

The Puppy Handbook

- **Kennel Training**

Kennel time is absolutely crucial to a learning puppy. It provides structure and takes away the time that your puppy could use to make mistakes.



- 60% - 70% of time should be spent in kennel
- Kennel at bedtime
- Kennel when you are home and when you leave
- Play Kennel Games
- Never bother your puppy in the kennel
- Don't reach into the kennel to grab your puppy
- Leave the kennel bare, do not add blankets and toys and bowls. This will only promote destructive behavior.

- **Potty Training**

It takes 4 – 6 weeks for dogs to build a solid habit. You can consider your puppy 'potty trained' once they have been accident free for at least a month. To get there use these tips.



- Use the kennel to shape your puppy's potty behavior
- After feeding your puppy put him in the kennel for an hour, then take your dog directly outside on a leash

- Always leash your dog for potty time
- Use the word 'potty' (or whatever you prefer) Once your puppy is already going potty and reward.
- Choose a designated potty spot to train your dog to.
- If your puppy has an accident take it outside to your designated potty spot.

- **Shaping Behavior**

Training a puppy is like playing with Legos. You get to shape their behaviors from a young age. There are many opportunities to do this if you are looking for them.



- Reward calm behavior
- Example) You are watching TV and your puppy is just laying calmly, reward this! It is a behavior that you want to increase the likelihood of your puppy repeating
- Do not give your puppy the opportunity to shape a bad behavior (such as eating shoes) if this is happening your puppy has too much freedom.

- **Redirection**

Puppies have to learn bite inhibition and what is and is not appropriate to play with. You can't stop your dog from chewing/biting entirely but you can give them an alternative to do this activity on. In order to learn this we have to teach them what items they are allowed to redirect their instincts on to.



- When your puppy is mouthing on you redirect them to a tug toy and play with them.

- Do not play with your arms and hands with your puppy. They will learn to target your body as a toy.
- Ignore your puppy and/or put a door between you if your puppy is continuously trying to bite you despite redirection attempts.

- **Socializing**

Socializing your puppies is one of the most important parts of raising them. Socializing allows your puppy to get comfortable in all types of situations with strangers and other dogs. Missing this step will often result in behavior problems down the road.



- Puppies can only truly socialize until 8 months old
- Puppies learn from bad experiences just as much as good ones so be cautious
- Bring your puppy with you to as many new places as you can
- Allow strangers to meet your puppy (With manners!)
- Let your puppy play with as many other well behaved dogs as you can (puppies learn from other dogs and will mimic their behaviors)
- Every new experience is a learning opportunity, bring your treat pouch with you everywhere so you can make every experience great!
- Do not baby your puppy during this phase. If you do they will think they need protecting. The goal is to have a confident puppy at the end of this socialization period.
- Socialize around objects (especially moving ones like bikes and skate boards)

- **Nutrition**

Proper nutrition is vital to raising a puppy. A good diet will have your puppy always ready to work for you and they will feel much better.



- Feed twice a day
- Try to feed around the same time each day
- Your dog food should be at least \$1 per pound
- Do not buy high protein dog food
- Older brands are typically better
- Beware artificial colors
- 90% of your puppies caloric intake needs to come from kibble

- **Bathing**

Bath time is one of those necessary evils. It doesn't have to be so bad though if introduced right. Structuring bath time during puppy hood is important to have a confident water dog.



- Use a Lickimat, put peanut butter on the mat or on your wall to keep your puppy occupied
- Be careful to not get water/soap in their eyes
- Do not use human products! Use animal products only
- Do not bathe often, dogs do not need it
- Introduce the water slowly, put small amounts on your dog at a time.
- Bring your puppy into the bathing area when you are not bathing them so they don't associate the area with bath time.

- **Desensitizing**

Despite our best efforts, there are still going to be things that your puppy is going to be scared of before you get the chance to shape their behavior and experience. Once this happens we have to desensitize the dog to this object to change our puppy's opinion on it.



- Don't rush this process, your puppy could end up more traumatized
- Make this object or person fun
- Add in lots of treats when your puppy sees this item
- Demeanor goes a long way, if you act like this is the best thing ever your puppy will feed off of this energy.
- Change the items position (Ex, from horizontal to vertical etc.) and see if your puppy's reaction changes.
- Work with this item continuously overtime, it will take more than one session to change your puppy's mind completely.

- **Boredom Busters**

Puppies seem to be endless balls of energy. Because of this it can be hard to keep them as stimulated as they need to be to ward off destructive and bad behaviors. Boredom busters are an easy way to keep your puppy's mind occupied and reinforce a calm demeanor. These also help build your puppy's confidence because it gives them an independent activity to do.



- Puzzle Bowls (Have more than one)
- Puzzle Toys

- Stuffed Kongs, especially frozen
- Get your Kong a size bigger than you would think and get multiple
- Water down your dogs kibble and stuff it in Kongs to have ready prepared meals that are mentally stimulating.
- Snuffle Mat (This doubles as an introduction to scent work)
- Frozen water bowls
- Burrow Toys
- Use these toys with supervision, they should not be left in the kennel for hours the only approved toy for longterm kennel use is the kong.
- Make sure to change it up. If you are always giving the same toy your puppy will become accustomed to it very quickly and get bored of it/it'll no longer be stimulating
- Use these in the kennel (take them back up after 20 or so minutes) to help your dog love its kennel and learn how to be calm and independent.

- **Play Behavior**

Teaching your dog proper play behavior is vital. Dogs communicate primarily with body language and they learn most of this language in group play. The more your puppy gets appropriate play while it is young the more likely you are to have the problem free and social dog.



- Be picky about who you let your dog play with, they learn play behavior from the dogs they are with.
- Have a motherly dog around to promote calm behavior
- Dogs learn best from other dogs, try not to intervene too much.
- Do not let your dog play on the leash
- Respect your dog's wishes, if they really don't seem to like another dog don't make them play!
- Do not baby your dog, if they are scared in a play group they need more socialization. Do not pick them up and remove them, do not save them. If fear is severe go to a professional to help build your puppy's confidence.
- Dogs are much like humans, not all dogs want to be friends with other dogs and that is okay!

- **Cradling**

Cradling is a vital handling skill that will help you in a multitude of ways down the road while training your new puppy. Cradling is when you hold the puppy on its back, securing it between your legs, until they are calm. Then you can release them back up.



- Never ever let your puppy up if they are struggling
- Don't talk to your dog while you are cradling them, they can get confused and stimulated by this
- Reward calm behavior
- Once comfortable, use cradling time to get your dog accustomed to their paws, privates, and tails being touched, reward for calm behavior!
- Do this many times each day
- Ignore mouthing while your puppy is cradling
- Holding the puppy by the shoulder blades makes it much harder for them to try and bite you while you are holding them.

- **Leash Manners**

The leash should be a direct line of communication from you to the dog. It is imperative to structure leashed time as quickly as possible. The leash should never be used for play time.



- Don't let your puppy get into the habit of pulling on the leash



- Do not let your puppy play on the leash. This is a hard habit to break once you are trying to get into more advanced training around other dogs.
- Don't use a corrective collar if you are not prepared to pay attention to your dog and guarantee their success on it.

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