoided. In fact, often the best area is a kitchen (so that this can also be the dog's feeding area) or a bedroom (so that it becomes the dog's sleeping area). Each time the puppy needs to be confined, it should first be well exercised and given an opportunity to eliminate. Another consideration in selecting the type of confinement area is how long you may need to leave the dog alone. You must provide an area for elimination anytime the puppy will be left alone for longer than it can control its elimination. A room or collapsible pen with a paper-covered area would be needed. A cage or crate could be used for owners that do not have to leave their puppies confined for longer than 2 or 3 hours (See crate training handout for instructions on crate training your puppy).

### ***What is the best way to punish my puppy for misbehavior?***

Every effort should be made to avoid punishment for new puppies as it is generally unnecessary and can lead to avoidance of family members, at a time when bonding and attachment is critical. By preventing problems through confinement or supervision, providing for all of the puppy's needs, and setting up the environment for success, little or no punishment should ever be required. If a reprimand is needed, a verbal "no" or a loud noise is usually sufficient to distract a puppy so that you can then redirect the puppy to the correct behavior. Puppies that are supervised with a remote leash can be immediately interrupted with a pull on the leash. (See our handout on 'Punishment' for further details).

### ***What should I do if my puppy misbehaves?***

Undesirable misbehavior must be prevented, or corrected in the act. Allowing the puppy, even once to perform an undesirable behavior such as entering a restricted room, jumping up, mounting or jumping onto the couch will serve to reward and encourage the repetition of the behavior.

There will be times when your new puppy misbehaves. How you respond to the puppy will often influence later interactions. Young puppies are very impressionable. Harsh physical reprimands are contraindicated. They only serve to frighten the puppy and perhaps make them hand shy. Unfortunately, animals can learn in one trial if something is aversive enough. We want young puppies to look toward a human hand as something pleasant that brings comfort, food and affection. Most puppies can be easily interrupted with vocal intonation and loud noises. What is equally important is to redirect the puppy to the correct behavior after you interrupt what you do not like. **Remember that punishment must take place while the behavior is occurring, not after.**

If you catch your puppy misbehaving, try a loud noise such as clapping your hands or a loud "uh-uh". Remember, reprimands need to occur while the behavior is happening, preferably just

as it begins, and never after. Often puppies will be startled when they hear these noises and temporarily stop the behavior. At that time you should redirect the puppy to a more appropriate task and reinforce with an immediate and positive 'good dog'.

Another way to interrupt your puppy is with various types of noise devices. One such device is a "shake can". This is an empty soda can that has a few pennies inside and then is taped shut. When given a vigorous shake it makes a loud noise, which will interrupt the puppy's behavior. Ultrasonic and sonic dog-training devices are also available (See our handout on 'Behavior management products').

The most important thing that you can do to avoid undesirable behavior is to supervise your puppy. Unsupervised puppies will chew and destroy objects as part of their natural curiosity and play. Rather than finding yourself with the need to reprimand your puppy, keep your puppy on a leash to avoid bad behaviors. Always provide suitable play objects designed to entertain your puppy so that it will not want to destroy your possessions (See our handout on 'Destructiveness - chewing' for ideas).

Most importantly, if you find something that your puppy has destroyed but you did not catch him in the act, just clean it up and vow to supervise your puppy better in the future. Do not go get your puppy and bring him over to the mess and yell and physically discipline him. Remember that you need to punish the behavior you wish to change at the time it occurs. If you did not see your puppy chew up the object, all you are doing is disciplining your puppy for being present at a mess on the floor. Since that makes no sense to your puppy, your reprimands could create fear and anxiety, which could lead to aggression and owner avoidance.

### ***How can I prevent problems?***

Supervise the puppy at all times that it is not confined to ensure that the puppy does not get itself into mischief, or cause damage to itself or the home. Leaving a remote leash attached is all that is usually needed to prevent or interrupt inappropriate behavior such as garbage raiding, chewing on household items, house-soiling, or wandering off into rooms or areas that are out of bounds. If the leash is attached to a head halter you can quickly correct other problems that might arise, such as nipping, play biting, and jumping up. When the puppy cannot be supervised, confinement (discussed above) will be necessary. See our handout on housetraining for guidance in training your puppy to eliminate in the proper location.

### ***What can be done for the particularly stubborn, disobedient, or headstrong puppy?***

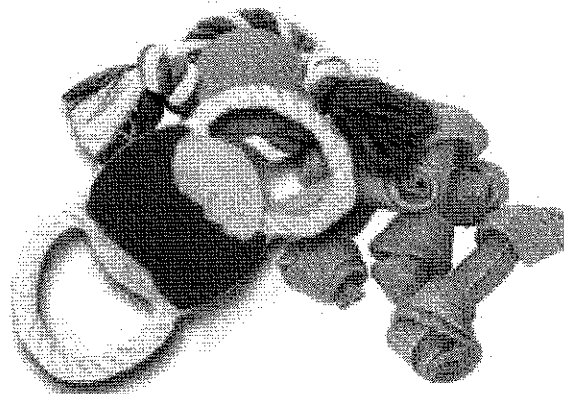
Puppies that are particularly headstrong and stubborn might need some fairly stringent rules. Tug-of-war games should only be allowed if the owner initiates the game, and can successfully call an end to the game, with an 'out', or 'give' command when it is time to call it quits (See our handout on 'Controlling stealing and teaching give'). Rough play must not escalate to uncontrollable play biting that cannot be controlled by the owner.

One of the best management tools for gaining safe and effective control at all times is a head collar. The puppy can be supervised and controlled from a distance by leaving a long line or leash attached to the head halter. The principle of halter training is to gain control over the dog with as much natural communication as possible and without the use of punishment. Positive reinforcement is used to encourage proper behavior. A pull on the leash is used to disrupt misbehavior. Since the halter is attached to the dog's muzzle, common behavior problems (nipping, barking, jumping up, pulling, stealing food, etc.) can immediately be interrupted without

fear or pain by pulling on the leash. The halter places pressure around the muzzle and behind the neck. This simulates the muzzle and neck restraint that a leader or mother dog might apply to a subordinate, and therefore is a highly effective and natural form of control (See our handout on 'Management devices in dog training').

***What must I do to provide for my puppy's needs?***

Chewing, play, exercise, exploration, feeding, social contact and elimination are basic requirements of all puppies. By providing appropriate outlets for each of these needs, few problems are likely to emerge. Puppies should be given chew toys that interest them and occupy their time. When supervised, the owner can allow the puppy to investigate and explore its new environment and can direct the puppy to the appropriate chew toys (and away from inappropriate areas). Play, exercise, affection, training, and handling must all be part of the daily routine. New tasks, new routines, new people and new forms of handling can be associated with rewards to ensure success. And, of course, the puppy will need to be provided with an acceptable area for elimination, and will need guidance until it learns to use this area.



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*This client information sheet is based on material written by Debra Horwitz, DVM, Diplomate ACVB & Gary Landsberg, DVM, Diplomate ACVB  
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April 27, 2010

# Puppy Behavior Basics

*The Humane Society of the United States*



Vanessa Montgomery/The HSUS

Well-socialized dogs are more likely to have well-socialized puppies. Pups often mirror their mothers' calm or fearful attitude toward people; this is a normal part of their socialization.

But you can play a vital role, too, by petting, talking, and playing with puppy to help him develop good "people skills."

Here are general guidelines for puppy stages of development, and what to expect during their first 18 months of life

## **Birth to two weeks: Neonatal period**

Puppy is most influenced by his mother.  
Senses of touch and taste are present at birth.

## **Stick with your littermates**

Puppies are usually weaned at six to seven weeks, but are still learning important skills as their mother gradually leaves them for longer periods of time. Ideally, puppies should stay with their littermates (or other "role-model" dogs) for at least 12 weeks.

Puppies separated from their littermates too early often fail to develop appropriate "social skills," such as learning how to send and receive signals, what an "inhibited bite" (acceptable mouthing pressure) means, how far to go in play-wrestling, and so forth.

[Play is important for puppies](#) because it increases their physical coordination, social skills, and learning limits. By interacting with their mother and littermates, puppies explore the ranking process ("who's in charge") and also learn "how to be a dog."

Most dogs are still puppies, in mind and body, through the first two years of life.

Skills not acquired during the first eight weeks may be lost forever. While these stages are important and fairly consistent, a dog's mind remains receptive to new experiences and lessons well beyond puppyhood. Most dogs are still puppies, in mind and body, through the first two years of life.

### **Two to four weeks: Transitional period**

Puppy is most influenced by his mother and littermates.  
Eyes open, teeth begin to come in, and senses of hearing and smell develop.  
Puppy begins to stand, walk a little, wag tail, and bark.  
By the fourth or fifth week, eyesight is well-developed.

### **Three to 12 weeks: Socialization period**

During this period, puppy needs opportunities to meet other dogs and people.  
By three to five weeks, puppy becomes aware of his surroundings, companions (both canine and human), and relationships, including play.  
By four to six weeks, puppy is most influenced by littermates and is learning about being a dog.  
From four to 12 weeks, puppy remains influenced by littermates and is also influenced by people. [Puppy learns to play](#), develops social skills, learns the inhibited bite, explores social structure/ranking, and improves physical coordination.  
By five to seven weeks, puppy develops curiosity and explores new experiences. Puppy needs positive "people" experiences during this time.  
By seven to nine weeks, puppy is refining his physical skills and coordination, and [can begin to be housetrained](#). Puppy has full use of senses.  
By eight to 10 weeks, puppy experiences real fear involving normal objects and experiences; puppy needs [positive training](#) during this time.  
By nine to 12 weeks, puppy is refining reactions, developing social skills with littermates (appropriate interactions), and exploring the environment and objects. Puppy begins to focus on people; this is a [good time to begin training](#).

### **Three to six months: Ranking period**

Puppy is most influenced by "playmates," which may now include those of other species.  
Puppy begins to see and use ranking (dominance and submission) within the household (the puppy's "pack"), including humans.  
Puppy begins teething (and associated [chewing](#)).  
At four months of age, puppy experiences another fear stage.

### **Six to 18 months: Adolescence**

Puppy is most influenced by human and dog "pack" members.  
At seven to nine months, puppy goes through a [second chewing phase](#), part of exploring territory.  
Puppy increases exploration of dominance, including challenging humans.  
If not [spayed or neutered](#), puppy experiences beginnings of sexual behavior.

*Adapted from material originally developed by applied animal behaviorists at the Dumb Friends League, Denver, Colorado. All rights reserved.*

**Fairleigh Pet Center**  
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## **PUPPY – TRAINING BASICS**

### ***At what age can I start training my new puppy?***

You will be training your puppy from the moment you bring it home and start to house train. Puppies start learning from birth. Good breeders encourage handling and socialization from birth. Some training can begin as soon as the puppy can open its eyes and walk. Young puppies have short attention spans but expect them to begin to learn simple obedience commands such as 'sit', 'down' and 'stay', from as young as 7 to 8 weeks of age. (Ask for our handouts on 'Rewards - learning and reinforcement', 'Puppy training – sit, down, stand, and stay'; and 'Puppy training – come, wait and follow' for training on the specific tasks).

Formal dog training has traditionally been delayed until 6 months of age. Actually this juvenile stage is a very poor time to start. The dog is beginning to solidify adult behavioral patterns, dominance behavior is beginning to emerge, and behaviors learned in puppyhood may need to be changed. In addition anything that has already been learned or trained incorrectly will need to be undone and retaught.



When training is started at 7 to 8 weeks of age, use methods that rely on positive reinforcement and gentle teaching. Puppies have short attention spans, so training sessions should be brief, but daily. Puppies can be taught to 'sit', 'down', and 'stand' using a method called food-lure training. We use food treats to entice the dog to follow its nose into the proper positions for 'sit', 'down', 'stand', and 'stay' (See our handout on teaching sit, down and stand).

### ***How do I get started using food lure training?***

Small pieces of food or a favored toy can be used to motivate your puppy to perform most tasks. Provided the reward is sufficiently appealing, the puppy can be prompted to get the desired response by showing the puppy the reward, giving a command, and moving it to get the desired response. For example, food held up over the puppy's nose and moved slowly backwards should get a 'sit' response; food drawn down to the floor should get a 'down' response; food brought back up should get a 'stand' response; food held out at a distance should get a 'come' response; and food held at your thigh as you walk should get the puppy to 'heel' or 'follow'. By pairing a command phrase or word with each action, and giving the reward for each appropriate response, the puppy should soon learn the meaning of each command. The use of rewards and the specific training commands are covered in separate handouts on Rewards – learning and reinforcement for dogs and cats; Controlling stealing and teaching the "give" command; Teaching – sit, down, stand and stay; and Training puppies – come, wait and follow.



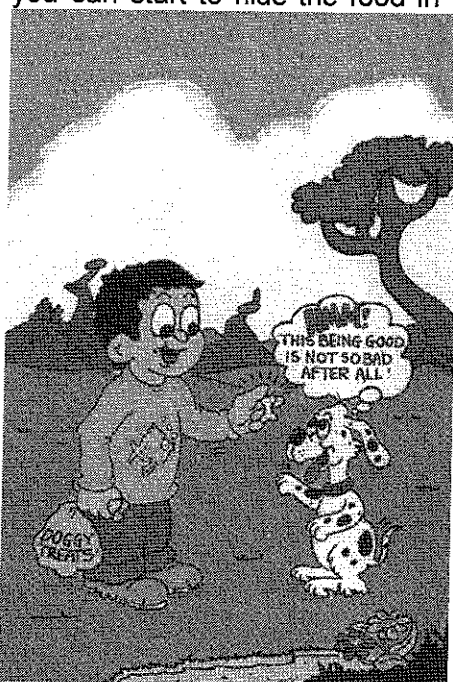
### ***How often should I give the command?***

Ideally you should give the command phrase once and then use your food to move the puppy into positions. Once the puppy has performed the task, add in verbal praise and an affectionate pat, which are known as secondary reinforcers (see below). Some trainers also use clickers as secondary reinforcers. If the puppy does not immediately obey on the first command, then you are likely proceeding a little too quickly. If you keep repeating the command, the puppy will learn that several repetitions are acceptable before it needs to obey. Keeping a leash attached can help to gain an immediate response if the puppy does not obey.

Remember that early in training your puppy does not know the meaning of the word. Therefore you could just as easily teach your puppy to sit with the word bananas, (or sit in any other language) as you could with the word sit. The key is to associate the word, in this case "sit", with the action of placing the hind end on the floor.

### ***How should I phase out the lure and food rewards?***

At first you are going to let the puppy see the food in your hand so that you will have her attention and can use it to guide her into position. As your puppy begins to comply more readily, you can start to hide the food in your hand, but give the command and repeat the motion or



signal that she has learned to follow. Soon the puppy will come to expect the treat each time she performs the task. Then, signal and give the command, but when she performs the task, reward only with praise and give the puppy an affectionate pat. Next, you can begin to vary the frequency, giving praise with 'good dog' and perhaps patting each time, but giving the food randomly, perhaps every 3 or 4 times. In time, the puppy should respond to either the hand signal or the command

Over time, the words "good dog" or the affectionate pat become secondary reinforcers. Because they have been paired with food in the past, they take on more meaning and become reinforcement in themselves. It is important to use secondary reinforcement because you will not always have food with you when you need your pet to obey. In addition, if you rely on food to always get your puppy to comply, you will have a puppy that will only do the task when you have a treat.

At first training may begin in designated sessions throughout the day, with a variety of family members. All rewards should be saved for these training sessions. Over time however, you should begin to ask your puppy to perform the tasks at other times.

### ***How much time should I spend training my puppy every day?***

You do not necessarily need to train in a set session daily. Rather, integrate these tasks throughout the day. A goal to strive for is at least 15 minutes of training every day. These can be short 5 minute sessions spread throughout the day. Try to have all family members ask your puppy to do these tasks. Remember to try and train in every room of your house. You want your puppy to 'sit', 'lie down' and 'stay' everywhere, not just in the training location.

Use these training tasks as you integrate the puppy into your life. For example, ask your puppy to 'sit' prior to receiving her food, 'sit' before you let her in or out the door, and 'sit' before you pet her. These are times when your puppy wants something and is more likely to comply. In this way you are training your dog all the time, throughout the day and also establishing yourself as the leader, the one who controls the resources. Training your puppy prior to getting each reward also helps to prevent problems. Having your puppy sit before getting a food or treat prevents begging, while teaching your dog to sit before opening the door can prevent jumping up or running out the door. Be creative. The time you spend training your puppy now will pay off when you have an adult dog. To have a well-trained dog, you need to be committed to reinforcing the training tasks on nearly a daily basis for the first year of your puppy's life. The more you teach and supervise your puppy, the less opportunity it will have to engage in improper behaviors. Dogs do not train themselves, when left to choose their behavior they will act like dogs.

### ***What can be done if my puppy is too distracted or excitable to control?***

Training should begin in a quiet environment with few distractions. The reward chosen should be highly motivating so that the puppy is focused entirely on the trainer and the reward. Although a small food treat generally works best, a favorite toy or a special dog treat might be more appealing. It might also be helpful to train the puppy just before a scheduled mealtime when it is at its hungriest. For difficult puppies or headstrong puppies the best way to ensure that the puppy will perform the desired behavior and respond appropriately to the command is to leave a leash attached and to use a head collar for additional control. In this way, the puppy can be prompted into the correct response if it does not immediately obey and pressure released as soon as the desired response is achieved (see our handout on 'Management devices in dog training') Clicker training is also an excellent way to immediately and strongly reinforce the desired response (See our handout on 'Rewards – learning and reinforcement').



### ***Should I also consider training classes?***

Pet owners who are novices at training can begin a training program with these few simple steps. It takes repetition, time and perseverance for the puppy to be able to predictably and reliably respond to commands in a variety of situations. The training class serves many functions. Of course trainers can demonstrate techniques and help guide you through the steps in training. They can help advise you on puppy training problems, and can help you advance your training to more difficult exercises. The puppy will be learning in a group situation, with some real life distractions. And, considering human nature, the pet owner who takes his or her dog to a puppy class, will be forced to practice (do their homework) throughout the week, if they do not want to fall behind by the next class. A training class is a good place to meet and talk to other new puppy owners and see how all puppies behave.

Training classes for young puppies are also an excellent way to socialize your new puppy to a variety of people, other dogs, and stimuli, in a controlled environment. In addition, you will learn how to prevent problems before they can begin, or deal with them as they emerge, rather than having to find a way to correct problems that have already developed. Your puppy might also make some new friends of the same age. You could then visit these friends (or vice versa) with

your puppy for social play and exercise sessions. Since the primary socialization period for dogs ends by 3 months of age, puppy socialization classes are most valuable for puppies 8 weeks of age and older. If all puppies in the class have had initial vaccinations, are healthy and parasite free, the health risks are low and the potential benefits are enormous. Discuss when to start and the location of classes in your area with your veterinarian.

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October 30, 2009

# Housetraining Puppies



Housetraining your puppy requires far more than a few stacks of old newspapers—it calls for vigilance, patience, plenty of commitment and above all, consistency.

By following the procedures outlined below, you can minimize house soiling incidents. Virtually every dog, especially puppies, will have an accident in the house, and more likely, several. Expect this—it's part of living with a puppy.

The more consistent you are in following the basic housetraining procedures, the faster your puppy will learn acceptable behavior. It may take several weeks to housetrain your puppy, and with some of the smaller breeds, it might take longer.

## **Establish a routine**

Like babies, puppies do best on a regular schedule. The schedule teaches him that there are times to eat, times to play, and times to potty.

Generally speaking, a puppy can control his bladder one hour for every month of age. So if you're puppy is two months old, he can hold it for about two hours. Don't go longer than this between bathroom breaks or he's guaranteed to have an accident. If you work outside the home, this means you'll have to hire a dog walker to give your puppy his breaks.

**Take your puppy outside frequently**—at least every two hours—and immediately after he wakes up, during and after playing, and after eating or drinking.

**Pick a bathroom spot outside**, and always take your puppy to that spot using a leash. While your puppy is eliminating, use a word or phrase, like "go potty," that you can eventually use

before he eliminates to remind him what to do. Take him out for a longer walk or some playtime only after he has eliminated.

**Reward your puppy every time he eliminates outdoors.** Praise him or give him a treat—but remember to do so immediately after he's finished eliminating, not after he comes back inside the house. This step is vital, because rewarding your dog for eliminating outdoors is the only way he'll know what's expected of him. Before rewarding him, be sure he's finished eliminating. Puppies are easily distracted. If you praise him too soon, he may forget to finish until he's back in the house.

**Put your puppy on a regular feeding schedule.** What goes into a puppy on a schedule comes out of a puppy on a schedule. Depending on their age, puppies usually need to be fed three or four times a day. Feeding your puppy at the same times each day will make it more likely that he'll eliminate at consistent times as well, and that makes housetraining easier for both of you.

**Pick up your puppy's water dish** about two and a half hours before bedtime to reduce the likelihood that he'll need to potty during the night. Most puppies can sleep for approximately seven hours without having to eliminate.

If your puppy does wake you up in the night, don't make a big deal of it; otherwise, he will think it is time to play and won't want to go back to sleep. Turn on as few lights as possible, don't talk to or play with your puppy, take him out to do his business, and return him to his bed.

### **Supervise**

Don't give your puppy an opportunity to soil in the house; keep an eye on him whenever he's indoors.

**Tether your puppy** to you or a nearby piece of furniture with a six-foot leash if you are not actively training or playing with him. Watch for signs your puppy needs to eliminate. Some signs are obvious, such as barking or scratching at the door, squatting, restlessness, sniffing around, or circling. When you see these signs, immediately grab the leash and take him outside to his bathroom spot. If he eliminates, praise him lavishly and reward him with a treat.

**Keep your puppy on leash in the yard.** During the housetraining process, your yard should be treated like any other room in your house. Give your puppy some freedom in the house and yard only after he is reliably housetrained.

### **Confinement**

When you're unable to watch your puppy at all times, he should be confined to an area small enough that he won't want to eliminate there. The space should be just big enough for him to comfortably stand, lie down, and turn around in. You can use a portion of a bathroom or laundry room blocked off with baby gates.

Or you may want to crate train your puppy and use the crate to confine him. (Be sure to learn how to use a crate humanely as a method of confinement.) If your puppy has spent several hours in confinement, you'll need to take him directly to his bathroom spot as soon as you let him out, and praise him when he eliminates.

### **Oops!**

Expect your puppy to have a few accidents in the house—it's a normal part of housetraining. Here's what to do when that happens:

Interrupt your puppy when you catch him in the act of eliminating in the house.

Make a startling noise (be careful not to scare him) or say "OUTSIDE!" Immediately take him to his bathroom spot, praise him, and give him a treat if he finishes eliminating there.

Don't punish your puppy for eliminating in the house. If you find a soiled area, it's too late to administer a correction. Just clean it up. Rubbing your puppy's nose in it, taking him to the spot and scolding him, or any other punishment will only make him afraid of you or afraid to eliminate in your presence. In fact, punishment will often do more harm than good.

Clean the soiled area thoroughly. Puppies are highly motivated to continue soiling in areas that smell like urine or feces. Check with your veterinarian or pet store for products designed specifically to clean areas soiled by pets.

It's extremely important that you use the supervision and confinement procedures outlined above to minimize the number of accidents. If you allow your puppy to eliminate frequently in the house, he'll get confused about where he's supposed to eliminate, which will prolong the housetraining process.

### **When you're away**

A puppy under six months of age cannot be expected to control his bladder for more than a few hours at a time (approximately one hour for each month of age). If you have to be away from home more than four or five hours a day, this may not be the best time for you to get a puppy; instead, you may want to consider an older dog, who can wait for your return.

If you already have a puppy and must be away for long periods of time, you'll need to:

Arrange for someone, such as a responsible neighbor or a professional pet sitter, to take him outside to eliminate.

Train him to eliminate in a specific place indoors. Be aware, however, that doing so can prolong the process of housetraining. Teaching your puppy to eliminate on newspaper may create a life-long surface preference, meaning that even as an adult he may eliminate on any newspaper lying around the living room.

### **Paper training**

When your puppy must be left alone for long periods of time, confine him to an area with enough room for a sleeping space, a playing space, and a separate place to eliminate.

In the designated elimination area, use either newspapers (cover the area with several layers of newspaper) or a sod box. To make a sod box, place sod in a container such as a child's small, plastic swimming pool. You can also find dog litter products at a pet supply store.

If you clean up an accident in the house, put the soiled rags or paper towels in the designated elimination area. The smell will help your puppy recognize the area as the place where he is supposed to eliminate.

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# Puppy Nipping and Rough Play

*The Humane Society of the United States*

It's not always easy to convince a new puppy not to bite the hand that feeds him, pets him, or plays with him, for that matter.

When puppies play with each other, they use their mouths, so they may also be inclined to bite or "mouth" your hand during play or when being petted. This is rarely aggressive behavior meant to



do harm, but it is a difficult habit to break unless you encourage your puppy to try an acceptable alternative behavior. The goal is to redirect your puppy's energy onto acceptable chew toys, and to teach her to be gentle when a hand is in or near her mouth.

## **Encourage acceptable behavior**

Redirect your puppy's penchant for nipping and biting by offering her more acceptable objects (such as chew toys) whenever you pet her. This technique can be especially effective when children want to pet her.

As you or the child reaches out to scratch her behind the ears with one hand, offer the chew toy with the other. This will not only help your puppy learn that people and petting are wonderful, but will also keep her mouth busy while she's being petted. Alternate which hand does the petting and which one has the chew toy. You may need to start off by petting or scratching your puppy for short periods of time, since the longer she's petted, the more likely she is to get excited and start to nip.

## **Discourage unacceptable behavior**

You must also teach your puppy to be gentle with hands, and show her that nipping results in unpleasant consequences. Teach your puppy that nipping "turns off" any attention and social interaction with you. As soon as a nip occurs, look your puppy right in the eye and yell "OUCH" as though you've been mortally wounded. Then ignore her. Leave the room if you must, but ignore her until she's calm, and then try the chew toy and petting method again.

## **Jumping up**

When your puppy jumps up on you, she wants attention. Even if you push her away, she is still getting attention (even if it is a response that you might consider negative).

## **When your puppy jumps up:**

Fold your arms in front of you, turn away from her, and say "off."

Continue to turn away from her until all four paws are on the ground, then quietly praise her and give her a treat. If she knows the "sit" command, give the command when all four paws are on the ground, then quietly praise her and give her a treat while she's in the sitting position.

If she begins to jump while you're praising her, simply turn away and repeat the second step, above. Remember to keep your praise low-key.

When your puppy realizes that she gets no attention from you while she's jumping up, but does get attention when she sits, she'll stop jumping up. Remember, once you've taught her to come and sit quietly for attention, you must reward her behavior. Be careful not to ignore her when she comes and sits politely, waiting for your attention.

### **What not to do**

Attempts to tap, slap, or hit your puppy in the face for nipping or jumping up are almost guaranteed to backfire. Several things may happen, depending on your puppy's temperament and the severity of the correction:

She could become "hand-shy" and cringe or cower whenever a hand comes toward her face.

She could become afraid of you, and refuse to come to you or approach you at all.

She could respond in a defensive manner and attempt to bite you to defend herself.

She could interpret a mild slap as an invitation to play, causing her to become more excited and even more likely to nip.

Set boundaries when playing "tug-of-war" or wrestling games with your puppy. When trained properly, these types of games can teach your puppy bite restraint and the limitations of rough play.

### **Be consistent**

It's important that all behaviors, acceptable and unacceptable, be managed consistently by all family members. And remember that any method you try will probably not be effective unless you work hard to teach your puppy an acceptable alternative behavior.

### **A note about children and puppies**

It's very difficult for children under 8 or 9 years old to practice the kind of behavior modification outlined here. Children's first reaction to being nipped or mouthed by a puppy is to push the puppy away with their hands and arms. This will be interpreted by the puppy as play and will probably cause the puppy to nip and mouth even more. Adults should closely monitor all interactions between their children and dogs.

*Adapted from material originally developed by applied animal behaviorists at the Dumb Friends League, Denver, Colorado. All rights reserved.*