

Puppy Rearing: The Essentials

Attention, Exercise, and Mental Stimulation

Puppies need social interaction, physical exercise, and mental stimulation – just like children do – in order to grow up to be healthy and well adjusted. When these needs are not met, many behaviour problems can develop.

Social Interaction:

How much daily social time does a puppy need? A good rule of thumb is that a puppy should spend at least half his waking hours each day interacting with other people and dogs, and he should spend twice as much time with people as he does with dogs. Like humans, most dogs enjoy a mix of old friends and new encounters – so make sure your pup meets at least one new person or dog each day. Allowing your puppy regular access to his familiar people friends and **well mannered** doggie buddies as well as the chance to meet new **well mannered** dogs will increase the chances of him being socially content and well adjusted.

Physical Exercise & Mental Stimulation:

Your puppy's brain and body BOTH need lots of exercise. Walks on leash practicing focus/attention, sit at sides, and recall are not always physically exerting, but they do provide a lot of mental stimulation. Working on obedience skills requires lots of doggy concentration, and your puppy will love the mental challenge of figuring out new things. Swimming, playing tug and fetch, and playing with other dogs are good brain AND body work-outs. Make sure you exercise your puppy's brain AND body each day.

Safe Mouth Training

It is normal for puppies to nip like little sharks – this sometimes earns them the nickname "jaws on paws". Puppies use their mouths to play and explore, in just the way that we use our hands. So if you don't want puppy to play with you with his mouth, don't play with him with your hands. Use a toy instead. Hands are for calm handling!

Responding properly to puppy nipping is very important. One technique used to address this issue is to yelp "Yiikes" when your puppy gives you one of his *hardest* bites, then direct him towards a chew toy to sink his teeth into. Yelping is not the same thing as scolding. Yelping gets your puppy's attention so that he disengages from your hand, ankle, etc. Yelping lets the puppy know that the bite hurts, and will help teach him to bite more softly if you respond with quiet praise when he does disengage. This feedback, combined with similar feedback from other puppies helps your puppy to develop an "inhibited bite". Bite inhibition allows an adult dog to bite with minimal or no damage, and is *essential* for a safe pet. When your puppy no longer bites hard, then use the same training technique for his medium, and then even for his soft bites – until he only mouths you *verrrry* gently.

Some puppies get excited when they hear a yelp – instead of easing off they bite again even harder. If your puppy does this then throw this technique out the window and try technique #2. The instant your puppy puts his mouth on you, immediately stop all movement until he disengages, offer him a quiet “good dog”, practice a few quiet sits and drops with a lot of praise, then go about your business. If your puppy is in a playful mood, play a game of tug or fetch, then put him in his pen or crate with a chew toy filled with some of his daily food and leave him to it. If you do not have time for interaction, skip the play and go straight to the pen/crate and chew toy.

Setting Rules

Every puppy needs rules. Before your puppy can learn the rules, the whole house needs to agree on what they are. These rules should be the same ones you would have in place for an adult dog. Rules should apply only to behaviours that are not emotional reactions. Reactions like fear and aggression need a whole different training approach!

For instance, if your puppy jumps up to get the cookie in your hand you can say “Too bad” and put the cookie back in the jar. If he tries to bolt out of the car towards the dog park without permission, you can cancel his visit to the park altogether. Consequences must be immediate and consistent, and not frightening or painful.

Don’t wait for inappropriate behaviors to happen! Manage your puppy’s environment from the beginning so he does not have the opportunity or the access to learn behaviors that may seem cute and harmless at first, but that will become inappropriate, annoying or even dangerous when he gets older, bigger and more confident. Examples include jumping on people for attention, bolting out the front door, getting on the furniture, and pulling you all the way to the park.

Housetraining

Puppies will want to pee and poop wherever they have done so before. Your job is to make sure your puppy learns to prefer the outdoors as a toilet – not your carpets!

To successfully housetrain your puppy, you need to know how long she can hold for between pees. A puppy can usually hold her urine and feces for as many hours as her age in months plus one, during the day, and 1½ times that length overnight. Take your puppy’s age in months, add one, and that is how many hours she can hold for during the day. Multiply that number by 1½ and that is how many hours she can hold for overnight.

Daytime Holding Limit = age in months + 1 hour

Example: 3 month puppy can hold for 4 hours during the day

Overnight Holding Limit = 1½ times the Daytime Holding Limit

Example: 3 month puppy can hold for 1½ x 4 = 6 hours overnight

Whenever you are unable to supervise your puppy with 100% attention, you need to place her in either a short-term or long-term enclosed area.

Your puppy can be placed in a short-term area such as a crate if she will be there for less than her holding limit. The purpose of the crate is to keep her out of trouble while you are unable to supervise her, and to help you housetrain her. The crate should be just big enough for her to be able to lie down on her side with outstretched limbs, stand up, and turn around easily. It should not be so big that she thinks there is enough space for a bedroom *and* for a toilet area! When you let her out of her crate you can bring her straight outdoors and reward her with a couple of treats, praise and 2 minutes of interaction for doing her business in the *right* place. A crate is appropriate to use as a sleeping area, in the car, when you are getting ready for work, when you have a sit-down tea for your boss, etc. Because your puppy may find herself confined to a crate when she is at the vets or at the boarding facility, conditioning her to the crate at a young age will help to minimize the stress associated with these situations!

For longer periods of time, a bigger area with non-absorbent flooring, such as a bathroom, kitchen, or utility room, is needed. The long-term area should have a bed or open crate at one end, and a strip of sod or astro turf in a large cat tray at the opposite end. Your puppy will naturally want to eliminate as far as possible from her bed. If the space you use for long-term confinement happens to have a door that leads to the outdoors, then place the toilet area near that door. This way, your puppy's toilet area is as close as possible to where she should ultimately be heading to do her business. Fresh water and stuffed chew toys should also be plentiful, and should be placed near her bed. Long term areas are appropriate to use when you go to work.

Puppies will naturally have the urge to eliminate after a nap, a meal, a drink, exercise, excitement, or time spent in a puppy pen, crate, or long-term area. Give your puppy the opportunity to do her business outdoors at these times. When your puppy does her business in the right place offer her a treat and a short game or a walk. This will speed up her housetraining.

Punishing a puppy for housesoiling *during and after* it has happened is abuse, not training. This is because your puppy is engaging in absolutely normal behavior and will therefore not understand what all the fuss and emotion is about, and also because punishment does not give the puppy any useful information such what she should be doing instead. Give your puppy the chance to get it right by teaching and rewarding her for doing the right thing rather than punishing her for doing the wrong thing. If you catch your puppy about to pee or poop in the wrong place just swiftly scoop her up to the outdoors to continue.

Remember, if your puppy makes a mistake, it is strictly a reflection of your teaching abilities.

Chewtoy Training

Dogs need to chew and they need jobs, so making them work for their food keeps their jaws exercised and their mind engaged – which helps keep them safe, happy and out of trouble. Chew toys should be safe, appealing, and virtually indestructible. Chew toys can be stuffed with daily meals or healthy treats to increase their appeal.

Check out the following enrichment toys:

Toy Name	Description	Manufacturer	Go To
Classic Kong Goodie Ship Treat Ball	Rubber toys with various hollow areas that can be stuffed with food	Kong Company	www.kongcompany.com Better Pets and Gardens / City Farmers / PETstock
Tucker Ball Home Alone	Hard plastic food balls used to enrich zoo animals	Aussie Dog	www.aussiedog.com.au Better Pets and Gardens / City Farmers / PETstock
Chewber	Durable rubber frisbees designed for chewing, tossing and tugging	Chewber	www.chewber.com
Buster Cube	Hard plastic cubes with inner maze. Slowly dispense kibble when rolled	Kruise	www.bustercube.com
Nylabone	Synthetic and edible bone shaped chew toys	Nylabone	www.nylabone.com
Orka Ball Orka Jack	Pliable synthetic hollow toys that can be stuffed with treats	Petstages	www.petstages.com

Resource Guarding Prevention

It is normal for dogs to guard their food, toys or bed from people – but it is not safe. Without preventative training, resource guarding from people may develop. If your puppy or dog already displays guarding behaviour (stiffening, growling, snarling) you will need training guidance from a qualified dog trainer or animal behaviourist.

Preventing a guarding problem is much easier, and much safer than fixing one. You can only prevent resource guarding in early puppyhood (until about 18 weeks of age) – so get started *now!* Do these exercises once a day until he is one year old, then once a week throughout his lifetime.

Note: only follow these steps with a young puppy (< 12 weeks of age) that has never lifted his lip, backed away, snarled or snapped at a person or other animal if that person or animal has approached when the puppy has been in possession of food or a toy or other object! If this is the case, consult with one of the qualified trainers at Paw Prints Pet Training.

The following steps are intended strictly for use by adults; children under the age of 15 should not participate.

Food Bowl Training

- When your puppy is eating dinner, approach and drop a bit of meat or cheese into his bowl without talking or petting, and then walk away. This will teach the puppy that people who approach will add a great bonus.
- When your puppy starts to disengage from his food in eager anticipation of your approach, repeat the first step but squat down sideways next to his bowl to place the treat in his bowl before walking away.
- The next step is to squat down sideways to his bowl and let your hand linger a while in the bowl while he eating before walking away.
- Next, practice touching him all over, occasionally adding a special treat to whatever he is eating. This will teach him to like it when people approach and touch him while he is eating.

Pig's Ear or Bone Training

- Sit down next to your puppy with a nice chewie treat in your hand. Hold one end while your puppy chews on the other. Every once in awhile, offer him a piece of meat or cheese, wait until he disengages from the chewie before giving the treat to him, and then give him the chewie again. When you have practiced this several times, trade him the treat for the chewie and put the chewie away for the next time.
- If your puppy has a toy or object that you would like to get away from him, offer him something of greater or equal value (his estimation, not yours), wait for him to disengage from the first item, and then give him the second.

Note: these guarding exercises are aimed at preventing guarding from people. Guarding from other dogs or pets requires intervention if it causes any fighting, stress, fear, or physical damage. In order to curb guarding from other animals you would need to consult with one of the qualified trainers at Paw Prints Pet Training.

Handling and Socialising

We want our pet dogs to be comfortable around dogs and people, and to be relaxed about handling and grooming, so that these things are not scary or unpleasant. Scared dogs bite, and scared dogs live a very stressful life, so please do not let your puppy grow up to be a scared dog!

The time to get your puppy used to all of these things is now – after he is 3 months old, it will be much harder to get him to relax about things he might find scary. Do the handling activities listed below, making sure that he is introduced to new experiences gradually, and that he gets lots of praise and treats.

- Gently clean inside his ears with ear cleaner and gauze, tissue or cotton balls.
- Brush his coat – at first just a few strokes at a time. If he tries to chew the brush then keep his mouth busy with a stuffed chew toy while you brush him.
- Get him used to tooth-brushing, first by rubbing his gums with just your finger, then using a finger toothbrush, and finally with a real toothbrush and doggie toothpaste.
- Get him used to having his mouth opened and examined by you, and pretend you are giving him a pill by touching the back of his tongue with your finger.
- Fiddle with his paws and nails, and then gradually introduce him to nail trims – at first clipping just one or two nails at a time. Make sure you know how to avoid cutting his nails too short – it will hurt him quite a bit if you cut the vein!
- Get him used to baths by putting him in the tub for treats: first with no water at all, then with a little puddle to play in. Eventually get him used to running water, being wet, and finally being shampooed and rinsed.
- Have lots of strangers pet and handle your puppy. Make sure your puppy meets men and women of all ages, children, and people of various appearances. Always make sure your pup is comfortable, and that he gets lots of praise and treats with each of these experiences.
- Expose your pup to whatever you want him to be comfortable with as an adult: car rides, busy sidewalks, noisy schoolyards, rowdy crowds, parties, other animals, sport games, traffic, elevator rides, stairwells, noisy appliances, etc. Do not flood your puppy with too much noise or activity. Your puppy should show curiosity, not fear.

Exposure Checklist for Socialisation

To keep track of your puppy's exposure to other people, pets, places, and experiences.

Exposure to:	Age in weeks:									
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
Babies, toddlers, children										
Teenagers, adults, elderly people										
People with wheelchairs, crutches										
In-line skaters, bikers										
Drunks, people with odd gaits										
People in uniform										
Repair people, delivery people										
People with umbrellas										
People in helmets, masks										
People with hats, beards, glasses										
People with parcels, capes, sacks										
People with strollers, wagons										
People of various ethnicities										
School grounds										
Crowds, clapping, cheering										
People yelling, loud speakers										
People dancing, singing										
Livestock, waterfowl										
Other puppies, friendly adult dogs										
Other pets										
Traffic, buses, trains, motorcycles										
Boats, seadoos, skidoos										
Manhole covers, grates										
Shiny floors, tiles, icy streets										
Gravel, cement, mud										
Revolving signs, swinging bridges										
Walks after dark, in bad weather										
Hot air balloons & airplanes										
Lawn mowers,										
Elevators, automatic doors										
Balconies, stairs										
Drive-thrus, car washes, tunnels										
Electrical appliances, washers										
Vacuum cleaners, hair dryers										
Construction and machinery noises										
Wind, rain, thunder, snow										
Fireworks, sporting events, fairs										