

BEHAVIOUR AND TRAINING OF PUPPIES

Introduction

There are many things to consider when bringing a new puppy into a home. This information is designed to make things as smooth as possible for your puppy and family.

The information is divided up into the following sections:

- 🐾 Introducing a new puppy
- 🐾 House training
- 🐾 Training Basics
- 🐾 Socialisation
- 🐾 Play and Exercise



Puppies require a lot of patience and perseverance. We hope that the following information will get you through. However if you encounter more ‘serious’ problems such as excessive barking, aggression, destructive behaviour, biting & chewing or stealing of food please let us know. The sooner your puppy can be corrected of such behavior the better.

A couple of recommended books are listed below and are excellent reading material, particularly for first dog owners that wish to avoid behavioural problems from the start:

Before and After Getting Your Puppy

The positive approach to raising a happy, healthy and well-behaved dog

By Dr Ian Dunbar

The Complete Idiot’s Guide to “Positive Dog Training” 2nd edition

By Pamela Dennison

Don’t shoot the Dog

The New Art of Teaching and Training

By Karen Pryor

SECTION I: INTRODUCING A NEW PUPPY



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

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

The rule of thumb for dog training is "set the dog up for success". Supervise the puppy whenever possible until it has learned what it is allowed to chew, and where it is supposed to toilet. Keeping the puppy on a 10 foot loose lead is an excellent way to keep it in sight, and to train it not to wander off. This is particularly helpful with a highly inquisitive puppy or busy household.

At any time that the puppy cannot be supervised, such as throughout the night or when you need to go out, house it in a secure area. An escape-proof cage, a dog run, or collapsible pen are simple, highly effective, and most importantly, safe. The puppy could also be confined to a room that has been carefully dog-proofed. When selecting your dog's confinement area it is useful to consider a number of factors. The dog will adapt faster to the new area if it is associated with rewards. Have the puppy enter the area for all its treats, toys, and perhaps food and water. The area should have some warm, dry, comfortable bedding and should never be used for punishment (although it can, and should, be used to prevent problems). Housing the puppy in isolated areas where there is minimal human contact, such as in a back room or basement cellar, should be avoided. In fact, often the best area is a kitchen (so that this can also be the dog's feeding area) or a bedroom (so that it becomes the dog's sleeping area). Each time the puppy needs to be confined, it should first be well exercised and given an opportunity to toilet.

Another consideration in selecting the type of confinement area is how long you may need to leave the dog alone. Anytime the puppy will be left alone for longer than it can control its toileting, you must provide an area for toilet.

A room or collapsible pen with a paper-covered area would be needed. A simple cage could be used for owners that do not have to leave their puppies confined for longer than 2 or 3 hours.

Another option is **crate training** which involves a comfortable, spacious crate (large enough for the pup to stand up, turn around and lay down) where the puppy can be kept in when he or she is unable to be directly supervised. People often make the mistake of giving attention for making noise in the crate. For the puppy, this confirms that crying for help will bring someone and that it's not ok to be alone. This might be the case in the wild, but we want the puppy to feel safe when alone so it is best to ignore any cries from the puppy whilst inside the crate. The worst thing you can do is let the puppy cry for a long time, then go to the puppy. It communicates to the pup that you want to be notified with lots and lots of noise! What you want the puppy to discover is that nothing bad happens from being alone in a crate. Check on the puppy after he or she is quiet again. It is best to schedule toilet breaks during the night so they do not have to alert you. Be careful not to abuse the crate. When you are at home and awake, supervise the puppy in person rather than using the crate. Too much crate time is not humane. If the crate time is scheduled so the pup can use it for sleeping, that's ideal (they need approximately 14 hours a day of sleep).

What is the best way to punish my puppy for misbehaviour?

Every effort should be made to avoid punishment for new puppies as it is generally unnecessary and can lead to avoidance of family members, at a time when bonding and attachment are critical. By preventing problems through confinement or supervision, providing for all of the puppy's needs, and setting up the environment for success, little or no punishment should ever be required. If a reprimand is needed, a verbal "no" or a loud noise is usually sufficient to distract a puppy so that you can then direct the puppy towards the correct behaviour. **Never** use physical punishment with dogs.

Instead, reinforce the good behavior by using food rewards, such as the Vet's Best Rewards (dried liver treats). A treat can be given in conjunction with **clicker training** too. This is where a "click" noise is sounded using a special clicker device to associate good behaviour with a specific noise (the click sound), eliminating confusion when different family members are training the dog. As soon as the good behaviour is noted, a click noise is made using the device and a treat given. See www.clickertraining.com for further information. Timing is crucial when using clicker training so it is important to do some research on the correct techniques first. Karen

Pryor is the one of the pioneers of clicker training and there are plenty of great articles and instructional videos on her website.

How can I prevent problems?

Supervise the puppy when it is not confined to ensure that the puppy does not get itself into mischief or cause damage to itself or the home. When the puppy cannot be supervised, confinement (discussed above) will be necessary. It is not fair to stop the puppy doing things for fun when you have not provided a suitable alternative. If you don't want something chewed, remove it from the pups reach.

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

Chewing, play, exercise, exploration, feeding, social contact and elimination are basic requirements of all puppies. By providing appropriate outlets for each of these needs, few problems are likely to emerge. Puppies should be given chew toys that interest them and occupy their time. The general rule is to have 8 or more toys, but only have two out at a time and rotate the toys every couple of days. When supervised, the owner can allow the puppy to investigate and explore its new environment and can direct the puppy to the appropriate chew toys (and away from inappropriate areas). Hollow toys can be stuffed with biscuits and treats to make them more attractive (e.g. Everlasting Treat Balls or Kongs). Play, exercise, affection, training, and handling must all be part of the daily routine. New tasks, new routines, new people and new forms of handling can be associated with rewards to ensure success. And, of course, the puppy will need to be provided with an acceptable area for toileting, and will need guidance until it learns to use this area.



SECTION II: HOUSE TRAINING

When you gotta go, you gotta go

How do I house-train my puppy?

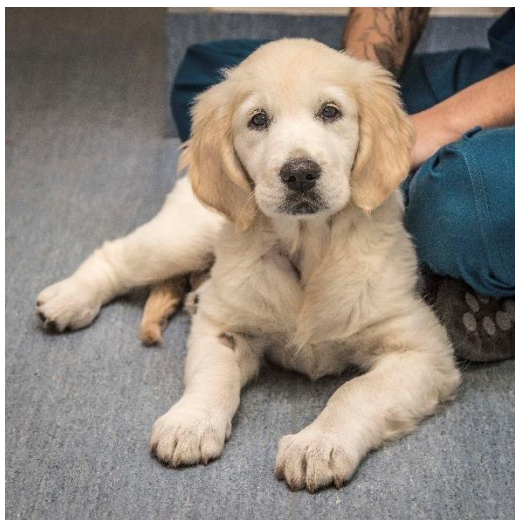
All it requires are a few basic rules to house-train puppies within a couple of weeks. This does not mean that the puppy will be able to be trusted to wander throughout the home without eliminating. What the puppy should quickly learn is where it should eliminate, and the consequences of toileting indoors when the owner is supervising.



Puppies have a strong urge to toilet after sleeping, playing, feeding and drinking. Prepare to take your puppy to its selected toileting area within a few minutes of each of these activities. In addition, although some puppies can control themselves through the entire night, most puppies need to toilet every 3 to 4 hours during the daytime. With each passing month, you can expect your puppy to control itself a little longer between toileting times.

The puppy should be taken to its toileting area, given a word or two of verbal encouragement and as soon as is completed, lavishly praised and patted. A few tasty food treats can also be given the first few times the puppy goes in the right spot, and then intermittently thereafter. This teaches the puppy the proper place to toilet, and that toileting in that location is associated with rewards. Always go outdoors with your puppy to ensure that it has toileted and so that rewards can be given immediately upon completion, and not when the dog comes back indoors (this is really too late).

When indoors the puppy must be supervised so that you can see when it needs to toilet and immediately take it outdoors to its toileting area. Should pre-toileting signs (circling, squatting, sneaking-off, heading to the door) occur, immediately take the dog to its toileting site, give the cue words, and reward the puppy for toileting. If the puppy begins to toilet indoors, immediately take the puppy outdoors to its proper site, so that it can complete the act. It is better to supervise your puppy appropriately than to depend on punishment. If you catch your puppy toileting somewhere they shouldn't, do not yell or punish the pup in any way and don't rub their noses in it. All that will achieve is a pup I that is scared to toilet in front of you! Always remember, reward good behavior, ignore bad behavior!



When you are not available to supervise, the puppy should be confined to its confinement area. Be certain that your puppy has had a chance to toilet, and has had sufficient play and exercise before any lengthy confinement. If the area is small enough, such as a pen or crate, many puppies will have sufficient control to keep this area clean. When you come to release the puppy from confinement, it must be taken directly to its toileting area. If the area is too large for the puppy to keep clean, or the puppy is left alone too long for it to control itself, the entire area, except for the

puppy's bed and feeding spot, should be covered with paper for toileting. Once the puppy starts to limit its toileting to some selected areas, unused areas of the paper can be taken up. For owners that intend to continue to use paper for training, even when home, the puppy should be supervised when released from confinement, and then returned to this area when pre-elimination signs are seen.

Why does my puppy refuse to toilet in my presence, even when outdoors?

Puppies that are not supervised and rewarded for outdoor toileting, but are constantly being disciplined and punished for indoor toileting, may soon begin to fear to toilet in all locations in an owner's presence. These puppies do not associate the punishment with indoor toileting; they associate the punishment with the presence of the owner. Check to see whether or not this could apply in your situation.

What do I do if I find some stool or urine in an inappropriate spot?

There is no point in punishing or even pointing out the problem to the puppy. Only if the puppy is in the act of toileting will it understand the consequences (rewards or punishment). In fact, it is not the puppy that has erred, if anything it is the owner who has erred by not detecting the problem sooner.

How can I teach my puppy to signal that it needs to go out to toilet?

By regularly taking the dog outdoors, through the same door, to the same site, and providing rewards for proper toileting, the puppy should soon learn to head for the door each time it has to toilet. If you recognise the signs of impending toileting and praise the puppy whenever it heads for the doorway, the behaviour can be encouraged further. It is even possible to teach your dog to ring a bell with its paw when he or she needs to go out!

When will I be able to trust my puppy to wander loose throughout the home?

Generally you will want your dog to have been error free around the house for about a month before you can begin to decrease your confinement and supervision. The first time you leave the puppy unsupervised should be just after taking the dog outdoors for toileting. Gradually increase the length of time that your dog is allowed to roam through the home without supervision. If the dog has been able to go unsupervised for a couple of hours without an "accident", it might then be possible to begin going out for short periods of time. Of course, if the dog still investigates and chews, then confinement and supervision may still be necessary as well as a wider range of chew toys.



SECTION III: TRAINING BASICS



At what age can I start training my new puppy?

Whether you realise it or not, you will be training your puppy from the moment you pick it up. Puppies learn as soon as they are born. Many good breeders encourage handling and socialisation from birth.

Some training can begin as soon as the puppy can open its eyes and walk. Young puppies have short attention spans but expect them to begin to learn simple obedience commands such as 'sit' 'down' and 'stay', from as early as 7 to 8 weeks of age.

Traditionally, formal dog training is often delayed until 6 months of age. Actually this juvenile stage is a very poor time to start. The dog is beginning to consolidate adult behavioural patterns and strategies which have been successful since puppyhood will be harder to change. Although there are many physical techniques that have been advocated for gaining control, it is the owners' attitudes, actions, and responses to the new puppy (along with the puppy's genetic tendencies) that are most important in determining whether the puppy will become either a well-mannered and responsive individual, or stubborn, disobedient and potentially aggressive.

When training is started at 7 to 8 weeks, always use methods that rely on positive reinforcement and kindness. Puppies have short attention spans, so training sessions should be brief, but frequent (several times a day, but no longer than 5 minutes per session). Puppies can be taught to sit, down, and stand using a method called food-lure training. We use food treats to entice the dog to follow its nose into the proper positions for sit, down, stand, and stay.

What type of treats should I be using?

There are several different types of treats available, but the best type to use during training are wet foods such as small pieces of cooked chicken, beef, lamb or a processed roll of dog food cut into small pieces. Dry treats are ok, but can be tricky to chew and swallow quickly and wet food treats will most likely be more desirable to the pup. Try to avoid fatty foods like frankfurts, sausages, ham and cheese. These foods are ok in very small amounts, but are high in fat and salts.

How do I get started using food lure training?

Small pieces of food or a favored toy can be used to encourage your puppy to perform most tasks. Provided the reward is sufficiently appealing, the puppy can be prompted towards the desired response giving the command as you show the puppy the reward and move it so as to get



the desired response. For example, food held up over the puppy's nose and moved slowly backwards and slightly downwards should get a sit response. Food drawn down to the floor between the dog's front paws should get a down response. Food brought back up and slightly forward should get a stand response. Food held out at a distance should get a come response. Food that is held at your side at the height of the puppy's nose as you walk should get it to heel or follow. By pairing a command phrase or word with each action, and giving the reward for each appropriate response, the puppy should soon learn the meaning of each command.

How often should I give the command?

Ideally you should give the command phrase once and then use your food to move the puppy into positions. Once the puppy has performed the task, give verbal praise and an affectionate pat which will act as secondary reinforcers (see below). Some trainers also use clickers as secondary reinforcers. If you keep repeating the command, the puppy will learn that several repetitions are acceptable before it needs to obey, so instead of the command being "Sit" it becomes "sit sit sit SIIIIIT". Keeping a lead attached can help to gain an immediate response if the puppy does not obey, but it is preferable to lure the right response without touching the puppy.

Remember: in the early stages of training your puppy does not know the meaning of the word. Therefore you could just as easily teach your puppy to sit with the word "bananas", as you could with the word "sit". The key is to have the puppy associate the word, in this case "sit", with the action of placing the hind end on the floor. Consistency is vital in training.

How should I phase out the lure and food rewards?

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

motion or signal that has been used to date. Soon you should give the signal and command without any food reward but only praise and affection. Next, you can begin to vary the frequency, giving the "good dog" and perhaps patting each time, but giving the food randomly, perhaps every 3 or 4 times. In time, the puppy should respond to either the hand signal or simple command.

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

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

Dogs need consistency amongst family members in the command words used. Keep a "dog dictionary" handy, listing the command words used so that everyone in the family uses the same commands.

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

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

Use these training tasks as you integrate the puppy into your life. For example, ask your puppy to sit prior to receiving food, sit before you let it in or out the door, and sit before you pet it. These are times when your puppy wants something and is more likely to comply. In this way you are training your dog all the time, throughout the day and also establishing yourself as the leader.



Training your puppy prior to getting each reward also helps to prevent problems. Having your puppy sit before getting a food or treat prevents begging, while teaching your dog to sit before opening the door can prevent jumping up or running out the door. Be creative. The time you spend training your puppy now, will pay off when you have an adult dog. To have a well-trained dog, you need to be committed to reinforcing the training tasks on a frequent basis. The more you teach and supervise your puppy, the less opportunity it will have to engage in undesirable behaviours. Dogs do not train themselves, when left to choose their behaviour they will act like dogs.

What types of handling should I begin with when I start to train my puppy?

🐾 Body Handling

You will do yourself and your new pet a favour by teaching your new puppy to allow you to handle his body. Throughout the life of your dog there will be times that you need to handle various parts of the dog's body. You may need to wipe their feet, clean their ears, give medication or clip their nails. Yet if you have never handled your dog these simple tasks could become impossible. Handling also serves to reinforce the control you are able to exert over your puppy. You should gently handle your puppy daily. Pick a time when your puppy is calm, e.g. just after a nap. Do not try to start a body handling exercise when your puppy is excited or in the mood for play.



Place the puppy in your lap and touch the feet, open the mouth, look in the ears and under the tail. All the while, praise your puppy for being good, even offer a few tasty food treats. Gradually increase the amount of time you handle your puppy. *All* family members should participate in this exercise. Gradually overcome any resistance through quiet persistence. Over time your puppy should allow you to place pressure on the back of its neck while it is in a down position, to roll it onto its side, to grasp its muzzle and to be lifted (if it is small enough). These forms of handling should not be used for punishment.

🐾Food and toy handling

Another exercise that is so important is to acclimatise your puppy to having his food and possessions touched by humans. Dogs will often guard their food to prevent its loss but this is not necessary in the home. Handle the food bowl while your puppy eats, pat the puppy and perhaps lift the bowl, place in a special treat, and return it. When walking past the puppy while it is eating you can place a treat in its food bowl, or reach down, pat the puppy and give a treat. This way the puppy learns to tolerate intrusions and disturbance while it eats and will not be startled and react aggressively should something unexpected happen when eating. If any growling should emerge you should seek professional guidance immediately.

You should also practice gently taking toys from the puppy. Quietly and calmly place your hand on the toy and tell your puppy "give" as you remove it from its mouth. Then say "thank-you" and return the object as you tell your puppy to "take it". Repeat this training task multiple times daily in multiple locations. At times take the object and offer a favorite treat or another toy instead, this will let your puppy know that sometimes something better comes from relinquishing the object. Note clicker training can also be used effectively in this manner.

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

Training should begin in a quiet environment with few distractions. The reward chosen should be highly motivating so that the puppy is focused entirely on the trainer and the reward. Although a small food treat generally works best, a favorite toy might work just as well. It might also be helpful to train the puppy just before a scheduled mealtime when it is at its most hungry. Try wet treats such as cooked chicken, beef or lamb. More desirable treats might get more attention from the pup.

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

One of the best management tools for gaining safe and effective control is a head collar or 'Canny Collar'. The principle of collar training is to improve communication with the dog with as much natural communication as possible and without the use of punishment. Positive reinforcement is used to encourage the right behaviour. The collar places pressure around the muzzle and behind the neck. This simulates the muzzle and neck restraint that a leader or mother dog might apply to a subordinate and therefore is a highly effective and



natural form of control. Try to avoid harness unless they are being used as a restraint in the car. Harness' can restrict the natural movement of a dog, but also encourage them to pull, because this is much more comfortable to pull on a harness than it is to pull on collar or halti.

Should I also consider training classes?

Pet owners who are novices at training can begin a training programme with these few simple steps. It takes repetition, time and perseverance for the puppy to be able to predictably and reliably respond to commands in a variety of situations. The training class serves many functions. Of course trainers can demonstrate techniques and help guide you through the steps in training. They can help advise you on puppy training problems, and can help you advance your training to more difficult exercises. The puppy will also be learning in a group situation, with some real life distractions. Also the pet owner who takes his or her dog to a puppy class, will be more likely to practice (do their homework) throughout the week, if they do not want to fall behind by the next class. A training class is a good place to meet and talk to other new puppy owners and see how all puppies behave. There are many puppy pre-school classes' available and different locations including Vet hospitals, pet shops, and dog training clubs. A simple internet search should find many options in your area.

Training classes for young puppies are also an excellent way to **socialise your new puppy** to a variety of people, other dogs, and stimuli, in a controlled environment. In addition, you will learn how to prevent problems before they can begin, or deal with them as they emerge, rather than having to find a way to correct problems that have already developed. Your puppy might also make some new friends of the same age. You could then visit these friends (or vice versa) with your puppy for social play and exercise sessions. Since the main socialisation learning period for dogs ends by 3 months of age, puppy socialisation classes are most valuable for puppies between 8 and 12 weeks of age. If all puppies in the class have had initial vaccinations, are healthy and parasite free, the health risks are low and the potential benefits are enormous.



SECTION IV: SOCIALISATION

What is socialisation?

Socialisation is the process whereby the puppy learns about itself, its own species and the other species with which it will live. During this process the puppy develops relationships with other living beings in its environment. Another important term relating to the puppy's development is "habituation".



What is habituation?

As all animals develop there are numerous stimuli (sounds, smells, sights and events) that they need to become accustomed to in their environment. If puppies do not encounter these stimuli and place them in their frame of reference for the world around them then the stimuli can induce fear and anxiety when they are encountered later in life. Habituation is the process whereby dogs get used to a wide variety of stimuli, and stop reacting to them provided that there are no untoward consequences.

Why are these terms important?

To reduce the possibility of fearful responses as a puppy grows and matures, it is essential to expose young puppies to many stimuli (people, places and things) when they can most effectively socialise and habituate to these stimuli. Early handling and events that occur during the first 2 to 4 months of life are critical factors in the social development of the dog. Dogs that receive insufficient exposure to people, other animals and new environments during this time may develop irreversible fears, leading to timidity or aggression.

What can I do to improve my chances of having a social, non-fearful dog?

🐾 Pedigree

The genetics of the breed and of the parents in particular play an important role in how sociable, playful, fearful, excitable, or domineering a puppy becomes. In order to maximise your chances of having a dog who is sociable you should choose a breed and parents (both male and female) that have the type of

behaviour that you would like the puppy to have. Of course, there is a great deal of variability between individuals, so that breed and parental behaviour will not always be indicative of what the puppy will be like.

🐾 Puppy assessment

Even the most sociable and playful of puppies may become fearful and aggressive as they develop out of puppyhood. Avoid selecting puppies that are shy, withdrawn or fearful. But selecting a friendly and non-fearful puppy does not ensure that this behaviour will persist into adulthood. Puppies under three months of age are still developing their social skills, but as puppies age these criteria do begin to become more reliable. Assessing the behaviour of the parents, and understanding the behaviour of a breed are far more critical than assessing an individual puppy.



🐾 Early handling

Puppies that are stimulated and handled from birth to five weeks of age are more confident, sociable, exploratory, faster maturing and better able to handle stress as they develop. Puppies obtained from a reputable breeder or home where they have had frequent contact and interaction with people are likely to be more sociable and less fearful as they develop.

🐾 Primary socialisation

There is a sensitive period in the development of most species when they develop social attachments with their own and other species, independent of punishment and rewards. In fact, both positive and negative events seem to accelerate socialisation. The events that occur during this socialisation period determine the puppy's preferred social partners, as well as to what species it feels it belongs. By recognising the time frame in which canine socialisation develops, you can help to ensure a healthy social attachment to people and other animals, including other dogs.

The main socialisation period for dogs begins at approximately 3 weeks of age and is diminishing by 12 to 14 weeks. Peak sensitivity is at approximately 6 to 8 weeks. Beyond 12 to 14 weeks, there is a tendency to act fearfully towards new people, animals and situations. Many young dogs will regress or become fearful again if they do not receive continued social interaction as they grow and develop and especially during the first 6-8 months of life.

To help to maintain a healthy social relationship with other dogs throughout life, dogs should maintain their social contacts with their mother and littermates until 6 to 8 weeks of age. They should continue to have regular social interaction and play sessions with other dogs after they are taken into a new home.

What is the best age to obtain my new puppy?

Since it is so important for the puppy to develop and maintain social attachments to their own species, puppies should ideally remain with their mother and littermates until at least 8 weeks of age. In toy breeds, puppies should ideally remain with their mother until 12 weeks.

Then when placed in the new home they can expand their social contacts to new people and species while still in their socialisation period. By this time puppies will also begin to develop preferences for toileting sites, so this timing can be helpful for housetraining.

What can I do to assist my puppy in its social development?

There should be little problem with a puppy that is less than 12 weeks of age developing healthy and lasting attachments to the people, sights and sounds in its new home. Your puppy is most likely to become fearful of stimuli that are not found in its day-to-day routine. Make a conscious effort to identify those people and situations that the puppy is not regularly exposed to. For example, if there are no children in the home, you might arrange regular play sessions with children. If you live in the country, make a few trips into the city, so that the puppy can be taken for walks on city streets. Conversely, a puppy that grows up in the city might become fearful or excited towards farm animals that it was not exposed to during its early development.

Introduce your puppy to as many new people and situations as possible, beginning in its first three months of development. People in uniforms, babies, toddlers, the elderly, and the physically challenged are just a few examples that might lead to fear and anxiety, unless there is sufficient early exposure. Similarly, car rides, lifts, stairs, or the noises of cars, trains, aeroplanes, or hot air balloons are some examples of events and experiences to which the puppy might be usefully exposed. It is important that the puppy be given the opportunity to relax in these new situations and not just taken out and excited by them all.

One way to facilitate the introduction of the puppy to new situations and people is to provide a reward such as a favourite toy or biscuit each time it is exposed to a new stimulus.

If strangers offer a biscuit to the puppy each time they meet it then it will learn to look forward to meeting people. Offering rewards will also discourage hand-shyness since the puppy will learn

to associate new friends and an outstretched hand with something positive. Once the puppy has learned to sit on command, each new friend should ask it to sit before giving the biscuit. This teaches a proper greeting and will make the puppy less likely to jump up at people.

The puppy needs to have the opportunity to meet and receive treats from a wide variety of people of all ages, races, appearances and both sexes during the formative months. There will of course, be times when your puppy is in a new situation and you do not have treats. Be sure then to use a happy tone of voice and encourage your puppy to relax.

If your puppy seems to panic, back off a little and try again later, rather than aggravating the fear. *Never reassure the fearful dog as this might serve to reward the fearful behaviour.*



Is it healthy to take my puppy out in public at such a young age?

There is always a concern about the risks of taking the puppy out of its home before it is fully vaccinated because it may be exposed to infection before the vaccines have had time to become protective. However benefits gained from these new and early public appearances can be enormous and without them the risk of the puppy developing permanent fears or anxiety is a serious concern.

One solution is for people and healthy vaccinated animals to visit the puppy in its own home, until it is sufficiently vaccinated to be taken out. A compromise is to take the puppy out to meet people and other pets in low risk environments. As long as vaccines are up-to-date, taking the puppy for walks along the pavement and avoiding neighbourhood parks where faeces and urine might accumulate is generally safe and effective. Alternatively the puppy may be carried out to meet people.

Puppy Classes

Another valuable aid to successful socialisation and habituation for your puppy is to enrol in puppy socialisation classes (puppy parties). These classes are held indoors in a room that can be cleaned and disinfected, and all puppies are screened for vaccination and health prior to each class. These classes provide varied and plentiful exposure to people and other dogs, in a low risk environment. Please enquire about our puppy classes at reception ph 9498 3000.

SECTION V: PLAY AND EXERCISE



Why are play and exercise important?

Play with owners and with other dogs, not only provides the dog with some of its exercise requirements, but also helps to meet social needs. Insufficient exercise can contribute to problem behaviours including destructiveness (chewing and digging), investigative behaviour (raiding bins), unruliness, excitability, attention-getting behaviours, and some forms of barking. It is especially important to ensure that a dog's need for exercise has been met prior to leaving the dog alone at home and prior to lengthy sessions of confinement.

What are good ways to play with and exercise my puppy?

Taking your dog for a walk is a good way to accomplish exercise and can be enjoyable and healthy for you as well. From an early age you should accustom your puppy to a collar and lead. A flat nylon or leather collar is fine. Keep your puppy away from stray dogs and neighbourhood parks until all vaccinations are completed. Practice your walking skills in your own garden first. Put your puppy on a lead, and using a food or toy reward as a prompt, encourage it to follow you. Reward the good behaviour with praise. Keep initial walks short to encourage compliance. Puppies should not be taken for a jog or long hikes and this is especially important during the fast growth phase of large breeds of dogs as over-exercise can lead to musculoskeletal abnormalities. Tire pups through training not over-exercise.

Playing with your pet is an enjoyable activity for both of you. Not only does the puppy get exercise, but positive interactions take place. Training sessions are also an excellent way to establish control, while providing interaction between you and your pet.

Dogs respond well to a fairly set routine, so where possible, try to factor walking, playing and feeding times into a day to day routine.

How much exercise and play is appropriate?

Selecting an appropriate amount and type of play and exercise, will depend firstly on the type of dog. Puppies and even adult dogs from breeds that have been bred for their stamina or to do "work" often have higher exercise requirements.

For purebred dogs, consider their traditional work when deciding the type and amount of play to provide. For example, the retrieving breeds do best with lengthy games of fetch or "Frisbee". Some dogs may still be ready for more after a 5 kilometer jog and a game of fetch while others may be tired and satisfied after a short walk around the block.

How can I keep my dog occupied when I am away?

When you are out, or you are busy at home with other activities and responsibilities, it would be



ideal for your dog to be relaxed and sleeping, but this will not always be the case. Exploring the environment, stealing food items, raiding the bin, chewing or digging, are just a few of the ways that dogs will find to keep themselves occupied. Therefore when you are certain that you have provided your dog with sufficient play and interactive exercise, and you must leave your dog alone, provide sufficient toys and distractions to keep your dog occupied and confine your pet to a safe, dog-proofed area. Some dogs do best when housed with another dog for play and

companionship. Others prefer objects to chew, areas to dig and self feeding toys to keep themselves occupied and "busy" while you are unavailable. One option is to "crate train" your dog (see puppy information notes).

What type of play should be avoided?

Try to avoid games that pit your strength against your puppy. Tug-of-war games seem to be an enjoyable diversion for many puppies and they do help to direct chewing and biting toward an acceptable play object, rather than an owner's hands or clothing. On the other hand, some puppies get very excited, overly stimulated and become far too aggressive during tug-of-war games. A general rule of thumb for tug-of-war (or any other game for that matter) is to avoid it, unless you are the one to initiate the game, and stop it as soon as any signs of aggression arise.

Teaching the dog to "drop" on command can help to ensure that you remain in control of object play sessions such as fetch and tug-of-war.

Although games like chase are good exercise, they can often result in wild exuberant play that gets out of control. Again, a good rule of thumb is to only play these games, if you are the one to initiate the game, and you are capable of stopping the game immediately should it get out of control. Many dogs can be taught to play "hide and seek" without becoming too excited. Other dogs like to "search" for their toys and bring them to you.

How can I teach my puppy to play fetch?

Most young puppies, even those that do not have an inherent instinct to retrieve, can be taught how to play fetch from an early age. You will need to train your puppy to do three things; go to get the toy, bring it back, and relinquish it to you so that you can throw it again. First, make the toy enticing. Try a squeaky toy or a rubber ball. Tennis balls are not recommended as they wear down the teeth.

Toss the toy a short distance, 1-2 feet, and encourage your puppy to go to it. When she gets there, praise her. If she picks it up in her mouth, tell her "good dog". Then, move backwards a short way, clap your hands and entice your puppy to come towards you. All the while you should be encouraging your puppy with a happy tone of voice and lots of praise. When your puppy returns to you, say "give" or "release" and show another toy or even a small food treat. Most puppies will gladly give the toy to get the new toy or treat and at the same time will quickly learn the "give" or "release" command. Then, by repeating the entire sequence of events again, the game of fetch itself should soon be enough of a reward that food and toys will no longer be necessary to entice the puppy to give the toy.

Please do not hesitate to contact us regarding any behavioural concerns or general queries you have during your dog's life. We are here to help you make the most out of this unique bond between you and your dog.