



RAISING YOUR PUPPY

THE FIRST YEAR AND A HALF

Sharing your home with a puppy can also leave you feeling tired, frustrated, annoyed, and even helpless on occasion. The reality is - raising a puppy into the ideal companion takes time, patience, forethought, and commitment, for the ***first 18 months of your dog's life!*** So buckle up and come to terms with this joyful, yet sometimes bumpy, ride that is puppyhood!

AGE MATTERS

Age appropriate training, means structuring skills in a manner which is comparable with your dog's physical and mental abilities. Puppies (8 weeks - 5 months) have short attention spans, quick bursts of energy, and quick crash sessions throughout the day.

Your training practice should be **10-15 minutes at a time MAX** when going through different training routines. Keep in mind, baby puppies are sponges - now is the time to maximize learning and building foundations for a large variety of commands and skills.

Adolescent dogs (6-18 months of age) are a greater challenge as hormones surge, and your pup is eager to explore the world and test boundaries. Your pup may easily lose interest in you, become increasingly over stimulated or distracted, and will have a tendency to want to explore more. This can be frustrating, but it *is* normal.

It is during this time that previously learned skills should be reinforced and impulse control (learning self-control) is important. **Do not over-challenge your dog.** It is better to introduce new training concepts slowly and selectively at this point. Try to reward multiple known behaviors to keep the dog involved in training, while working on one new skill at a time.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO PHD SCHOLAR

Most owners become completely fixated on long term training goals. We have all heard or said the following:

- "I want a well behaved dog"
- "I want to control my dog"
- "I want my dog to listen"
- "My dog does not respond with distractions"
- "My dog loses his marbles around people"
- "My dog cannot focus"
- "My dog is not interested in learning"

The reality is, **it takes years to go from elementary school to a PHD**; and the same goes for your dog!

To be successful, training needs to be done in simple steps, slowly graduating to more challenging situations, and complicated behaviors.

Instead of getting hung up on all the things you wish your dog would do - focus on what steps to take to change it. Soon your goals will change. The focus should be more pro-active:

- "I will not allow my dog to pull"
- "I will not let my dog be pet unless they sit"
- "I will walk away when puppy is play biting too hard"
- "I will go out every hour during potty training"
- "I will ..."

It's a big responsibility to train a dog! It is the owner's job to ensure that the dog is able, capable, and motivated to learn. It is the dog's job to be present; and basically exist. Everything and anything you want your dog to do has to be taught, practiced, and applied. Be patient - the successful moments are worth it!

TOILET TRAINING 101

Toilet training can be a seriously big endeavor. The hardest challenge is that success varies based on many factors such as: breed, size of dog, household dynamics, and even weather!

Successful toilet training relies heavily on the *prevention of accidents* in the house. Whether you are toilet training a puppy or working with an older dog - consistency, routine, patience, and prevention are key!

ROUTINE

Having a **toileting schedule** is vital in toilet training. Pick a set amount of times throughout the day where you can consistently take your dog out to go to the bathroom. The more predictable your visits outside are, the more success your dog will have.

Use a toilet training log to help you keep track of your pups needs! This will help drastically reduce accidents and problem solve trouble areas!

CONSISTENCY

In order to better condition your dog to going outside - **pick a certain spot in the yard and relentlessly take your dog to that location.** Familiar smells and residual odor will help encourage your dog to eliminate again.

KEEP IN MIND!!!

Here's a few things to keep in mind when toilet training ...

- **Only give access and freedom to the home when the dog has gone to the bathroom outside.** If your pup does not potty within 5 minutes of yard time, supervise the dog or crate them in order to minimize accidents. Try taking them out 15 minutes later.
- Look for **body language** such as sniffing, spinning, pacing, or a stiff and heightened tail.
- Teach your dog to **indicate to their toileting needs** by rewarding them for standing by the door or ringing toilet training bells
- Never **reprimand your pet** through physical or vocal punishment as this will only teach them to avoid you while eliminating themselves. If an accident occurs, simply clean it up with a non-ammonia based pet cleaner and try again. If you catch the puppy prior, simply clap your hands and interrupt them - and quickly rush them outside.
- Keep in mind, your puppy's body is developing still. There may be **toilet training setbacks during adolescence** (when hormones are raging) of fear periods (dogs can get insecure too!)
- Pick one spot and *don't move from there until after* the dog has eliminated
- Always keep your pup *on leash* to prevent them from becoming distracted
- Use a command such as "go potty", "hurry up", or "get to it" once you have reached your toileting destination. Repeat it a few times if needed.
- *Praise and treat your dog immediately AFTER they eliminate!* If you reward them mid stream they will become distracted and be more likely to toilet inside.

CRATE TRAINING

CONDITIONING THE “IN” CUE

Throwing treats inside the crate will help teach your dog that good things happen there!

- With the door open, throw a treat inside and say “in”.
- Mark “yes” the second the dog enters the crate.
- Repeat multiple times until the dog eagerly enters on command.
- Prolong the game by continuing to say “yes” and throwing treats inside the crate as long as they stay inside. This may be a rapid fire reward situation - keep food coming!
- Stop feeding treats as soon as the dog exits the crate.

For more reluctant dogs, you may need to reward outside the crate or near the opening first.

HIDE THE COOKIE

Using a dog bed, blanket, or towel, hide treats inside the crate scattered around. Your dog will have to rummage through the folds to get rewards. This helps increase time inside the crate!

REVERSE PSYCHOLOGY

Reverse psychology works on dogs too! Scatter lots of treats in the crate like in the “hide the cookie” game. Let the dog watch from the outside of the locked crate as you scatter food.

- Allow dog to browse around the outside of the crate and smell the cookies
- As soon as your dog is pawing, circling, or showing other signs of frustration - stay “in” and open the door
- Mark “yes” and let the dog find the treats for a few seconds - make sure they don’t finish them though!
- Pull them out and repeat ... ensuring the dog stays in the crate for increasing periods of time. Try 3 seconds, 5 seconds, 10 seconds, 15 seconds before pulling them out.

FOOD DISPENSING TOYS

Feeding meals in food dispensing toys will help your dog stay in the crate for prolonged periods of time. It allows your dog to be pacified while confined, while

also providing important mental stimulation to tire your dog out! Rotate toys for every other meal to make the process even more challenging.

TOP 10 CRATE TIPS!

1. **Be proactive!** Use the crate to prevent unwanted behaviors BEFORE they happen ... and NOT as a punishment after the dog has already failed.
2. **Crate ‘em empty!** Ensure puppy is empty before returning to the crate!
3. **Keep it clean!** Make sure puppy has a clean crate. Soiled beds or blankets can result in repeat accidents and will impact your toilet training goals.
4. **Feed all meals in the crate!** *Whether in a food dispensing toy, stuffed Kong, or just in a plain bowl ... it will help your dog associate positive things with the crate!*
5. **Zip ‘em up!** Use zip-ties to fasten Nylabones, Kong toys, rawhides, or bones to the inside of the crate.
6. **Use it all the time!** It is vital that your dog learn to use the crate at all times of day; whether you are home or not. Dogs can easily develop anxiety if they are only crated when owners go to work, go to sleep, or leave town.
7. **Put it in the right spot!** *You want to place the crate somewhere the dog can see you, but does not have constant access to you.* This is important for working on any separation issues.
8. **Tired brain is a happy brain.** *Puppies especially require lots of mental stimulation, but adult dogs will do better in the crate too if their brain is exhausted.*
9. **Sometimes it’s about the bedding.** Ensure you have dog-appropriate bedding in the crate.
10. **Crates are not my jam.** If a crate is not suitable for your dog, consider an alternative confinement strategy. Laundry rooms, blocked off kitchens, mud rooms, and a stand alone exercise pen, can all be useful alternatives!

PLAY BITING

PURPOSE OF SHARK TEETH

Puppies have super sharp teeth in order to encourage soft mouthing. If one puppy plays too rough and bites too hard, the victim of a bite will shun or remove itself from the bully. After a few further encounters, the puppy will learn to develop a softer play style. The reflex which controls bite pressure is called bite inhibition. Dogs with a softer mouth will be less prone to causing damage should a defensive bite occur.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

After welcoming your puppy home, it is vital to **continue soft mouth training until 5 months of age**. The littermate and mother are gone, so the new owner has to share the responsibility of being a role model. Calmly praise your puppy for soft mouthing to further encourage good bite inhibition. BUT if it gets out of hand ... it hurts ... the puppy thinks it's a game ... and your clothes are getting ripped ... try this:

- Say "ouch" or "no" and immediately disengage from the puppy. **Leave the room, walk away, close a baby gate, or exit the immediate vicinity of the puppy.** Lack of social contact with a 10-15 second timeout if plenty for most puppies to start moderating their play biting habits. (Use self-removal for hard biting, and gentle praise for soft mouthing)
 - Teach puppies that clothes receive the same reaction as if puppy bites skin - remove yourself!
 - Use the crate or tether to manage your puppy during times of high activity. This should be a **preventative measure to take before** the puppy goes nuts. Do not use the crate as a punishment tool once the puppy has failed.
 - Feeding meals in **food dispensing toys** can further help drain excess energy to limit crazy biting during periods of excitement. Puppies often get the "zoomies" in the morning and evening, which is when biting can be at it's worst. Be PROACTIVE!
 - Keep interactions fun, playful, and **low key**. Rate your puppy's energy level from 1-5 and only play/interact between 1-3!
- Give your pup plenty of appropriate **chew items**. Instead of giving your dog a chew toy after he bites you, try redirecting their attention to a chew as a preventative measure BEFORE uncontrollable biting occurs. (Who wants to reinforce a dog for hard play biting by giving them a toy?)
 - Teach visitors, children, and family members to respect the same rules. Do not allow children to inappropriately over-excite the puppy and focus on calm, controlled, and productive interactions.
 - If you are unable, or unwilling to supervise your puppy - use confinement to minimize unwanted behavior.
 - Of biting and pulling at the leash, make sure to stop! Give a time out by saying "no" and applying pressure on the leash. Hold the leash up until your pup stops biting, then say "yes" and gently release the pressure.

SOCIALIZATION

The ultimate goal for socialization is to create a dog who is happy, content, curious, and thriving in the world around them. Here's the real issue -

Socialization is NOT ABOUT EXPOSURE! It's about teaching your dog how to adapt! Yes, you will be exposing your dog to a variety of sights, sounds, smells, people, dogs, obstacles, etc ... but the main goal should be **building confidence and teaching your dog what is expected, or how to interact in that environment.**

SCAREDY CAT!

You can create a lot of damage by overwhelming a dog which are hesitant, insecure, scared, or down right shut down. You may have all the best of intentions, but forcing a dog into new situations can seriously backfire on you. Instead of dragging your pup along, allowing strangers to force their love on your pup, or shoving them into unknown and scary instances - focus on building confidence.

When things are scary, the **“what's that” game** can easily convince a dog to explore an otherwise overwhelming situation. Just follow these rules when you come across something your dog is unsure about:

1. Say “what's that” when in proximity of the scary item.
2. Wait for your dog to look or move in that direction
3. Say “yes” the exact moment they go to check it out
4. Reward heavily

You may have to start off further away from the object so your dog is not stressed. Once you have mastered introducing your dog at a distance, you can slowly move closer. Continue the “what's that” exercise.

Eventually - you will be feeding your dog for sniffing or touching the scary thing!

Common things that dogs are scared of: new textures (like flooring), stepping up on a scale at the vets, walking over a man hole or sewer grid, approaching strangers, loud cars or motorcycles, heavy machinery, trains passing, Halloween decorations, people on forklifts ... the list is infinite.

SOCIAL BUTTERFLY

If your dog is friendly, outgoing, and seeking interaction with other dogs and people - your focus will be a bit different than a dog who is hesitant. It's the social butterflies which often turn into impulsive, uncontrollable, and distracted dogs.

Imagine this - you are taking your dog on a walk. As you pass by, strangers eagerly approach to pet your puppy. Sometimes they ask - other times they just go for it. Appeasing the stranger and helping your dog socialize you let your dog say “hi”. What has your dog learned?

Your dog has learned TO IGNORE YOU when other dogs or people approach. By allowing interactions without any structure, your dog will become rambunctious and excited. Be proactive! If this is your dog - you need to work on focus, control, and impulses before allowing your dog to interact. This means practicing eye contact with the owner EVERY TIME a dog or person approaches. The dog may not greet until they “check in” with the owner. Try simple things like sitting for petting in order to teach your dog good manners from the start.

Keep in mind - if a stranger or dog approaches and they do not ask to meet - walk away. It's ok to say “no thanks, we're in training” or “one moment please we're in training.” We've heard it all before from other dog owners “it's ok, I have dogs” when the dog jumps or ignored the owner. No, it is not ok. We have to be pro-active in advocating for our dogs and their education.

SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN

Most dogs will fall somewhere between the two extremes of being super outgoing and curious, or hesitant and overwhelmed. The key is to switch gears accordingly. When your dog is excited and curious - work on control. If your dog is hesitant, scared, or unsure - work on building confidence.

RULES OF PLAY

Play is all about practicing and mimicking behaviors related to hunting, fighting, and breeding. It is a natural part of your dog's overall wellbeing, and an appropriate outlet for breed specific behaviors when conducted appropriately.

Play is also a great way of working on impulse control, using alternate rewards for training, as well increased mental and physical fitness.

Remember! Inappropriate play can lead to over stimulation, hyper fixation or arousal, compulsive behaviors, and inappropriate habits (jumping, biting, humping, lunging, etc).

Here's a few rules to ensure you incorporate play productively into your daily routine:

1. START AND END

To minimize impulsive or attention seeking behavior, it is your job to decide when play starts and stops. Use the command "**ready**" to signal play is about to start. Use the command "**game over**" to let the dog know play is done.

2. NAME THE GAME

Make sure you are very clear which game you are playing with your dog. Decide before engaging in play! Give commands such as "tug" for tugging, "fetch" for retrievals, "get it" for chase with a toy, or "find it" for hidden toys. By

naming the games you are preventing unnecessary impulsivity, and incorporating training into your routine.

3. LEVELS OF PLAY

Rate your dog's play on a scale of 1-5 while interacting. 1 would be the dog seeking social contact, 2 would be the dog showing interest in the toy, but still pretty 3 would be active play, 4 would be play with over stimulation, and 5 would be play with hyper stimulation and increased impulsivity. When playing with your dog, keep it between a 1-3. The goal is to curate healthy and harmonious play. This will also prevent your pet from play biting or acting out due to over stimulation.

4. CHILL OUT

Whenever your dog goes beyond a level 3 with play, fold your arms, stand still and upright, and give the command "chill out". Ignore your dog until they calm down, then, mark "yes" and reward! You may want to start with food rewards, but eventually switch to re-engagement in play as the reward.