

Puppy Socialization & Training Tips

Starting one week after you get your puppy (age 8 or 9 weeks), get him out one day a week to a new situation he has never seen before. This takes some planning, but is worth the effort.

8 Weeks:

A walk (off leash) in a meadow or pasture with medium tall grass. Keep him with you by voice. Encourage him to climb over a little mound of dirt or a log. *Praise* his efforts to do something he has never done before. Walk just fast enough that he has to strain very slightly to keep up with you. At this age his desire to stay with you is very keen. Capitalize on that. The walk should take no more than 20 minutes.

9 Weeks:

Another walk, this time in the woods. He is in taller grass and weeds. He must occasionally climb over small logs (Just big enough to be a challenge). He goes up the hill, down the hill, over the rocks, maybe down a small bank. The perfect setup is where he goes across a small creek. He gets wet up to the chest. He scrambles up the bank to follow you. He goes through a thick carpet of leaves that crunch when he walks. Encourage him all the way. Praise him for meeting the challenge. The walk takes about 20 minutes.

10 Weeks:

The same as age 9 weeks but a bit more difficult. Occasionally hide momentarily from him when he is distracted in the woods. Watch him. Does he notice you are missing? If he does, and starts to look for you, suddenly appear and praise profusely. If he doesn't look for you, toss a pebble to make him notice you are missing. Then call him from your hiding place. When he starts to look for you, appear and praise him. This will teach him, as it is repeated time and time again, to watch you when you are out in the woods, instead of you having to constantly be watching where he is. This makes him take that responsibility of staying with you. Play this game over and over through many weeks until you cannot hide from him because he is always watching. This only works when started young.

11 Weeks:

Take him swimming. You hold him and wade out to knee-deep water. Point him toward shore and gently let him go. Be sure he gets his head up and he heads for shore. Have someone on shore encouraging him in a positive way. Another way to approach this is to entice him into the water by going in yourself and encouraging him to follow. Do not throw him in! When you are through get him out and dry him off and go home. Don't let him get chilled.

12 Weeks:

Take a trip to the farm. Let him see cows, horses, chickens and whatever else you can find. This time you can keep him on leash. Make sure he is safe from the animals and let him get close enough to sniff. This outing can take 20 or more minutes. You have a positive attitude about all this. Be nonchalant about it all, as if this is what every 12-week-old pup does.

13 Weeks:

Take him on leash to town. Walk him on a main street with medium to light foot traffic. He sees and hears cars, trucks and heavy street traffic. He passes by many people walking bicycles, deliverymen with hand trucks, etc. This should be a short outing about 10 minutes. Praise him lavishly for positive behavior. Be nonchalant and very encouraging. When you get back to the car, lay on the praise for his remarkable feats of courage.

14 Weeks:

A trip to the beach or some other special place he has never been. Perhaps a trip to the local grade school front lawn when all the children are pouring out. Let the kids stop and pet him. Let him see and be in the crowd.

15 Weeks:

Another trip to town.

16 Weeks:

Your pup's major learning age of his entire life is now over. Hopefully you have given him a very wide range of experiences. If you have done all this faithfully you will have taught him the most important thing of all to learn and it will stay with him the rest of his life, enabling him to continue to learn throughout his lifetime.

17 to 21 Weeks:

This is a bad time to subject your pup to stress, such as plane trips, a stay at the vets, boarding kennel or any threatening situation. Many pups act very fearful at this age. This should be a quiet time in their lives.

Socialization Tips and Puppy Training Pointers for New Puppy Owners

Puppy Socialization Do's and Don'ts

Socialization and puppy training are of utmost importance as puppy hood is the most important and critical time in your dog's development. What you do and do not do right now will affect your dog's behavior forever.

Puppy Socialization

A properly socialized dog is well adjusted and makes a good companion. It is neither frightened by nor aggressive towards anyone or anything it would normally meet in day-to-day living. An un-socialized dog is untrustworthy and an unwanted liability. They often become fear-biters. Often they like to fight with other dogs. They are difficult to train and are generally unpleasant to be around. Unsocialized dogs cannot adapt to new situations and a simple routine visit to the vet is a nightmare not only for the dog itself, but for everyone involved. Don't let this happen to you and your dog. Start socializing your new puppy NOW! The Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine agrees that the socialization period lasts up to about 12 weeks (3 months) of age. However, at 12 weeks, the puppy must continue socialization to refine its social skills. Socialization most easily occurs before the puppy is 3 months old. Any later than that and it becomes an excruciatingly difficult and time-consuming process that very few owners have the time, energy, money or patience to cope with.

Early Puppy Training

There still remains a belief that dogs should not be trained until at least six months to one year of age. All dogs and their owners CAN benefit when behavior, temperament and obedience training begin as soon as the seven or eight-week-old puppy enters his new home. By six months of age, almost all problem behaviors are already in place, and solving them will be difficult, frustrating and possibly not successful.

Nipping, chewing, digging, barking, mounting, etc. are all normal dog behavior but, if left uncorrected, can lead to problems. Dogs learn each and every day whether it is good behavior or bad behavior.

Children and Dogs

Parents have an obligation to monitor all child-dog interaction, until both child and dog have learned to play nicely together. There will be times when you will have to protect the pup from children and vice-versa.

Do not leave children alone with a new pup. Inevitably, the pup will view small children as littermates and will nip.

Do not allow aggressive play or tug-of-war with the pet puppy. This can lead to aggressive behavior and biting. Instead, throw a ball for the pup to chase.

Do not allow the pup to join in running games with children. The pup will be encouraged to think of children as "prey".

Tell children to leave a sleeping puppy alone. Dogs instinctively do not like surprises, and a serious incident could occur.

Encourage children to think of the puppy as a sensitive, living thing, with needs and desires. It is not a toy.

Spoiling

A trained dog is not likely to be spoiled. Through training he has learned to look for leadership, has learned trust and obedience. Indulging in bad behavior, catering to his every desire, allowing nipping, begging, stealing from plates, barking, etc. is another matter. The irritating, unpleasant dog has become "leader of the pack"; while the trained dog develops into a companion free to be with you wherever you dog.

Growling, snapping and nipping are an attempt to gain control - to become leader of the pack.

The destructive chewer has not been taught responsible behavior and should not be rewarded with the freedom to behave so.

The food or garbage stealer has never been taught his limits.

The dog indifferent to his owner's commands has learned not to respect his owner - he's not tired or bored.

The dog which incessantly demands his owners attention is over-indulged. Owners sometimes choose not to teach, preferring, instead, to "buy" the pup's love with permissiveness, over petting and coddling. Each pup naturally must find his place in the [family] pack. The owner must assume the "leader" position to provide the security the pup needs. Preventing problems is easier than solving them!

Leadership

Dogs are genetically programmed to live in packs. A dog requires leadership to give structure and security to his life. The pup's mother corrected each pup firmly, swiftly, and instantly, by using a neck shake, a clout of her paw, or by pinning the pup to the ground. She was the "boss".

In his new home the pup will fill the role of leader if none is provided. This is usually shown through growls, nips and other dominant behavior. Avoid excessive petting as only the pack leader is entitled to such demonstrations. Once a dog is trained and under control the owner can indulge in hugging without fear of spoiling him.

All members of the family must agree to behave consistently. Do not allow the pup on the couch one day and scold him the next. This is very confusing to a pup.

Socialization

At eight weeks the new puppy in the home should be accustomed to normal household sounds: the vacuum cleaner, dishwasher, TV, radio, toilet, etc. Ideally, this was begun by the breeder. Invite friends and neighbors to your home to meet the new pup. Take him for short car rides to accustom his body to the motion of a moving car and to help prevent carsickness later on.

After a couple of weeks take him everywhere you can, choosing new environments each time. Examples are a park, a schoolyard, a construction site, a busy sidewalk, and a busy plaza. If the pup ever shows fear, do NOT pet him. He'll view this as praise for being fearful. Remain calm and let him adjust his behavior.

Praise and Discipline

As leader, use a happy, enthusiastic tone when praising your pup for good behavior, and accompany your verbal praise with petting. Praise good behavior generously. Never reward fearful behavior by "soothing" it with a soft voice and stroking. This only reinforces the behavior, from the dog's point of view, he is being rewarded.

Never pet or soothe a pup when he is aggressively threatening anyone. A full-blown case of dangerous aggression could result.

Use a calm, firm voice when disciplining. Do not plead with the pup. Discipline does not mean punishment and should not be harsh physical punishment.

Use NO to inform your pup that his actions are not appropriate. NO is an authoritative sound with the object of creating an immediate reaction. Do not use the word "no" combined with your pup's name.

OK is a happy-sounding, positive word. It gives permission and approval from you.

House Training

Dogs are den animals, and a crate is readily accepted as a pup's private place. A crate provides a secure place to prevent the pup from undesirable behavior. Since no dog likes to soil his den, house training will be simplified by using a crate. The crate should be located in your bedroom to promote bonding with your pup.

The pup will earn freedom by demonstrating his responsibility. Later, the pup can be provided with more freedom and the crate left with the door open.

As a rule, all pups will have to "go" upon waking, after eating, after drinking, during or after play or excitement, whenever they are busily circling and sniffing, and just because!

Food remains in the intestinal tract about 16 hours. Therefore, a regular feeding schedule will equate to a regular washroom schedule. Dogs free fed are eating all the time - what goes in all day, comes out all day. A feeding at 6:00 a.m. will produce elimination at 10:00 p.m. and a 6:00 p.m. feeding will produce elimination at 10:00 a.m. Adjust the feeding schedule to times you can exercise the dog.

People who work part time simply crate the pup while away. People who are at home all day can tie the pup's leash to their waist as they go about their chores, monitoring him closely to take him out when he indicates he needs to "go". People who work full time should not expect a young pup to be in his crate for 8-10 hours at a stretch.

Remember, very young puppies need to sleep a lot, crate training takes advantage of this need by putting the pup in his crate to nap. Then, he is taken outside as soon as he awakens. Walk him on leash until he goes, then praise him happily. Encourage him with an expression such as "Do your business," "Go pee," et cetera.

After elimination the pup should be given play time with feeding afterwards.

Do:

- Expect a few noisy nights when the pup first comes home.
- Adhere to a rigid walk-play-feed-walk schedule.
- Feed on a regular schedule.
- Allow peace and privacy when the pup is in his crate.
- Allow the pup to sleep in your bedroom.

Make sure that each of the following events are pleasant and non-threatening. If your puppy's first experience with something is painful and frightening, you will be defeating your purpose. In fact, you will be creating a phobia that will often last a lifetime. It's better to go too slow and assure your puppy is not frightened or injured than to rush and force your pup to meet new things and people.

-Invite friends over to meet your pup. Include men, women, youngsters, oldsters, different ethnic backgrounds, etc.

-Invite friendly, healthy, vaccinated dogs, puppies and even cats to your home to meet and play with your new puppy. Take your puppy to the homes of these pets, preferably with dog-friendly cats.

-Carry your pup to shopping centers, parks, school playgrounds, etc; places where there are crowds of people and plenty of activity.

-Take your puppy for short, frequent rides in the car. Stop the car and let your puppy watch the world go by through the window.

-Introduce your puppy to umbrellas, bags, boxes, the vacuum cleaner, etc. Encourage your puppy to explore and investigate his environment. -Get your puppy accustomed to seeing different and unfamiliar objects by creating your own. Set a chair upside down. Lay the trash can (empty) on its side, set up the ironing board right-side up one day and upside down the next day.

-Introduce your puppy to new and various sounds. **Loud, obnoxious sounds** should be introduced from a distance and gradually brought closer.

-Accustom your puppy to being brushed, bathed, inspected, having its nails clipped, teeth and ears cleaned and all the routines of grooming and physical examination.

-Introduce your puppy to stairs, his own **collar and leash**. Introduce anything and everything you want your puppy to be comfortable with and around.

Don't:

- Expect the pup to spend more than four hours in the crate.
- Allow children to tease the pup in his crate
- Leave destructible items in the crate.
- Give water after 7:00 p.m.

- Take the pup out of his crate if he is barking, crying, etc.
- Place rugs, pillows, etc. in the crate. Use newspapers.
- Also attempt to paper train. Why teach him to "go" indoors?

-Do not put your puppy on the ground where unknown animals have access. This is where your puppy can pick up diseases. Wait until your puppy's shots are completed. Do not let your pup socialize with dogs that appear sick or dogs that you don't know, that may not be vaccinated.

-Do not reward fearful behavior. In a well meaning attempt to sooth, encourage or calm the puppy when it appears frightened, we often unintentionally reward the behavior. It's normal for the puppy to show some signs of apprehension when confronting anything new and different.

-Do not allow the experience to be harmful, painful or excessively frightening. This can cause lifetime phobias in your dog.

-Do not force or rush your puppy. Let your puppy take things at his own pace. Your job is to provide the opportunity.

-Do not do too much at one time. Young puppies need a lot of sleep and tire quickly. It is much more productive to have frequent and very brief exposures than occasional prolonged exposures.

-DO NOT WAIT!! Every day that goes by is an opportunity of a lifetime that is lost forever. You can never get these days back. If socialization does not happen now, it never will.

Biting

All pups use their teeth, just as they did in their litter, nipping or chewing to test their limits. The mother never permits the pup to nip her - she punishes swift and to the point.

Biting is usually the result of misbehavior that was never corrected. It escalates as the pup grows up thinking of himself as the leader of the pack. Corrections must be done instantly every time it occurs. Very young puppies generally respond to a piercing YIPE! And will release instantly. Another technique is the hand-over-the-muzzle grab accompanied by a firm NO and a low, menacing growl. He will understand this just as he did his mother.

For those who are a little more determined a firm, upward open-handed tap under the chin, a firm NO, and a growl will usually work. When he stops, take him to his crate and leave him alone for half an hour.

Keep a 4 inch-6 inch "grab" lead on him so he cannot escape from any correction.

Food Treats

The use of food treats to train basic commands is generally not recommended (with the exception, perhaps, of parlor tricks - they matter not in day-to-day activities). A pup is a pack animal and must learn through trial and error his position within his family pack. His mother never rewards with "treats".

The promise of food is a distraction wherein the pup will concentrate on the hand or

pocket and not on his owner's face and eyes. A pup that avoids eye contact will not learn and will not concentrate. A pup trained with food will appear eager but is reacting in a mechanical way, that is, he is not learning.

Training without treats reinforces the owners dominant position over the dog. A pup that learns will be eager to learn more when he is properly praised.

Chewing

Pups that are prevented from destructive chewing never develop the problem. Any pup left to his own devices while the owners are away will vent his loneliness and frustration on whatever object catches his fancy. This is normal and to be expected. A pup that is crated during his owners' absence cannot indulge in such a destructive activity. The owner must keep the pup under close supervision at other times. Freedom of the house should not be granted. A pup will have to hear the word "No" many times before he learns that household objects are forbidden. Should he mouth an object, clap your hands, stamp on the floor, etc., to attract his attention. When he releases the object offer him his own approved "chewie" and praise him when he takes it.

Begging

Begging usually begins with an indulgent owner offering food from his plate or the kitchen counter. This easily leads to whining, barking, leaping at the table, etc. Never offer the pup food from your plate, table or kitchen counter. This will prevent all begging problems. Should the pup beg simply ignore him, eventually, the pup will give up and wander off in boredom.

Growling over Food

Pups should be prevented from growling over their food especially if there are children in the household.

Sit on the floor, holding the food dish, and call the pup to you. Verbally praise him for coming to you. As the pup eats, talk to him, pet him, and perhaps throw in a treat. Have each member of the family take turns at different meal times.

If the pup should growl or indicate any defensiveness, he must be told No, then grabbed by his middle, and pulled backward away from the dish. Roll the pup onto his back and scold him. When he subsides, release him, and allow him to resume eating. Repeat if he growls again. This works for young pups.

For older pups the owner should stand near the dish with the pup on lead. Should he growl, say No firmly, and pull the dog back away from the dish, administering a leash correction. In a day or two, you may hold the dish on your lap while the dog is eating quietly.

An older dog that has developed this behavior should not be treated as above but should be referred to a professional trainer/behaviorist.

Jumping on People

Start immediately to teach your pup to keep all four feet on the ground. With the young pup do not encourage him to stretch up to greet you, instead, crouch down to his level, assist him in sitting, then greet him.

The pup should be taught the sit-stay. When visitors arrive the pup should be on lead and put in a sit-stay to one side of the door. The guests should be allowed to enter, told to ignore the pup, and when seated the pup should be brought on lead to meet them. The pup should be sat in front of each guest and then they can pet him. It is important that the sit-stay be mastered if the pup is to learn to keep his feet on the floor.

CRATE TRAINING

Crate training is not putting your dog/puppy in a cage or jail, and you are not being cruel if you follow these tips. Dogs feel secure in small, enclosed spaces, like a den. Dog crates make excellent dens. It is a safe place for him to stay when you're away or when you cannot watch him.

Watch your own dog around home. Where do you find him napping in his deepest sleep? Under the table, desk, chair? Yes, somewhere out of the traffic pattern where he has a roof overhead and a little privacy. A crate offers security, a den with a roof, and a place to call his very own where he can go to get away from it all.

There are basically just a few steps in "crate" training and they are as follows:

Choose a crate the same size as your puppy/dog. He should only have enough room to stand up, turn around and lie down comfortable. His crate is for sleeping or for a safe place to be when you cannot be with him. If you get a huge crate for a small dog, he may eliminate in one end and sleep in the other and you will have defeated the whole purpose of using the crate (dogs do not like to eliminate anywhere where they sleep or eat). If you have a puppy that will grow into a 60-70 lb. dog, we suggest that you get the one that will fit him as an adult then make a divider you can move as he grows.

Use a single-word command for your dog to enter his crate, for example, "KENNEL"; throw in a treat or piece of kibble; when the dog/puppy enters, praise him and close the crate door. Increase the time he spends in the crate before you let him back out. Remember, your dog still needs time to play and eliminate. Maintain a regular schedule of trips outdoors so as not to confine him too long. NEVER let him/her out when they are howling, I take a treat divert the puppy to the side with the treat and open the door while he is focused on me and the treat. That way they never associate getting out with yapping.

As a general guide, your puppy can stay in his crate comfortably for several hours, depending on his age. Take his age in months, add 1 month, and that's how many hours he should be able to stay in his crate (up to about 8 hours). For example, a 2-month old pup should be comfortable in his crate for about 3 hours in his crate.

Always take your puppy/dog outside to the same area in your backyard to eliminate on a leash so you can praise him when his job is finished. This will take the guesswork out of his visits to the backyard. And don't forget to play with him and exercise him. He needs this kind of stimulation for his mental and physical wellness.

Remember, your dog or puppy is a pack animal by nature and he will be looking to you for direction. Your job as a responsible pet owner is to give him that direction so you can enjoy each other as true companions should.

Biting & Chewing

Dogs need to chew to relieve stress and excess energy. In fact, puppy teething is a natural part of development. If your dog chews on something that is off-limits, say "no" or "eh" in a low voice. Then give your dog a safe chew toy. Praise him for good behavior. Remember to give your dog safe chew toys instead of old household items like old shoes, because that could encourage him to also chew on new shoes. You will also want to avoid rough play and games like "tug of war" as this will encourage aggressive behavior

House Training

A dog or puppy is either housetrained or not. If your dog is sneaking off to another room and having an accident, you will have to take some of his freedom away until you can solve the problem. The longer you allow this type of behavior to exist, the harder it will be to modify. Unless you can catch him, it really does not do any good to drag him off to the site of his mishap and try and punish him. Keep him in sight if he is bold enough to try something in front of you, say "No," get his attention and take him outdoors quickly so he can finish eliminating in the appropriate area. Remember, it is your house. He has to earn his freedom through good behavior and this is your responsibility.

Your dog will be trained to eliminate outdoors, start by establishing an elimination spot. In the morning, clip his leash to his collar and take the dog outdoors to his spot for elimination. State commands like "go potty" or "hurry up." After he does his duty, bring the dog inside for food and water. About 15 to 20 minutes after the meal, take the dog outside again for elimination. Take your dog to his "spot" at each elimination time. Maintain a regular feeding, drinking, and elimination schedule.

One of the most commonly made errors in housetraining is rushing too quickly ahead of your dog. Too much freedom too quickly can cause some confusion. If your dog experiences an accident or two, you will have to back up and slow down.

Providing your dog or puppy with a crate that is way too large may allow him to relieve himself in one end and sleep in the other. Placing food or water in his crate will allow him to fill up his bladder and bowel and he will have no choice but to relieve himself in his crate. Make sure you take your dog or puppy outdoors to eliminate on a regular schedule and especially prior to being left for prolonged periods of time.

Even well trained dogs sometimes have accidents. Clean the accident area with a pet odor neutralizer so your dog won't be tempted to repeat his mistake. Here are some tips to help prevent accidents:

- Do not make sudden changes in his diet.
- Avoid giving your dog late night snacks.
- Make sure to spend enough time outdoors

MORE thoughts on SOCIALIZING YOUR PUPPY

Many times I've heard a prospective dog owner say, "I want the same breed as my friend's dog. It has a marvelous temperament and does all kinds of tricks." Or, "I'm going to get an "all-American mutt". They're better dogs."

Even with a promising genetic potential or the characteristics that fit your profile of the ideal puppy, the kind of dog your puppy becomes will largely be determined by how you socialize it. The experiences a puppy encounters in its new environment are key factors in shaping its personality and temperament as an adult.

A puppy's socialization begins with its mother and littermates and continues as it is placed in a new home and, to the puppy, a strange environment. Behavioral studies show that a key period of socialization for puppies to humans is from six to eight weeks. This is the time when the mother usually weans her puppies. The puppy's nervous system is reaching the structural and functional capacities of an adult dog. Eight weeks is also the time a puppy is normally placed in its new home. It's ready to learn and intensive socialization should begin.

Socializing your puppy means providing quality time. Give it lots of attention and affection. Pet it and call it by its chosen name. Introduce it to your neighbors and service people such as the mail carrier and others who come to your home regularly. Show children how to hold and pet it. Socializing your puppy to other dogs is important, but this does not mean letting it run free in the neighborhood. Give it the opportunity for safe, controlled interaction with dogs whose owners you know and be sure the dogs are immunized.

As your puppy explores its new environment, it may inadvertently damage some items by chewing. This is part of its exploration. If your puppy damages something or has an accident, do not punish it or speak harshly to it unless you catch it in the act. Even then, punishment should be administered carefully. The only thing a puppy learns from harsh or untimely punishment is to fear you. Begin to introduce it to basic commands, "come," "sit," and "stay." Praise it for positive responses.

In socializing your puppy, remember that the "pack instinct" every dog inherits must be controlled. Your puppy will test you and other family members by attempting to establish dominance as leader of the pack. All family members should cooperate in establishing and enforcing a code of conduct for your puppy. To help it understand that it must obey the rules of the house, be consistent in reprimanding and in praising it. Eye contact and a firm "no" usually deter an undesirable activity.

Utilize every opportunity to socialize your puppy. Make feeding time a happy experience by praising your puppy for being a "good dog" as you place its dish on the floor. Considerable puppy-owner bonding can occur through positive feeding experiences.

Feeding can also aid in training your puppy. As you place its food dish on the floor, give the command, "Come," preceded by the name you have chosen for it. This introduces your puppy to an obedience command and helps teach it to respond to its name.

As your puppy settles into its new home, it may encounter new situations, which will be potentially stressful to it. Helping your puppy adjust to these situations minimizes future behavior problems. You may find that your puppy is frightened by loud noises. During a thunderstorm, fireworks or when appliances are operating, such as the dishwasher or vacuum sweeper, play with your puppy as you normally do or pet and reassure it that the noises are simply "business as usual." Reward it with a dog snack for being calm during the noise.

Gradually accustom your puppy to being left alone. Begin with brief periods of separation and gradually increase the time. When unattended, leave your puppy in its crate or in an area where it cannot do any damage. Give it a favorite chew bone and/or a favorite toy to help prevent boredom.

As you socialize and train your puppy, remember that puppies are eager to please. Reward your puppy for good behavior by praising it. A little praise goes a long way in helping your puppy become an endearing companion.

What is the potential for socializing dogs that have had minimum exposure to people and other dogs during their first three months? The chances of turning such a dog into a family pet depend upon the amount of time the owner is committed to spending with the dog. Considerable time and patience are musts. It can be done, but it is not an easy task.

TRAINING TIPS

Socialization

What your puppy learns about people and his environment now will stay with him for the rest of his life. From his fourth to twelfth week a puppy acquires almost all of his adult sensory, motor and learning abilities. The more loving interaction you establish now, the stronger the bond your dog will have with you later. Plan to spend at least two periods a day playing with your puppy. Use playtime to teach your puppy the basic training commands.

As soon as your veterinarian says it's safe, you should also begin exposing your puppy to as much of the outside world as possible. Introduce your pup to a variety of positive experiences. Visits three new places a week and introduce him to five new people at each place (find a variety of people). Take your pup on regular car rides-use a carrier to insure safer driving.

Puppies may be predisposed to developing phobias between 8 and 11 weeks of age. During this time, you may want to be cautious when exposing your puppy to particularly stressful experiences, like large crowds and unusually loud noises. If he does become frightened, reassure him in a cheerful voice and pass it off quickly. Keep in mind; your puppy will sense feelings from you, so keep your response fairly matter-of-fact. Too much attention to a frightening experience may actually encourage a phobia.

Brush your pup daily with lots of affection and reassurance to make it a special time for both of you. At the same time, handle your pup's feet and ears and open his mouth for inspection. Massage him all over. If the pup fusses, say "no" firmly. When he is quiet, talk to him in a soft, pleasant voice. Similarly, teaching your puppy to allow you to wipe his paws now will be a real asset when he's full grown, bounding inside with wet feet on a rainy day!

Leash Training Fundamentals

Complete leash training is a gradual process. However, the fundamentals of leash training are an essential part of basic puppy training. Begin by having your puppy wear a collar. She may resist this at first but do not give in; for the safety of your puppy this is one rule that must not be broken. Once your puppy is used to the collar, begin letting her drag her leash around the house, under your supervision. When it's potty time, guide the puppy to

her potty place on her leash. Get her used to walking on your left side by simply placing her there each and every time you take her outside. Most puppies learn to love their leash since it's a signal they're going outside - and puppies love to explore!

Heel

Once your puppy is used to her leash, you can introduce the command, "Heel." Stand with your puppy at your left side and start your walk. Talk to your puppy and keep her focused on you by making yourself the most interesting thing in her line of sight. When she becomes distracted and runs ahead, as she undoubtedly will, call her name and say, "Heel," and make an abrupt U-turn to the right. She will find herself behind you and hurry back to your side. Praise her and repeat. Make it fun for your puppy to heel with your praise and excitement and she will learn quickly.

Come

This basic training command should be started from the first day you bring your puppy home. As with all the basic commands, you should announce your intention by calling his name first, followed by the one word command - i.e., "Max, come!" Make the invitation as inviting as possible by using an enthusiastic voice. When he stumbles to you, praise generously. If he doesn't come immediately, give a tug on his leash, then guide him to you.

If you're having trouble getting your puppy to come, examine your technique. Are you using his name, getting his attention? Squat down to his level and put a lot of energy into an enthusiastic command. Praise lavishly and repeat quickly - puppies typically enjoy learning to come to their leader. Never use "Come" in an angry tone or to call our puppy for a punishment. "Come" must be seen as a positive behavior.

Sit

Teaching your puppy to sit can keep him out of a world of trouble and do wonderful things for your relationship - and by eight weeks of age, he's ready to learn this basic command. Start by getting your puppy's attention, then using his name and the command, "Max, sit," gently help your dog to a sitting position by folding his back legs under his bottom. Once sitting, praise him. Repeat the exercise often to reinforce the training.

You can also teach, "Sit" with a food reward. Using a kibble of Purina Puppy Chow, show your puppy the food. Once you have his attention, have him follow the treat as you move it slowly up and over his head. As the puppy follows the food, he will have to sit.

"Sit" is an excellent command to teach a puppy for praise. Once it's established in his mind that sitting is the sure way to receive praise, you will never have to worry about your puppy jumping on you or other people for attention.

Other things you should be doing with your pup are:

Baths: Get your pup accustomed to getting a bath while he is still small enough to handle easily. Give him 3 or 4 baths between the ages of 2 and 5 months.

Nails: You must keep your dogs nails trimmed. A dog who lives inside and doesn't get his nails trimmed may have damage to his feet from too long nails. Start trimming your pups nails as soon as you get him. Trim the nails about every other week. If you do this

now he will learn to accept it Wait until he is grown and you will probably have a fight on your hands. Don't put off learning to do your dog's nails. "I can't do it because I am afraid I will hurt him" is no excuse. Everyone has to learn sometime. You owe it to your pup to keep his nails clipped. You will hurt him more by letting it go.

Grooming: Put your pup on your washer on a towel for grooming sessions. Brush him and clip his nails. Do this right from the first weeks you get him. Expect him to stand still and let you groom him. Don't let him get out of this by acting up. This is all part of taking care of your dog.

To introduce an element of "natural discipline", grasp the recalcitrant pup by the scruff of the neck with one hand, place your other hand over the top of his muzzle, gently pressing his muzzle towards his chest as you say, in a low, growly tone of voice, "No BITE". If they begin to throw a tantrum and thrash around trying to bite, just hold the line until they "give in" and "say uncle" (quit resisting). You should not find it necessary to get aggressive with a young puppy. Simple *restraint* is usually enough to get the message across.

Absolutely do not use any stiffer discipline without guidance from an instructor. An example of overkill is the alpha roll. Most young puppies simply do not need that level of discipline, and you can really damage the relationship by using it. (Job Michael Evans himself stated, before his death, that he regretted that they ever covered that subject in *How to be Your Dog's Best Friend*, because the alpha roll has been so grossly misused

Nothing in Life is Free:

It is also a good idea to get your puppy used to working for things – even play time. Before you feed puppy, have him sit and then feed. DO the same before leashing up for a walk. If the puppy brings a toy and asks you to play, turn tables and do a bit of training then play. Puppy learns that if he listens and obeys and does something, there will be a reward. This also helps establish humans as higher in the pack order.--- Should your dog continue to bite and not respond or if the biting is accompanied with aggression, growling or anything you do not like, contact a behaviorist. Also, have your dog examined by a vet. There could be an underlying factor for the biting. A dog that is sore or not feeling well may bite. It is his way of saying something is not right. Also, a poorly socialized or scared dog is more prone to bite, as is a startled one. Teach your children NEVER EVER touch a dog, even one they know, without the owner's permission. Teach them never to handle a stray or loose animal, even if they know it. Children should contact a grown-up instead. Teach children not to tease or hurt dogs. Even the most tolerant dog can be pushed past his limit and retaliate. Even if the children are plainly at fault, it will be the dog that suffers. Prevention is the key.

A Closing thought

Consistency among all family members in introducing a puppy or an older dog to social skills is essential. In addition to consistency, please remember the three P's: patience, persistence and praise

Recommended Books & Tapes

How to Raise a Puppy You Can Live With by Rutherford and Neil

Purely Positive Training by Sheila Booth,

Positive training made easy! Complete manual on how to train your dog using positive reinforcement. Includes how to raise your puppy positively, build a strong relationship, train manners, and teach a really reliable recall. Special instructions in each section for companion dogs, competition obedience, agility and Schutzhund. "Written with love and understanding- love of dogs and understanding of training".

Sheila Booth, 380 pages, 1998. The Dog Writer's Association of America's "Best Book of the Year" Award Winner!- 1998

Schutzhund, Theory and Training Methods by Susan Barwig, Stewart Hillard

Explains Schutzhund and its components including philosophy and training techniques for all 3 phases; tracking, obedience and protection. An excellent overview of the sport. Includes point breakdowns of all three phases and a section on testing a puppy or prospect and numerous photos and illustrations to help the enthusiast better understand the sport. The finest book of it's kind!

Schutzhund Obedience - Training in Drive

A step-by-step manual of motivational obedience training techniques. Clear concise directions to teach to heel, sit down, stand, recall, finish, retrieve, jump, and send away. Four chapters on theory, including the explanation of drive. Includes puppy imprinting, proofing, retraining, trial preparation and handling. More than 70 "how to" photos. Sheila Booth with Gottfried Dildei.

The Foundations of Competitive Obedience Tape 1- Basic Skills

Demonstrates inductive techniques to teach your dog or puppy to be a willing, active learner; to develop active, dynamic attention; to teach constructive play and drive containment; and to create eager performance of sit, down, heel, come-fore, and recall. Basic Skills Tape 1 introduces drive containment, correction, and motivational training methods for puppies, adults and retrains as well as guidance on how to handle dogs of different body types and drive levels. This video is excellent for Schutzhund and Kennel Club Obedience. 84 minutes.

Schutzhund with Gottfried Dildei- Basic Obedience

Covers the use of food in obedience training: teaching attention, conditioning activity in the dog, heeling, the halt, and sit and down in motion. Basic Obedience stresses importance of pattern training to create anticipation for commands for reliable, immediate performance in trial situations. An excellent video for Schutzhund and Kennel Club Obedience. 68 minutes.

A DOG'S PLEA

Treat me kindly, my beloved friend, for no heart in all the world is more grateful for kindness than the loving heart of mine.

Do not break my spirit with a stick, for though I should lick your hand between blows, your patience and understanding will more quickly teach me the things you would have me learn.

Speak to me often, for your voice is the world's sweetest music, as you must know by the fierce wagging of my tail when your footstep falls upon my waiting ears.

Please take me inside when it is cold and wet, for I am a domesticated animal, no longer accustomed to bitter elements. I ask no greater glory, then the privilege of sitting at your feet beside the hearth.

Keep my pan filled with fresh water, for I cannot tell you when I suffer thirst.

Feed me clean food that I may stay well, to romp and play and do your bidding, to walk by your side, and stand ready, willing and able to protect you with my life, should your life be in danger.

And my friend, when I am very old, and I no longer enjoy good health, hearing and sight, do not make heroic efforts to keep me going. I am not having any fun. Please see that my trusting life is taken gently. I shall leave this earth knowing with the last breath I draw that my fate was always safest in your hands.

Author Unknown