

K9 Help

Puppy Care, Training and Development.

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K9 Help

This information is provided to answer many of the questions that you may have regarding the challenges that you will potentially experience with a new puppy.

Puppy Information Contained in this Document.

1. **Housetraining your puppy: Crate and other training methods explained.**
2. **Puppy Nipping and Rough Play.**
3. **Puppy Development.**
4. **Positive Training.**
5. **Chewing.**
6. **Use of Toys.**
7. **Puppies; What Children and Parents Need to Know.**
8. **Obedience training at home: Structuring a 5 minute training session.**

Below you will find the definition of an educated puppy; this information is provided courtesy of Denver Dumb Friends, an animal shelter in Denver, Colorado, who dedicate their time to the welfare of animals.

An Educated Puppy.

If you feel frustrated and disappointed with your puppy's behaviour, remember that someone must teach it what is acceptable behaviour, as well as what is not. A puppy that receives no instruction, training or boundaries cannot possibly know what you expect of it. By teaching your puppy how to behave, you will not only have a calmer household, but a healthier and happier puppy.

An Educated Puppy;

1. Allows you to handle every part of its body, to check for injury or illness and to give it medication.
2. Has good manners so it can spend most of its time indoors with its people. That means more supervision, less boredom and fewer opportunities for mischief. The more time you spend with your puppy, the more likely you will be to notice when something is wrong, like a limp, a cough, a sensitive area or a loss of appetite. By recognising such irregularities early, you can seek medical attention and potentially prevent problems from becoming more serious.
3. Wants to stay near you, listening for instructions and praise. This means it will have less opportunity to stray into danger.
4. Will walk or run beside you on a lead without pulling or dragging, so you and your puppy can get more exercise and spend more time together.
5. Knows that "drop it" and "leave it alone" are phrases that are serious, so it will have fewer opportunities to swallow dangerous objects. Also, it can be taught what things and places are out of bounds, like hot cookers, heaters or anxious cats. However, you will still need to limit access to dangerous places when you cannot supervise or instruct your puppy.
6. Will "sit" immediately, simply because you say so in anticipation of your praise. No matter what danger may be imminent, a puppy that is suddenly still is suddenly safe and a puppy that will remain in that position will remain safe.
7. Understands its boundaries, knows what is expected of it and has fewer anxieties. Less stress means a healthier, happier puppy.

By training your puppy, you can help prevent tragedy and develop a better relationship with it. Remember that even an educated puppy needs supervision, instruction and boundaries, such as being on a lead or contained behind a fence or in a harness in a car. Allowing your puppy, no matter how educated he/she may be to walk, to run "off lead" near traffic, roam outside of a fenced area or to travel loose in a car puts you, other people and your puppy in danger.

1: House training.

Housetraining a puppy requires time, vigilance, patience and commitment. Following the procedures outlined below, you can minimise house-soiling incidents, but virtually every puppy will have an accident in the house (more likely several). It is part of raising a puppy; the more consistent you are in following the basic housetraining procedures, the

faster your puppy will learn acceptable behaviour. It may take several weeks to housetrain your puppy and with some of the smaller breeds, it might take longer.

During housetraining your puppy should be always be in one of the following situations;

- In its crate, or containment area.
- Loose but under your direct supervision.
- Outside at its toilet area or on a walk, again under your direct supervision.

Times and signals that may mean your puppy needs to urinate or defecate.

- Just woken up/ been let out of its crate or confinement area.
- Stops playing abruptly, wanders away from a play area.
- After eating or drinking.
- Sniffing with its nose directly on the floor.
- Circling, (possibly sniffing at the same time).
- Standing near or going to the door that it usually goes out of to urinate or defecate.
- Moving towards an area that it has previously soiled.
- About to squat!

Establish a Routine.

Puppies need a regular routine. Take your puppy outside frequently, at least every two hours, immediately after your pup wakes up from a nap, after playing and after eating. The optimum times to take your puppy outside to wee and/or poop are after sleep, play and feeding.

Praise your puppy lavishly every time your pup wees or poops outside. You must praise your puppy and give your puppy a treat immediately after your pup has finished weeing or pooping, not after your pup comes back inside the house. This step is vital, because rewarding your puppy for weeing or pooping outside is the only way your pup will know that is what you want it to do.

Choose a location not too far from the door to be the toilet spot. Always take your puppy, on a lead, directly to the same spot. Take your puppy for a walk or play with it only after it has weed or pooped. If you clean up an accident in the house, take the soiled rags or paper towels and leave them in the toilet spot. The smell will help your puppy recognise the area as the place it is supposed to wee or poop. While your puppy is weeing or pooping, use a word or phrase, like “be quick,” that you can eventually use before it wees or poops to remind your puppy of what it is supposed to be doing.

If possible, put your puppy on a regular feeding routine. 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 your pup will wee or poop at consistent times as well. This makes housetraining easier for both of you.

Supervise!

Do not give your puppy an opportunity to soil in the house. Your pup should be watched at all times when inside. You can tether your puppy to you with a six-foot lead, or use baby gates, to keep your puppy in the room where you are. Watch for signs that your pup needs to wee or poop, like sniffing around or circling. When you see these signs, immediately take your puppy outside, on a lead, to its toilet spot. If your pup wees or poops, praise your puppy lavishly and reward your puppy with a treat.

Confinement.

When you are unable to watch your puppy at all times, your pup should be confined to an area small enough that your pup will not want to wee or poop there, ideally its crate. It should be just big enough for your puppy to stand, lie down and turn around comfortably in. If not its crate, this area could be a portion of a toilet or laundry room, blocked off with boxes or baby gates. If your puppy has spent several hours in confinement, when you let your puppy out, take your puppy directly to its toilet spot and praise your puppy when your pup wees or poops.

Oops!

Expect your puppy to have an accident in the house – it is a normal part of housetraining a puppy.

When you catch your puppy in the act of eliminating in the house, do something to interrupt your puppy, like make a startling noise (be careful not to scare your puppy). Immediately take your puppy to its toilet spot, if your pup finishes weeing or pooping there, praise your puppy and give it a treat.

Do not punish your puppy for eliminating in the house. If you find a soiled area, it is too late to administer a correction. Do nothing but clean it up. Rubbing your pup's nose in it, taking your puppy to the spot and scolding your puppy, or any other punishment or discipline, will only make your puppy afraid of you or afraid to wee or poop in your presence. Animals do not understand punishment after the act, even if it is only seconds later. Punishment will do more harm than good.

Cleaning the soiled area is very important because puppies are highly motivated to continue soiling in areas that smell like urine or faeces. Do not use ammonia based products as they contain a chemical that may encourage your puppy to return to that area to wee or poop.

It is extremely important that you use the supervision and confinement procedures outlined above to minimise the number of accidents. If you allow your puppy to wee or poop frequently in the house, your pup will get confused about where your pup is supposed to wee or poop which will prolong the housetraining process.

Crate Training your Puppy.

Crate training your puppy may take some time and effort, but can be useful in a variety of situations. You can use the crate to limit its access to the house until your pup learns all the house rules, such as, what your pup can and cannot chew on and where it can and cannot wee or poop. A crate is also a safe way of transporting your puppy in the car, as well as a way of taking it to places where your pup may not be welcome to run freely. If you properly train your puppy to use the crate, it will think of it as its safe place and will be happy to spend time there when needed.

Selecting a Crate.

Crates should be the collapsible, metal pen type. They are available in different sizes and can be purchased at most pet shops. Your puppy's crate should be just large enough for it to stand up and turn around in.

The Crate Training Process.

Crate training can take days or weeks, depending upon your pups age, temperament and experiences. It is important to keep two things in mind while crate training. The crate should always be associated with something pleasant, and training should take place in a series of small steps - do not go too fast. Your puppy should never be put in its crate as a punishment.

Step 1: Introducing Your Puppy to a Crate.

Put the crate in an area of your house where the family spends a lot of time, such a kitchen or family room. Put a soft blanket or towel in the crate. Bring your puppy over to the crate and talk to it in a happy tone of voice. Make sure the crate door is open and it is fastened securely, so it will not hit your puppy and frighten it.

To encourage your puppy to enter its crate, drop some small food treats near it, then just inside the door and finally all the way inside the crate. If your pup refuses to go all the way in at first, that is okay, do not force it to enter. Continue tossing treats into the crate until your puppy will walk calmly in to the crate to get the food. If your pup is not interested in treats, try tossing a favourite toy in the crate. This step may take a few minutes or several days.

Step 2: Feeding Your Puppy its Meals in the Crate.

After introducing your puppy to the crate, begin feeding it its regular meals near the crate. This will create a pleasant association with the crate. If your puppy is readily entering the crate when you begin Step 2, put the food dish all the way at the back of the crate. If your puppy is still reluctant to enter the crate, put the dish only as far inside as your puppy will readily go without becoming fearful or anxious. Each time you feed your pup, place the dish a little further back in the crate.

Once your puppy is standing comfortably in the crate to eat its meal, you can close the door while it is eating. At first, open the door as soon as your pup finishes eating. With each successive feeding, leave the door closed a few minutes longer, until your pup is staying in the crate for ten minutes or so after eating. If your pup starts to whine in an attempt to be let out, you may have increased the length of time too quickly. Next time, try leaving your puppy in the crate for a shorter period. If your pup does whine or cry in the crate, it is imperative that you not let it out until your

pup stops. Otherwise, your pup will learn that the way to get out of the crate is to whine, so your pup will keep doing it. (See notes below).

Step 3: Conditioning Your Puppy to the Crate for Longer periods.

After your puppy is eating regularly in the crate with no sign of fear or anxiety, you can confine your puppy there for short time periods while you are home. Call your puppy over to the crate and give your puppy a treat. Give your puppy a command to enter such as, "in your crate." Encourage your puppy by pointing to the inside of the crate with a treat in your hand. After your puppy enters the crate, praise your puppy, give it the treat and close the door. Sit quietly near the crate for five to ten minutes and then go into another room for a few minutes. Return, sit quietly again for a short time, then let your puppy out. Repeat this process several times a day. With each repetition, gradually increase the length of time you leave your puppy in the crate and the length of time you are out of its sight. Once your puppy will stay quietly in the crate for about 30 minutes with you out of sight the majority of the time, you can begin leaving your puppy crated when you are gone for short time periods and/or letting your puppy sleep there at night. This may take several days or several weeks.

Step 4: Crating Your Puppy When Left Alone.

After your puppy is spending about 30 minutes in the crate without becoming anxious or afraid, you can begin leaving your puppy crated for short periods when you leave the house.

Put your puppy in the crate using your usual command and a treat. You might also want to leave your puppy with a few safe toys in the crate. You will want to vary at what point in your "getting ready to leave" routine you put your puppy in the crate. Although your pup should not be crated for a long time before you leave, you can crate your puppy anywhere from five to 20 minutes prior to leaving. Do not make your departures emotional and prolonged, but matter-of-fact. Praise your puppy briefly, give it a treat for entering the crate and then leave quietly.

When you return home, do not reward your puppy for excited behaviour by responding to your puppy in an excited, enthusiastic way, keep arrivals low key. Continue to crate your puppy for short periods from time to time when you are home so your pup does not associate crating with being left alone.

Step 5: Crating Your Puppy at Night.

Put your puppy in the crate using your regular command and a treat. Initially, it may be a good idea to put the crate in your bedroom or nearby in a hallway, especially if you have a puppy. Puppies often need to go outside to wee or poop during the night and you will want to be able to hear your puppy when your pup whines to be let outside. Older dogs, too, should initially be kept nearby so that crating does not become associated with social isolation. Once your puppy is sleeping comfortably through the night with its crate near you, you can begin to move it gradually, to the location you prefer.

Potential Problems.

Too Much Time in the Crate.

A crate is not a magical solution. If not used correctly, a puppy can feel trapped and frustrated. For example, if your puppy is crated all day while you are at work and then crated again all night, your pup is spending too much time in a small space. Other arrangements should be made to accommodate its physical and emotional needs. Also, remember that puppies under six months of age should not stay in a crate for more than three or four hours at a time. They cannot control their bladders and bowels for longer periods.

Whining.

If your puppy whines or cries while in the crate at night, it may be difficult to decide whether your pup is whining to be let out of the crate, or whether your pup needs to be let outside to wee or poop. If you followed the training procedures outlined above, your puppy will not have been rewarded for whining in the past by being released from its crate, in which case, try to ignore the whining. If your puppy is just testing you, your pup will probably stop whining soon. Shouting at your puppy, hitting, or banging on the crate will only make things worse. If the whining continues after you have ignored your puppy for several minutes, use the phrase your pup associates with going outside to wee or poop. If your pup responds and becomes excited, take your puppy outside. This should be a trip with a purpose, not play time. If you are convinced that your puppy does not need to wee or poop, the best response is to ignore your puppy until your pup stops whining. Do not give in, otherwise, you will teach your puppy to whine louder and longer to get what it wants. If you have progressed gradually through the training steps and have not done too much too fast,

you will be less likely to encounter this problem. If the problem becomes unmanageable, you may need to start the crate training process over again.

Separation Anxiety.

Attempting to use the crate as a remedy for separation anxiety will not solve the problem. A crate may prevent your puppy from being destructive, but it may injure itself in an attempt to escape from the crate. Separation anxiety problems can only be resolved with counter-conditioning and desensitisation procedures. You may want to consult a professional dog behaviourist for help.

Paper Training.

A puppy under six months of age cannot be expected to control its bladder for more than a few hours at a time. If you have to be away from home for more than four or five hours a day, this may not be the best time for you to get a puppy. If you are already committed to having a puppy and have to be away from home for long periods, you will need to train your puppy to wee or poop in a specific place indoors. Be aware, however, that doing so can prolong the process of teaching your puppy to wee or poop outdoors. Teaching your puppy to wee or poop on newspaper may create a life-long surface preference, meaning that your pup/she may even in adulthood, wee or poop on any newspaper your pup finds lying around the house.

Leaving your puppy for long periods of time.

I do not advise that you do, but if you need to leave your puppy alone for long periods, confine your puppy to an area with enough room for a sleeping space, a playing space and a separate place to wee or poop. In the area designated as the elimination place, you can use either newspapers or a sod box. To make a turf box, place turf in a container, like a child's small, plastic swimming pool. You can also find puppy litter products at a pet shop. If you clean up an accident in the house, take the soiled rags or paper towels, and put them in the designated toilet area. The smell will help your puppy recognize the area as the place where your pup is supposed to wee or poop.

Other Types of House-Soiling Problems.

If you have consistently followed the housetraining procedures and your puppy continues to wee or poop in the house, there may be another reason for its behaviour.

Medical Problems.

House soiling can often be caused by physical problems such as a urinary tract infection or a parasite infection. Check with your veterinarian to rule out any possibility of disease or illness. Submissive/Excitement Urination: Some dogs, especially young ones, temporarily lose control of their bladders when they become excited or feel threatened. This usually occurs during greetings, intense play or when they are about to be punished. Territorial Urine-Marking: Dogs sometimes deposit urine or faeces, usually in small amounts, to scent-mark their territory. Both male and female dogs do this, and it most often occurs when they believe their territory has been invaded.

Separation Anxiety

Dogs that become anxious when they are left alone may house soil as a result. Usually, there are other symptoms, such as destructive behaviour or vocalisation.

Fears or Phobias.

When animals become frightened, they may lose control of their bladder and/or bowels. If your puppy is afraid of loud noises, such as thunderstorms or fireworks, your pup may house soil when exposed to these sounds.

2: Nipping and Rough Play.

When puppies play with each other, they use their mouths. Therefore, puppies usually want to bite or "mouth" hands during play or when being petted. With puppies, this is rarely aggressive behaviour intended to do harm. Because puppies are highly motivated to exhibit this type of behaviour, attempts to suppress it or stop it are unlikely to be successful unless you give your puppy an alternative behaviour. The goals of working with this normal puppy behaviour are to redirect your puppy's desire to put something in its mouth onto acceptable chew toys and to teach your puppy to be gentle when a hand is in its mouth.

Encourage Acceptable Behaviour.

Redirect your puppy's' chewing onto acceptable objects by offering a small rawhide chew bone or other type of chew toy whenever you pet your puppy. This technique can be especially effective when children want to pet your puppy. As you or the child reach out to scratch behind the ears (not over the head) with one hand, offer the chew bone with the other. This will not only help your puppy learn that people and petting are wonderful, but will also keep its mouth busy while being petted. Alternate which hand does the petting and which one has the chew bone. At first, you may need to pet or scratch your puppy for short periods, since the longer it is petted; the more likely it is to get excited and starts to nip.

Discourage Unacceptable Behaviour.

If you feel your puppy's teeth on your skin immediately stop contact with your puppy and walk away. There is no such thing as a friendly bite! If you do not remove yourself from the situation immediately, you will teach your puppy to keep biting you until it hurts, therefore encouraging the very behaviour you would like to prevent.

You must also teach your puppy to be gentle with hands and that nipping results in unpleasant consequences. Teach your puppy that nipping "turns off" any attention and social interaction with you. After a nip, look your puppy right in the eye and yell "OUCH" as though you have been mortally wounded, then ignore it. Leave the room if you must, but ignore it until it is calm and then try the chew bone and petting method again. It is even better if you can coax your puppy into a sitting position using food. It may take many repetitions for it to understand what is expected.

Jumping Up.

When your puppy jumps up on you, it wants attention. Whether you push away, knee in the chest or step on its hind legs, it is being rewarded for jumping up, even though it is negative attention, your puppy is still getting what it wants.

When your puppy jumps up.

- Fold your arms in front of you, turn away from your puppy.
- Continue to turn away until all four feet are on the ground, then quietly praise your puppy and give it a treat. If your pup knows the "sit" command, give the command when all four of its feet are on the ground, then quietly praise and give a treat while your puppy is in the sitting position.
- When you begin to praise, if your pup begins to jump up again, simply turn away and repeat this exercise. Remember to keep your praise low-key.
- When your puppy realises that it gets no attention from you while jumping up, but does get attention for stopping jumping up and sitting, your puppy will stop jumping up. Remember, once you have taught your puppy to come and sit quietly for attention, you must reward that behaviour. Be careful not to ignore your puppy when it 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, it could:

- Become "hand-shy" and cringe or cower whenever a hand comes toward its face.
- Become afraid of you and refuse to come to you or approach you at all.
- Respond in a defensive manner and attempt to bite you to defend itself.
- Interpret a mild slap as an invitation to play, causing your puppy to become more excited and even more likely to nip.

Never play "tug-of-war" or wrestling, or rough and tumble games with your puppy. These types of games encourage out-of-control behaviour, grabbing, lunging and competition with you. These are not behaviours you want your puppy to learn.

A Note about Children and Puppies.

It is very difficult for children under eight or nine years old to practice the kind of behaviour 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. Dogs should not be alone with children under 8 and parents should monitor closely all interactions between their children and dogs.

3: Puppy Development.

Although feeding time is important, it is also vital to include petting, talking and playing, in order to help your puppy build good “people-skills.” Well-socialised mothers are more likely to have well-socialised puppies. Puppies “feed” off their mothers’ calm or fearful attitude toward people.

Puppies are usually weaned at six or seven weeks, but are still learning important skills as their mother gradually leaves them more and more. Ideally, puppies should stay with their littermates (or other role-model dogs) for at least 8 weeks.

Puppies separated from their littermates too early often don’t develop appropriate “social skills,” such as learning how to send and receive signals, what an “inhibited bite” means, how far to go in play wrestling and so forth. Play is important to help puppies increase their physical coordination, social skills and learning limits. Interacting with their mother and littermates helps them learn “how to be a puppy” and is a way to explore ranking (“who’s in charge”).

Skills not acquired during the first eight weeks may be lost forever. While these stages are important and consistent, a puppy’s mind remains receptive to new experiences and lessons well beyond puppy-hood. Most dogs are still puppies, in mind and body, during their first two years.

The following chart provides general guidelines for the stages of development:

0 - 2 weeks = Neonatal

- Most influenced by their mother.
- Touch and taste present at birth.

2 - 4 weeks = Transitional

- Most influenced by their mother and littermates.
- Eyes open, teeth erupt, hearing and smell developing.
- Beginning to stand, walk a little, wag, and bark.
- By four or five weeks, sight is well developed.

3 - 12 weeks = Socialisation

- During this period, puppies need opportunities to meet other dogs and people.
- By four to six weeks, they are most influenced by their littermates and are learning about being a puppy.
- From four to twelve weeks they are most influenced by their littermates and people. They are also learning to play, including social skills, inhibited bite, social structure/ranking and physical coordination.
- By three to five weeks, they are becoming aware of their surroundings, companions (dogs and people) and relationships, including play.
- By five to seven weeks, they are developing curiosity and exploring new experiences. They need positive “people” experiences during this time.
- By seven to nine weeks, they are refining their physical skills/coordination, including housetraining and full use of senses.
- By eight to ten weeks, they experience real fear, when normal objects and experiences can alarm puppies and as a result, your puppy may need positive training to overcome fears such as these.
- By nine to twelve weeks, they are refining reactions, social skills (appropriate interactions) with littermates and are exploring the environment, spaces and objects. Beginning to focus on people. This is a good time to begin training.

3 - 6 months = Ranking

- Most influenced by “littermates” (playmates now include those of other species).
- Beginning to see and use ranking (dominant and submissive) within the pack, including humans.
- Teething (and associated chewing).
- At four months, they experience another fear stage.

6 - 18 months = Adolescence

- Most influenced by human and puppy “pack” members.
- At seven to nine months, they go through a second chewing phase—part of exploring territory.
- Heightened exploration of dominance, including challenging humans.
- If not spayed or neutered, beginnings of sexual behaviour.

4: Positive Training.

Positive reinforcement is the presentation of something pleasant or rewarding immediately following behaviour. It makes that behaviour more likely to occur in the future, and is one of the most powerful tools for shaping or changing your pet's behaviour.

Correct timing is essential when using positive reinforcement. The reward must occur immediately, or your pet may not associate it with the proper action. For example, if tell your to puppy "sit," but reward your puppy after it has stood up again, your pup will think it is being rewarded for standing up.

Consistency is essential.

Everyone in the family should use the same commands. It might be helpful to post these where everyone can become familiar with them. The most commonly used commands for dogs are "look at me," "sit," "down" (means lie down), "off" (means off me or off the furniture), "stand," "come," "heel," and "leave it". Consistency means always rewarding the desired behaviour and never rewarding undesired behaviour.

For your pet, positive reinforcement may include food treats, praise, petting or a favourite toy or game. Food treats work especially well for training your puppy. A treat should be enticing and irresistible to your pet. It should be a very small, soft, piece of food, so that your pup will immediately gulp it down and look to you for more. If you give your puppy something, your pup has to chew or that breaks into bits and falls on the floor, your pup will be looking around the floor, not at you. Small pieces of soft commercial treats, hot dogs, cheese, cooked chicken or beef have all proved to be successful. Experiment a bit to see what works best for your pet. You may carry the treats in a pocket or training pack on the front of your belt. There are even special treat packs available in many pet shops. Each time you use a food treat, you should reinforce it with a verbal reward such as "Good boy/girl", as well as very gentle contact stroking with your other hand. Voice praise should be in happy tone of voice.

Note: Some pets may not be interested in food treats. For those pets, the reward could be in the form of a toy or brief play.

When your pet is learning a new behaviour, reward it every time it does the behaviour, this is continuous reinforcement. It may be necessary to use "shaping," with your pet (reinforcing something close to the desired response and gradually requiring more from your puppy before it gets the treat). For example, if you're teaching your puppy to "shake hands," you may initially reward your puppy for lifting its paw off the ground, then for lifting it higher, then for touching your hand, then for letting you hold its paw and finally, for actually shaking hands with you.

Intermittent reinforcement can be used once your pet has reliably learned the behaviour. At first, you may reward your puppy with the treat three times out of four, then about half the time, then about a third of the time and so forth, until you are only rewarding your puppy occasionally with the treat. Continue to praise your puppy every time, although once your pup has learned the behaviour, the praise can be less effusive - a quiet, but positive, "Good boy/girl." Use a variable schedule of reinforcement, so your pup does not catch on that it only has to respond every other time. Your pet will learn that if it keeps responding, eventually it will get what it wants. If you have a puppy that barks until you reward it by it paying attention, you have seen the power of intermittent reinforcement.

By understanding reinforcement, you can see that you are not forever bound to carry a pocketful of goodies. Your puppy will soon be working for your verbal praise, because it really does want to please you and it knows that, occasionally, it will get a treat, as well! There are many small opportunities to reinforce your pup's behaviour. You may have your puppy "sit" before letting it out the door (helps prevent door darting), before petting your puppy (helps prevent jumping up on people) or before giving your puppy its food. Give your puppy a pat or a "Good boy/girl" for lying quietly by your feet or slip a treat into its Kong toy when it is chewing this rather than your shoe.

Punishment and where it goes wrong and why you shouldn't physically punish your puppy.

Punishment, including verbal, postural and physical, is the presentation of something unpleasant immediately following a behaviour that makes it less likely that the behaviour will occur again. To be effective, punishment must be delivered while your pet is engaged in the undesirable behaviour, in other words, "caught in the act." If the punishment is delivered late, your pet will feel "ambushed." From its point of view, the punishment is very unpredictable, and it is likely to become fearful, distrusting and/or aggressive. This will only lead to more behaviour,

problems. What we humans interpret as “guilty” looks, are actually submissive postures by our pets. Animals do not have a moral sense of right and wrong, but they are adept at associating your presence and the presence of a mess, with punishment.

If you have tried punishment and it has not worked, you should definitely stop using punishment and use a positive method instead. Physical punishment usually involves some level of discomfort or even pain, which is likely to cause your puppy to bite, as that is the only way it knows to defend itself. Scruff shakes and “alpha rolls” are likely to result in bites, especially if the puppy does not perceive you to be its superior. In addition, punishment might be associated with other stimuli, including people that are present at the time the punishment occurs. For example, a pet punished for getting too close to a small child may become fearful of or aggressive to that child.

5: Chewing.

Puppies may be just as much work as human babies - maybe more so because puppies cannot wear nappies and they have very sharp teeth! It is definitely true that, similar to infants and toddlers, puppies explore their world by putting things in their mouths. In addition, puppies are teething until they are about six months old, which usually creates some discomfort. Chewing not only facilitates teething, but also makes sore gums feel better. Although it is perfectly normal for a puppy to chew on furniture, shoes, shrubbery and such, these behaviours can be a problem for you. A puppy will not magically “outgrow” these behaviours as he matures. Instead, you must shape your puppy’s behaviours and teach him which ones are acceptable and which are not.

Discouraging Unacceptable Behaviour.

It is virtually inevitable at some point that your puppy will chew something you value. This is part of raising a puppy! You can prevent most problems by taking the following precautions:

- Minimize chewing problems by puppy proofing your house. Put the rubbish out of reach, inside a cupboard or outside, or buy containers with locking lids. Encourage children to pick up their toys and do not leave socks, shoes, eyeglasses, briefcases or TV remote controls lying around within your puppy’s reach.
- If, and only if, you catch your puppy chewing on something he shouldn’t, interrupt the behaviour with a loud noise, then offer him an acceptable chew toy instead and praise him lavishly when he takes the toy in his mouth.
- Make unacceptable chew items unpleasant to your puppy. Furniture and other items can be coated with “Bitter Apple” to make them unappealing or Vick Vapour Rub, or Deep Heat Muscle Gel. Test it on an area first as this can stain.
- Do not give your puppy objects to play with such as old socks, old shoes or old children’s toys that closely resemble items that are off limits. Puppies cannot tell the difference!
- Closely supervise your puppy. Do not give him the chance to go off by himself and get into trouble. Use baby gates, close doors or tether him to you with a six-foot lead so you can keep an eye on him.
- When you must be gone from the house, confine your puppy to a small, safe area such as a utility room. Puppies under five months of age should not be crated for longer than four hours at a time, as they may not be able to control their bladder and bowels longer than that.
- Make sure your puppy is getting adequate physical activity. Puppies left alone in a yard do not play by themselves. Take your puppy for walks and/or play a game of fetch with him as often as possible.

Give your puppy plenty of “people time.” He can only learn the rules of your house when he is with you.

Encouraging Acceptable Behaviour

- Provide your puppy with lots of appropriate toys.
- Rotate your puppy’s toys. Puppies, like babies, are often more interested in unfamiliar or novel objects. Put out four or five toys for a few days, then pick those up and put out four or five different ones.
- Experiment with different kinds of toys. When you introduce a new toy to your puppy, watch him to make sure he will not tear it up and ingest the pieces.
- Consider the various types of toys that can be stuffed with food. Putting titbits of food inside chew toys focuses your puppy’s chewing activities on those toys instead of on unacceptable objects.
- If your puppy is teething, try freezing a wet flannel for him to chew on.

What not to do.

Never discipline or punish your puppy after the fact. If you discover a chewed item even minutes after he has chewed it, you are too late to administer a correction. Animals associate punishment with what they are doing at the time they are being punished. A puppy cannot reason that, "I tore up those shoes an hour ago and that's why I'm being punished now." Some people believe this is what a puppy is thinking because he runs and hides or because he "looks guilty." "Guilty looks" are canine submissive postures that dogs show when they are threatened. When you are angry and upset, the puppy feels threatened by your tone of voice, body postures and/or facial expressions, so he may hide or show submissive postures. Punishment after-the-fact will not only fail to eliminate the undesirable behaviour, but could provoke other undesirable behaviours, as well.

Other Reasons for Destructive Behaviour

In most cases, destructive chewing by puppies is nothing more than normal puppy behaviour. Adult dogs, however, can exhibit destructive behaviour for a variety of reasons, which can occasionally be the cause of chewing problems in puppies, as well. Examples include separation anxiety, fear-related behaviours and attention-getting behaviour.

6: Correct use of Puppy Toys.

Safe Toys.

There are many factors that contribute to the safety or danger of a toy. Many of those factors, however, are completely dependent upon your dog's size, activity level and personal preference. Another factor to be considered is the environment in which your dog spends his time. Although we cannot guarantee your dog's enthusiasm or his safety with any specific toy, we can offer the following guidelines.

Be Cautious.

The things that are usually the most attractive to dogs are often the very things that are the most dangerous. Dog proof your home by checking for: string, ribbon, rubber bands, children's toys and anything else that could be ingested.

Toys should be appropriate for your dog's current size. Balls and other toys that are too small can easily be swallowed or become lodged in your dog's mouth or throat.

Avoid or alter any toys that are not "dog-proof" by removing ribbons, strings, eyes or other parts that could be chewed and/or ingested. Avoid any toy that starts to break into pieces or have pieces torn off. You should also avoid "tug-of-war" toys, unless they will be used between dogs, not between people and dogs.

Ask your veterinarian about which rawhide toys are safe and which are not. Unless your veterinarian says otherwise, "chews" like hooves, pig's ears and rawhides, should be supervision only goodies. Very hard rubber toys are safer and last longer.

Take note of any toy that contains a "squeaker" buried in its centre. Your dog may feel that he must find and destroy the squeak-source and could ingest it, in which case squeaking objects should also be "supervision only" toys.

Check labels for child safety, as a stuffed toy that has labelled as safe for children under three years old, does not contain dangerous fillings. Problem fillings include things like nutshells and polystyrene beads, however, even a "safe" stuffing is not truly digestible.

Remember that soft toys are not indestructible, but some are sturdier than others are. Soft toys should be machine washable.

Recommended Activity Toys.

Very hard rubber toys, like Nylo-bone type products and Kong type products. These are available in a variety of shapes and sizes and are fun for chewing and for carrying around.

"Rope" toys that are usually available in a "bone" shape with knotted ends.

Tennis balls make great dog toys, but keep an eye out for any that could be chewed through and discard them.

Distraction Toys.

- Kong type toys, especially when filled with broken-up treats or, even better, a mixture of broken-up treats and a smear of cream cheese or honey. The right size Kong can keep a puppy or dog busy for hours. Only by chewing diligently can your dog access the treats, and then only in small bits - very rewarding! Double-check with your veterinarian about whether or not you should give peanut butter to your dog.

- “Busy-box” toys are large rubber cubes with hiding places for treats. Only by moving the cube around with his nose, mouth and paws, can your dog access the goodies.
- Comfort Toys:
- Soft stuffed toys are good for several purposes, but are not appropriate for all dogs. For some dogs, the stuffed toy should be small enough to carry. For dogs that want to shake or “kill” the toy, it should be the size that “prey” would be for that size dog (mouse, rabbit or duck size).
- Dirty laundry, like an old t-shirt, pillowcase, towel or blanket, can be very comforting to a dog, especially if it smells like you! Be forewarned that the item could be destroyed by industrious fluffing, carrying and nosing.

Getting the most out of toys.

Rotate your dog’s toys weekly by making only three or four toys available at a time. Keep a variety of types easily accessible. If your dog has a huge favourite soft toy,” you should probably leave it out all the time, or risk the wrath of your dog!

Provide toys that offer a variety of uses - at least one toy to carry, one to “kill”, one to roll and one to “baby.”

“Hide and seek” is a fun game for dogs to play. “Found” toys are often much more attractive than a toy which is blatantly introduced. Making an interactive game out of finding toys or treats is a good “rainy day” activity for your dog, using up energy without the need for a lot of space.

Many of your dog’s toys should be interactive. Interactive play is very important for your dog because he needs active “people time.” By focusing on a specific task, like repeatedly returning a ball, Kong or Frisbee, or playing “hide-and-seek” with treats or toys, your dog can expel pent up mental and physical energy in a limited amount of time and space. This greatly reduces stress due to confinement, isolation and/or boredom. For young, high energy and untrained dogs, interactive play also offers an opportunity for socialisation and helps them learn about appropriate and inappropriate behaviour with people and with other animals, like jumping up or being mouthy.

7: Puppies; what Children and Parents should know.

Living with a pet can be beneficial to children. Pets can enhance a child’s self-esteem, teach them responsibility and help them to learn empathy. However, children and dogs are not always going to start with a wonderful relationship. Parents must be willing to teach the puppy and the child acceptable limits of behaviour in order to make their interactions pleasant and safe.

Children and puppies should not be left unsupervised; if you don’t protect your puppy from children, you risk your puppy learning to protect itself and vice versa.

General rules.

- Children, (under 8 years old is a good guide) and puppies should not be together unsupervised, ever. All interaction between them should be monitored by an undistracted adult.
- Teach children the right way to interact with a puppy, encourage them to only stroke a puppy on its chest, cheeks or under its chin when it is in a sit, rather than patting the head or hugging, both of which can be easily misconstrued by a puppy as a threat.
- Do not allow your puppy to be picked up by a child, without being certain that the correct method is used. Struggling frightened puppies are easily dropped.
- Make sure that children and puppies have time apart from each other and that your puppy is not disturbed when it is in its crate, or asleep.
- If practical, make the entrance/hall way of your home a non-contact area for your puppy. This will discourage if from going there. It is often the place where puppies learn to jump up on home coming children, sometimes causing injury and distress. Encourage children to enter, cross their arms and put their hands on their shoulders, look up at the ceiling, thus avoiding eye and hand contact with the puppy and keep walking to a point away from the hallway, the kitchen for instance. Have a put of treats easily accessible, so that a child can put their hand in, take out a treat and say, (pups name), and “sit”. If possible they should not look at the puppy until the puppy has all 4 paws on the floor. It is sometimes necessary to put a physical a barrier between the kitchen and hallway, for instance, so that a puppy is contained and is therefore more controllable
- Calm houses have calm puppies!

Selecting a Puppy.

What age is best?

Many people have a “warm fuzzy” image of a puppy and a child growing up together. If you have a young child and are thinking of adopting a puppy (less than one year old) there are a few things you need to consider.

Time and energy.

Puppies require a lot of time, patience, training and supervision. They also require socialisation in order to become well-adjusted adult dogs. This means they need to be taken to places and exposed to new things and new people. If you have a young child who already requires a lot of care and time, will you have enough time to care for a puppy, as well?

Safety.

Puppies are fragile creatures. A puppy may become frightened, or even injured, by a well-meaning, curious child who wants to constantly pick your puppy up, hug your puppy or explore its body by pulling on its tail or ears.

Rough play.

Puppies have sharp teeth and claws with which they may inadvertently injure a small child. Puppies also tend to jump up on small children and knock them down. All interactions between your child and puppy will need to be closely supervised in order to minimise the chances of either being injured.

Advantages of getting an adult dog.

Adult dogs require less time and attention once they've adjusted to your family and household routine, although you'll still need to spend time helping your new puppy with the transition to its new home. You can better gauge how hardy and tolerant an adult puppy will be of childish enthusiasm and you can work with your local animal shelter to adopt a puppy with a history of getting along well with children. As a rule, if your child is under six years old, it is best to adopt a dog that is over two years old.

Although puppies can be a lot of fun and it is exciting and rewarding to help them grow into wonderful companions, they do require significantly more time to train and supervise than an adult puppy.

Which breed is best?

Although some general statements can be made about specific puppy breeds, the characteristics of an individual puppy are just as important as a puppy's breed.

Size: Small breeds of dogs, such as toy or miniature poodles, Chihuahuas or cocker spaniels, may not be good choices for a young child. These small breed dogs are more easily injured than larger dogs and may be more easily frightened by a lot of activity, loud noises and by being picked up and fondled frequently. Frightened dogs tend to snap or bite in order to protect themselves. Larger dogs may be better able to tolerate the activity, noise and rough play that are an inevitable part of living with children.

Breed type.

Some of the sporting breeds, such as Labradors and Golden Retrievers, make good pets for families with children. Breeds that have been selected for protective behaviour, such as Chows or German Shepherds, may not be as good for families with children. It is sometimes difficult for this type of puppy to tolerate the many comings and goings of children and their friends, who may be perceived as territorial intruders. Herding breeds, such as Border Collies are inclined to “herd” children, chasing and nipping at their heels.

Who will care for the Puppy?

It is unrealistic to expect a child, regardless of age, to have sole responsibility for caring for a puppy. Not only do pups need basic things like food, water and shelter, they also need to be played with, exercised and trained on a consistent basis. Teaching a puppy the rules of the house and helping your puppy become a good companion is too overwhelming a task for a young child. While responsible teenagers may be up to the task, they may not be willing to spend an adequate amount of time with the puppy, as their desire to be with their friends usually takes over at this age. If you are adopting a puppy “for the kids,” you must be prepared and willing to be the puppy's primary carer.

Starting Right.

The following are some guidelines to help you start on the right foot. Remember, small children should never be left alone with a puppy or dog without adult supervision.

Holding.

It is safest for both your child and puppy if your child is sitting down whenever he/she wants to hold the puppy. Puppies are squirmy and wiggly and may easily fall out of a young child's arms and be injured. If held insecurely, a puppy may become frightened and snap or scratch in response. After your child is sitting, you can place the puppy in its arms.

Have your child offer the puppy a chew toy while he/she pets the puppy. When puppies are teething, they tend to chew on everything, including hands and arms, so having a chew toy handy will divert the puppy's teeth away from your child. An added benefit is that the puppy will come to associate pleasant consequences (getting a treat) with being held by your child.

For larger dogs, have your child sit in your lap and let the puppy approach both of you. This way you can control your child and not allow your puppy to become "carried away" with pats that are too rough. You are also there to teach your new puppy to treat your child gently.*

Petting and giving affection.

Children often want to hug dogs around the neck. Your puppy may view this as a threatening gesture, rather than an affectionate one and may react with a growl, snap or bite. You should teach your child to pet your puppy from underneath the puppy's chin, rather than hugging your puppy or reaching over its head. You should also teach your child to avoid staring at, or looking directly into, your puppy's eyes.

Giving Treats.

Children tend to become somewhat fearful and anxious when a puppy tries to take a treat from their hand. This causes them to jerk their hand away at the last second. The puppy may then snap in order to obtain it or jump up or lunge, which may result in the child being knocked down. Have your child place the treat in an open palm, rather than holding it in its fingers. You may want to place a hand underneath your child's hand to help guide your puppy.

Supervising Play.

Children move with quick, jerky movements, have high-pitched voices and often run, rather than walk. All of these behaviours somewhat resemble the behaviour of prey animals. Almost all of a puppy's play behaviours are based on predatory behaviour. Consequently, your puppy may respond to your child's behaviour by chasing your child, nipping at its heels, jumping up at your child or even trying to knock your child down.

At first, your child may need to play quietly around your new puppy until it becomes more comfortable and calm and your child has gained more control over the puppy. Your puppy must also learn that certain behaviours on its part are unacceptable, but your pup must also be taught what behaviours are the right ones. However, most children under the age of ten are not capable of carrying out these procedures, so it is helpful to teach your puppy a "leave it" command that you can use when play gets too rough. Taking an obedience class together is a good way to teach your puppy to respond to commands.

An approach that is not helpful is to punish your puppy for its behaviour. If it learns that being around children always results in "bad things" happening to your puppy, it may become defensive in their presence.

Possessions.

Your puppy will not know the difference between its toys and your child's toys until you teach your puppy. Your child must take responsibility for keeping its playthings out of your puppy's reach. If, and only if, you catch your puppy chewing on something he/she shouldn't, interrupt the behaviour with a loud noise, then give your puppy an acceptable chew toy and praise your puppy lavishly when it takes the toy in its mouth.

Do not give your puppy objects to play with such as old socks, old shoes or old children's toys, that are similar to those that you do not want your puppy to chew or play with. They cannot tell the difference!

Puppies and dogs can be possessive about their food, toys and space. Although it is normal for a puppy to growl or snap to protect these items, it is not acceptable. At the same time, children need to learn to respect their puppy as a living creature who is not to be teased or purposefully hurt and who needs time to themselves.

8. Obedience training at home.

Structuring a 5-minute Training Session.

Much of the training you do at home will occur during every day contact with your puppy. For example, when your puppy jumps up, you should turn your back, fold your arms and reward him/her with attention only when all four of his/her feet are on the floor. Be conscious of all your interactions with your puppy. Make an effort to reward behaviour you like and avoid rewarding behaviour you do not like.

Additionally, devoting a few minutes a day to a training session is invaluable. Many of the techniques taught in class require you to develop new skills, such as timing, reading your puppy and simultaneously juggling treats and a lead. The ultimate target, besides a better-behaved puppy, is for you and your puppy to learn to communicate effectively. Training sessions allow you and your puppy to focus exclusively on each other. Develop a routine of at least one short training session per day.

The treat is only the lure or the incentive, not the reward. The reward is you, the words you use, such as, "Good boy/girl" and gentle contact stroking on the neck/head. Say your praise words quietly, but clearly, mean it, make your puppy listen to you; convey to your puppy that you really appreciate what it has done for you and your puppy will react quickly because it wants to earn your praise.

Rules for training at home:

- One trainer and one puppy at a time. Children should be supervised to ensure that they fully understand what is required, what is being attempted and the techniques needed for success.
- Spectators, such as other members of the family, are only allowed if they promise to sit down and are quiet. Other puppies, dogs or pets should be kept outside of the training area.
- Be prepared. Have your treats, such as soft stinky treats ready and decide what you are going to work on before you begin.
- Set your puppy up to win. Progress comes from building on success.
- If your puppy appears not to understand what is expected or what you are trying to achieve, change something you are doing.
- Keep it short, happy and always end on a successful and positive note. A session that ends with both of you happy is a successful session.
- Do not chase your pup around trying to give it a treat. If your pup wants the reward then make sure it comes to you. Stand still, hold your lead right at the collar end, if necessary, and then do everything with your pup in your space, not hers. The most positive reward you can give your puppy is voice and contact praise. The food, which should be used at all times at this stage of your pup's life, should not be the only reward; it is the lure to get it to do something.
- Attitude: training a puppy or dog is incredibly rewarding. If you have an alert positive attitude that says to your pup; let us get this right first time and you will get the reward sooner, then your pup will react accordingly. You will have a keener, more spontaneous pup, eager to learn and to achieve.

The Training Session.

- Find a place to train where you and your puppy can be alone.
- Get your treats ready. Positive reinforcement methods require positive reinforcements. Treats should be small, soft and something your puppy is willing to work for. You can put treats in a bowl on a table; put them in your pocket or in a waist bag. When training, have the treat in your hand so that you can give it to your puppy immediately.
- Using the treats. Always use your pups name before you give the command, such as "Rover; sit", "Rover, down". Using your pups name gets its attention and alerts it to the fact that something is going to happen.
- Praise and reward while your puppy is doing the right thing, such as when in the sit, do not praise if your pup has move out of the position, if this happens, start again. Teach your puppy to respond correctly from the start.
- Holding and using the treat; put a small tasty treat on the first and second finger of your right hand, (left if you are left handed). Then put your thumb over the treat. With your hand knuckles side down, put the treat to your pups nose/mouth. Do not release it to your puppy until it has done the right thing. Make sure that you keep it right where it should be, so that it does not learn to jump up and snatch or snap for food.
- Pick a few obedience positions to work on before you begin.

- Help your puppy choose the position you want, by luring or by limiting his/her choices, and treat/reward him/her when he/she gets it right. He/she cannot succeed if you are not clear in your own mind on what you want. For your next training session, pick different obedience exercises to work on, keep changing the routine. This keeps it interesting for both you and your puppy. Avoid making training sessions into repetitive exercise drills.
- Set your puppy up to win. In the early stages of training, treat frequently to keep your puppy interested in the game, the learning comes when he/she is getting it right. If you do not get an opportunity to reward and treat within 30 seconds or a minute, change the obedience exercise. Then assess what how you can improve and succeed (see training challenges below) and try to fix it. Repeated failures, such as when your puppy is not responding to your first cue, may establish a pattern in the pup's mind of behaviour you do not want.
- A good training session has a beginning, middle and an end.
- Begin with a few exercises your puppy already knows, so you can reward and give a treat straight away. Then spend a few minutes on a new exercise or improving an old one. End the session on a success; go back to an easy obedience position if you need to; then give a big reward and let your puppy know the session is over. Following a training session with gentle play, a meal or a walk is a nice plus.
- The whole session may only last than 5 minutes or less; do not keep going so long that your puppy loses interest in the training. A tiny amount of progress in any individual session is all you need. Add up all the tiny steps and you will soon see very big changes.
- If you are getting frustrated, try again later continuing will do more harm than good. What is most important is that both you and your puppy enjoy the process, so you are motivated to train again the next day.

Training challenges?

Does your puppy seem anxious, confused or disinterested?

- If anxious, do not lean over your puppy; use a softer tone of voice.
- If confused, make sure you reward immediately you have the success you are attempting to achieve and that you reward for the same behaviour each time.
- If disinterested, try different treats such as chopped up hotdog or small bits of cooked chicken; or try training in a place with fewer distractions. Have you recently fed your puppy and therefore he/she is not hungry? Another possibility is that you need to improve your timing. Once your puppy understands this is a game worth winning, he/she will be interested.