

A few things to consider:

- **Scheduling Spay/Neuter** – There is clear data that links early procedures (before bones/sexual maturity) to serious health issues. For this reason, we require females to be spayed between 6 – 9 months of age and males 12 – 18 months. It is not too soon to schedule the procedure and adjust if needed. For example, if your vet feels your dog is not fully grown by this date and would like to delay longer, heed their advice. Simply provide this to us in writing and we will amend our agreement in writing.
- **Furniture** – Will your puppy be allowed? Our personal recommendation is that puppies are not allowed on furniture the first month or two. (Even if you plan to do so with reckless abandon in the future!) And here is why. This greatly reduces the urge to jump up and on things they shouldn't. As time goes on, consider allowing on furniture when "invited." That means a towel on the couch or bed (combined with the human pat on the towel) sends the sign that it's okay to come up. The towel is the visual clue. And you can take your dog to other homes, and they won't hop up on furniture without the clue.
- **Eating off Human Plates** – A simple way to discourage your dog from begging is to have them eat exclusively from their own bowl. If you're giving a few table scraps, such as an egg or chicken, just take the time to scrape your plate into their bowl. Imagine having guests over and they have plate on their lap. If your doggie is used to eating right from plate, well, it gets confusing for them and leads to a discipline situation that's easy to avoid.
- **Love & Consistency** – Puppies respond to love and consistency. They don't like to be teased. They do not have a sense of humor and respond well when you explain what's expected.
- **Discipline** – Never strike your puppy. And in the first month or so, any mistakes on their part should be corrected by redirecting. As your puppy bonds with you, you'll introduce the word "no" and do so firmly. Then show them what they should be doing. Accidents in the crate should be handled in as casual a way as possible. Clean up comes with zero discipline. It's all up to human timing. And if they know they have disappointed, just creates anxiety and they will not like the crate.
- **Puppy Training Class** – Many folks tell us they really enjoy puppy training classes... virtually and in person. Gets everyone on the same page! We do like the Baxter & Bella program (link on our website) and it comes with unlimited one-on-one virtual sessions.
- **Grooming** – Your puppy has been gently brushed for a couple minutes at a time. Often with the back side of a child's hairbrush. They view this as a massage and their alone time with their human! If we find a knot in hair, we aren't struggling to get it undone. It's really a bonding experience. It will be up to you, over the next few months, to get your puppy to know that a brush in the hand means it is time to snuggle. Keep it short and fun.