

Puppy Training

Few things are cuter or more fun than a new puppy. Bringing home one of these furry bundles of joy is often among a pet owner's most treasured memories. The first few weeks will be filled with special milestones and precious bonding time. But to ensure that you look back fondly on the start of life with your new pet, you must take a few steps to help him grow into a well-behaved adult:

#1: Start Training Early

Many owners see housetraining as the first step in the dog-training process. Teaching a pup the proper spot for elimination is certainly an essential part of his early education – housetraining should in fact begin on the very day of your puppy's homecoming. The mistake some owners make, however, is in thinking that other types of training should follow housetraining. Perhaps you don't want to overwhelm your pet, or maybe you worry that additional training will distract him from his housetraining goals. But the truth is that basic obedience training should reinforce your pup's housetraining progress, not hamper it.

When it comes to training, that old joke about voting can be applied: train early and train often. It will be far easier to teach your puppy how you want him to behave now than to correct unwanted behaviors later. The important thing to remember is that puppies are always learning; it's just a matter of whether they are learning the right things or the wrongs ones.

#2: Enlist Help

Consider enrolling your new pet in puppy kindergarten, the common name for an introductory training class. Like kindergarten for human children, puppy-K focuses on the basics. In addition to learning a handful of commands such as sit and down, your pup will also get a chance to interact with other puppies and their owners when the class meets. This meet-and-greet time is just as important as the lessons

themselves. Socialization is in fact one of the best ways to teach your pet about proper behavior. A well-socialized pup is friendly and at ease in new situations.

Ask other family members to help with training. The more people who take part in your pup's education, the better trained he will truly be. You don't want your pet to see you as the only person whose commands he must obey. Having more eyes on your pup is also helpful for preventing him from regressing when you can't be there. One resource that many adults overlook is older children. They can be especially helpful in the training process. Invite them along to class with you, so they can learn along with you and your new four-legged friend.

#3: Keep It Simple

Training a puppy isn't difficult, providing you take it one step at a time. Keep sessions short – no more than 15 minutes without a break. Doing so will help prevent your pet from becoming bored or distracted. Puppies need to pause for playing, resting, and making regular trips to their potty spot. Plus, your pet will learn much more from a few 15-minute training sessions each day than one longer session.

Work on one or two commands at a time until your pup is producing the desired results at least 90 percent of the time. You can then move on to teaching additional commands, again no more than a couple at a time. Whatever command you are working on, use it even when you aren't in the middle of a training session. For example, instructing your puppy to sit before giving him his meals or treats will reinforce the command and teach him good manners at the same time.

#4: Utilize Treat Rewards

High-value treats like cubed chicken make ideal training treats. But remember that any edible reward used during training should be small and easy to chew. Avoid extremely chewy or crunchy foods while training, as they can distract your pet from the task at hand.

In addition to being fun for your puppy, chewing is also good for him. This important activity prevents plaque and tartar from forming and eases the pain of teething.

Giving your pet appropriate items for chewing is also one of the best ways to keep him from making your footwear and other possessions your pup's target of this normal canine activity. Nylabone's Puppy Chews are designed for puppies without adult teeth, made from soft, flexible materials to satisfy a puppy's natural urge to chew.

#5: Stay Positive

By far the most important reward you will ever give your pet is your encouragement. Negative reactions of any kind will do nothing to foster progress in training. Harsh words or actions can scare any dog, but they can be especially intimidating for younger ones. Of course, you should not reward your pet for doing the wrong things, but showing emotions like frustration and anger will only confuse—or worse, frighten—your pet. Simply ignore unwanted behaviors. If you are feeling overwhelmed, take a break.

Whether you are working on teaching a simple command or dealing with an unwanted behavior, a positive attitude can make all the difference in how quickly your puppy learns. Rewarding your pet with yummy treats is a great way to reinforce desired behaviors, but never forget the value of verbal praise. Puppies enjoy pleasing their owners, but you must let them know when they succeed. A wholehearted “Good boy!” goes a long way!

“Nylabone Dog Toys, Chews, Treats, & Edible Dental Chews.” Nylabone Dog Toys, Chews, Treats, & Edible Dental Chews, www.nylabone.com/.