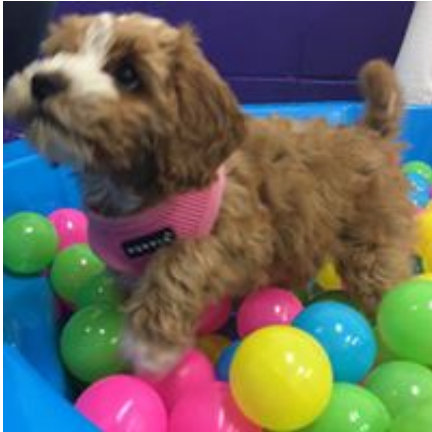


For the New Puppy



This social animal needs to feel confident in your ability to provide and protect. He will become more relaxed and confident in the world around him, through his relationship and bonding with you and other people. When the puppy is confident in your abilities and trusts your intentions, he will become more responsive to you and your commands, seeking your attention through behaviours that please you, and less likely to be distracted by other influences.

The tie-up or restraint exercise is an exercise in desensitisation. If commenced in puppy-hood and progressed appropriately, it will eventually produce a dog that is comfortable when left on his own. This is of great assistance in avoiding the development of separation-related anxieties.

The restraint exercise should be commenced after the puppy has been in his new home for one week.



Start at the easiest possible level: tie the puppy on a short lead (approx 30 - 40 cm) to the leg of the chair you are sitting in. Experience will show the pup that any fighting or struggling against the lead (or you, at the end of the lead) is futile. However, care must be taken to avoid the puppy panicking which would risk creating sensitisation to being restrained by the lead. If he is struggling against the lead, pick him up and place him closer to the leg of the chair to release any tension in the lead.

The puppy is not being punished. You can pat him and even play with him during the exercise. It is a good time for young children to interact with the puppy because they are able to back away if the puppy becomes over-zealous with his teeth. He can have a comfy bed and a chew toy; but not every time. Sometimes it's just a boring tie-up; might as well go to sleep!

Soaking the lead in vinegar regularly will deter most puppies from wanting it in their mouth at all, least of all, chewing on it. Failing that, you may need to resort to a chain lead for the exercise.

When the puppy has become comfortable with this situation of restraint, you can move onto the next level. If your puppy is strong enough to pull the chair over without you sitting in it, you will now need to tie the lead to the leg of a table or something else strong enough to hold him. Sit just out of reach of the puppy – when he is calm in this scenario, step up to moving around the room, then leaving the room (very briefly initially – half a second), etc, etc.

Always build on success – our aim is to avoid the puppy ever becoming panicked – we want to build confidence. Look for signs that might indicate that your puppy is not coping as well with the situation as we might like: yawning, lip licking, tense body, panting. Do not progress if you see any of these signs; your puppy has not yet desensitised to the current level.

Tie up exercises can last anywhere from two minutes to two hours at this age – just remember to take toileting requirements into consideration. Also, vary: the location of the exercise; the family member involved; the time of day; and any other aspect you can think of.

Freedom from the restraint exercise must only be granted when the pup is completely relaxed with the situation. If the pup has been performing an undesired behaviour such as barking for attention, be sure to delay his release or any other form of reward for at least ten seconds after the undesired behaviour has ceased. An exception is if the puppy has been calm and suddenly becomes agitated: he probably needs a toilet break – get him outside to his toilet – QUICK!

Aim to practice the tie-up exercise at least once a day.

Greeting and Re-Uniting

Greetings on your return home or on getting up in the morning should be calm. Immature animals are not expected to possess control over their emotional state at a young age. We regularly see our puppies becoming over-whelmed with various emotions, including excitement. Over- excitement can develop into hyper-excitement. In an adolescent or adult dog, hyper-excitement usually suggests that the dog is not in control of his emotional state – not a pleasant experience for dogs or people. Unfortunately, people often enjoy the over-the-top greeting from their puppy or dog, as a sign of their intense love for them! Joining in the puppy or dog’s hyper-excitement only exacerbates the situation. Instead, talk to them in a calm and monotonous tone of voice as you quietly and calmly go about your business, without giving much attention at all. You want to communicate, “It’s just *not* that exciting!” Once they are completely calm, you could then increase your level of interaction. You’re allowed to get excited and playful with your dog or puppy, just not when they’ve gone into hyper-excitement!

He Doesn’t Need to be With You to Feel Safe

In the early days, your puppy will have the best chance of coping with being left home alone if he is left in a social area of the home such as the living room or kitchen where he has spent time with family members. Left in his crate or a puppy pen, he is safe from harm and your possessions are safe from him! He will benefit from learning to cope emotionally, on the occasions when he will be excluded from the family, by being placed in the laundry, bathroom or backyard, not only when you go out, but also for periods of time when you are at home. We want to avoid him learning that being placed in these locations predicts your departure.

Always start at a level that is only mildly stressful for the pup. You may not be able to simply put him in the backyard; you may need to start with tie-up exercises in the backyard with you present, then out of reach, then further away, then just inside the open back door, etc, etc. Aim to practice at least once a day.

After four to seven days of settling-in time, the puppy sleeps away from the other family members most nights. Best options include: closed in the laundry/bathroom or other small room; another enclosed area; or a crate. If you plan to have him sleep in your bedroom as an adult dog, that’s fine, but as a puppy, I recommend building his independence so that he can cope when he has to sleep away from you. As a puppy I would prefer that he sleep away from you four to five nights a week. Once he is a confident adult dog, I recommend that he continue to sleep elsewhere, one or two nights a fortnight or month in order to maintain his independence.



Variety is the Spice of Life

Avoid establishing routines. Or if you must, make a habit of breaking them on at least a weekly basis. Dogs can become dependent on routines, and problems can arise when any deviation from set routines is made; the dog becomes distressed because the routine he depends upon has let him down. It also seems that dogs that have become over-dependent on routines, become anxious that the routine *might* break down.

Vary the time of day that the puppy is fed, walked, trained, groomed, etc. Vary the route of his walk, the length of his training sessions, the location of his tie-up exercise, where he sleeps, when he is allowed inside and when he is excluded. The more variety incorporated into his life the greater his flexibility for change and the greater his resistance to developing anxieties.

Varied mental stimulation will assist the development of neural pathways and connections within the puppy's developing brain. Routine is not so stimulating. Mental stimulation is experienced when events are not exactly what you were expecting!

Play, Play and Then More Play

Play is so important for the puppy's development and for relationship building and bonding with his new family. Play is a means of helping puppies to develop impulse control and tolerance of frustration – similar to a two-year-old child.

Providing numerous different toys will stimulate the puppy's interaction and development. Put some toys away so that you can swap them around to provide variety.

Despite previous 'bad press', tug-o-war is one of the most beneficial games you can play with your puppy. It will aid in developing responsiveness to you and your commands and is of great assistance in developing a relationship based on trust. Tug-o-war does not encourage aggressive behaviour! **IT DOES NOT MATTER WHO WINS OR LOSES!** Introducing tug games at a young age is also useful for identifying potential resource guarding tendencies. Treating such problems during puppyhood is more successful than having to address the problem once it has become established in the adult dog.



Sitting in the doorway of a room can assist in introducing the retrieve of a ball or toy with the puppy chasing the item into the room. Once he has picked up the toy, he will have nowhere to go but back to you, in the doorway. Training can be further assisted by the use of a long line attached to the puppy's collar to enable you to block incorrect responses. A puppy that has not learnt to retrieve by 16 weeks of age is less likely to enjoy the game throughout his lifetime. What a shame that would be!

Attaching a cord or string to a toy can enable you to make the toy more stimulating to the puppy and also establish a habit of returning to you with the toy.



To train the puppy to release the tug or retrieve toy on command simply say the cue, "leave", and then offer a food treat to the puppy. Hopefully he will release the toy in order to eat the treat. Further reward him by re-initiating the game after he has finished eating.

Alternatively, if the puppy is not keen to give up the toy for a food treat, gently hold your hand on the toy without pulling and hold the puppy still by his collar with your other hand - if he is particularly highly driven for the toy and still does not leave, lift him just off his front feet with your other hand. You may have to quietly hold this position for a few moments until the puppy gets bored and releases the toy. At which point, you praise and re-initiate the game. You must remain calm, non-competitive and non-threatening throughout the process. The large majority of puppies will lose interest in the toy once the food treat has been presented – it might be a minute or two of not getting any further treats, before the puppy is interested in playing once again.

Show your puppy that fighting and struggling with you will not achieve success for him; but working with you achieves huge success!

Teach children how to play with the puppy via toys.

Neither has fully developed emotional self-regulation, so it is imperative that a responsible adult must supervise all interactions between children and puppies to ensure that neither party becomes scared or incurs an injury.

Learn to Wait – Patience is a Virtue

Each and every puppy has an individual tolerance of frustration. Some puppies seem to be eternally patient and others have a “hissy fit” the instant something does not go their way! There are numerous ways we can raise your puppy’s tolerance of frustration and generally improve his competence in coping with his emotions including: crate training; restraint or tie-up exercise; sitting and focusing on your face until released for his dinner; releasing the toy on cue during retrieve and tug-o-war games; simple obedience skills where the puppy must hold position until the release cue is given.

Additionally, your puppy can learn to wait for your invitation at doorways and gateways. With the puppy on lead at a closed door that he is keen to get through; open the door a crack and when the puppy pushes to get through; close the door abruptly. The aim is not to catch the puppy’s toes or nose or cause any pain – you are simply blocking the puppy from proceeding in such a pushy manner. The puppy will now pull back from the closed door and you can attempt to open the door a crack again. Repeat the process until the puppy voluntarily holds back and awaits your directions. What lovely manners!

Manners at Dinnertime

When feeding the puppy have him hold a sitting position (on lead if necessary) while the meal is placed on the ground. He must await the release command, FREE, before eating the food. Take a morsel of food and hold it midway between your eyes and the puppy’s eyes in order to have him hold focus on your face. On the release cue, FREE, drop the morsel and if necessary, encourage him to commence eating.

Tidy up your puppy’s eating habits and improve food motivation in readiness for training him with food rewards. Meals are left down for ten minutes only. If there is any food left after ten minutes or the food is completely untouched, it should be removed and nothing further offered to the puppy until the next regular mealtime. If the puppy is a “finicky eater” and is ten weeks of age or older and still receiving three meals per day, consider reducing to two meals per day. Once over six months of age, consider cutting to one meal a day.

Preventing Food Guarding

We would like to feel confident that if we, or our children, happened to approach the dog while he was eating, the dog would comfortably accept the situation without displaying any form of aggression.

We need to understand the dog's natural instincts and behaviour in regard to food. In canine law, possession is nine tenths of the law. Any dog is entitled to guard food in his possession (in his mouth or directly around his face) against any other. This is why a dog is highly unlikely to growl at you while you are standing up with the food bowl in your possession, but the moment you place it on the ground, he will consider it in his possession and feel entitled to guard it from you. Should you reach out to take the food bowl whilst the dog is guarding it, you will risk being bitten. However, once you

have possession of the bowl again, the dog will behave in what *seems* an apologetic manner.

Having ignored the dog's attempts to warn you off, next time you attempt to “steal” the food, he may feel a need to escalate that warning! Conversely, you may be able to successfully intimidate the dog into not growling at you when you approach the food. But think ahead: the dog will not feel intimidated by a crawling baby or young child and as you have already taught the dog that humans are a threat to food in his possession, the baby or child is likely to be at risk.

There is a better way, to alter the idea in his mind as to what our approach to the food signifies. Do not teach your puppy that you are a threat to his food by attempting to take it when he tries to warn you off. Heed the warning and do not approach any closer. This way, your puppy can feel comfortable that he does not have to escalate the warning. You now “speak dog”. You are not a threat.



Place only half of the puppy's meal in the bowl, reserving the yummiest bits: steak fat, leftovers, etc. Place the puppy's bowl on the ground in the usual manner and allow him to commence eating and then move away. Return to the puppy with more food in your hand before he has finished the food in the bowl. The moment you detect any discomfort or warning such as tensing up or growling, stop where you are. Toss the food into the bowl. Repeat the sequence.

Soon the puppy will look forward to your approach to his food bowl because now he is expecting you to be bringing him something good. And, he trusts that you are listening to him. He no longer feels the need to keep you away from his food.

Aim to achieve the ultimate result of being able to pet the puppy and even move his food bowl, without him becoming concerned. (Start by always giving him further yummys after each occasion he has tolerated your petting or touching the bowl).

Please do not allow children to stroke the puppy while he eats. Some puppies find such interference irritating at such a serious event as eating. Aggression can develop.

Of course, this type of training needs to be carried out by an adult. Only when the puppy is absolutely reliable, would you consider introducing a child to the scenario. And then, tie the dog on lead so that he can reach the food bowl and no further – your child is then provided with a safety gap.

Repeat this exercise with an especially favourite food of the dog's, such as raw meaty bones. Raw chicken necks are great puppy food. Cut the necks into a couple of small pieces so that you can start the puppy on a few in his bowl and then add more after he has started eating. Many puppies will show no sign of food guarding and it may never be an issue. But some puppies can develop the problem later. I recommend conducting food-guarding prevention training anyway.

Sit Happens!

Training treats should be something the dog finds highly appealing. I use tiny pieces of sliced-up hotdog sausage. Cut them small because the puppy's tummy will fill quickly.

These treats are not a healthy, nutritional food source. We do not want them surviving on this rubbish food. They are doggy lollies!

To commence or formalise the "sit" exercise take a supply of food treats (10 – 20) into the palm of your right hand. Move one piece at a time to your fingertips to reward. Keep it hidden between your thumb and forefinger so that the puppy cannot "steal" the treat.

Take the food hand to the puppy's nose and lure his head upwards and back over his shoulders. Once the puppy has sat, say GOOD and then give him a treat of food from the fingertips of your right hand. Use your voice, the food, the lead or anything else to get and keep the dog's focus and attention on your face. Immediately pay him again for holding the sitting position on a relaxed lead and paying attention to you. Continue to say GOOD and quickly deliver further rewards for continuing to hold the position and paying attention until the release cue, FREE is given. On the FREE, you may need to physically move the pup out of the sit.

Use the lead to block the puppy from being able to leave the sitting position. Focus and attention to the owner is the key to all training and successful relationship building with the puppy. Commence building focused attention now by moving the food treats between your eyes and the puppy's eyes.



Remember, you are not only training the puppy to sit on command, but also to hold that sitting position until you end the exercise with the release cue, FREE.

The praise, GOOD, is always given before the delivery of the food treat, to build an association between the two. The term, “ah-ah” or “oops” if you prefer, indicates to the puppy that his current action will not be rewarded or successful in any way. Avoid using a scolding tone of voice; he’s not in trouble; we’re just providing information. Example: if the puppy lifts his front feet off the ground in order to get to the incoming food treat, “oops” followed by you quickly withdrawing the food, will result in the puppy holding the sitting position in order to draw the food reward back in.

Once the release cue has been given, gently or playfully move the puppy out of the sitting position.

How Often Do I Train the Puppy?

Aim to achieve at least one training session each day. However, each training session should be no more than three minutes. You want to finish the session with the puppy begging to do more, so that the next time, he will be keen and enthusiastic. Make sure the puppy hasn’t just eaten before the training session.

An overload of new information is only likely to become jumbled in the puppy’s brain. Short, successful training sessions are more readily absorbed.

Socialisation With Other Dogs

The need for puppies to socialise with other dogs by being off lead and playing hard is highly over- exaggerated. Puppies learn most of what they need to learn about being a dog whilst with their mother and litter up to eight weeks of age. Your puppy needs to practice social competence, particularly on greeting other social animals: people and dogs. He does not need to greet every other dog and person he meets in the street.

Not many puppies are capable of performing confident, calm greetings, without help. Some puppies are timid and will avoid greeting other dogs and unfamiliar people. These puppies need to be given space and time to approach. The other dog or unfamiliar person must not be allowed to force themselves onto the timid puppy – they must hold back; or be blocked from approaching a timid puppy. Allow the puppy to back off to the end of the lead and do not try to encourage him towards the other dog or person. In a perfect world, you would not leave the situation until the puppy has voluntarily made its investigations and is now interacting happily. It can be time consuming. But the alternative, where this timid puppy is allowed to avoid all such social interactions or where people or dogs have forced themselves upon a timid pup, will potentially result in anxiety and aggression problems in the future.

Other puppies demonstrate their social incompetence by rushing excitedly towards other dogs and unfamiliar people. This behaviour is often mistakenly perceived to be highly confident friendly behaviour. It is actually rude and obnoxious greeting behaviour and can also produce anxiety and aggression problems in the future. The correct canine approach for a greeting of another social animal is to glance and look-

away, show some disinterest and meander indirectly without rushing towards the other. A socially competent dog is looking for and responding to body language that suggests the other animal does not wish to be approached – for whatever reason. A socially competent dog or person avoids making others feel uncomfortable or fearful. The majority of puppies will need to be coached in this respect. Like us, puppies are not born with natural social skills or an understanding of social etiquette – we all need to learn!

If your puppy attempts to rush directly at other dogs or people, do not allow him to be successful in getting to them. While such behaviour is an attempt to cope with the situation by the socially inept puppy, it is offensive in canine terms. The puppy needs to learn more appropriate greeting behaviour. Do not scold the puppy; simply call him to you as you are moving away from the other dog or person. Further approach can be made but only when the puppy is approaching calmly.

On occasions you will want your dog to meet other dogs belonging to friends and acquaintances you meet on walks in your neighbourhood. The other dog must always be on lead and under control when your puppy meets them, particularly on the first occasion. Ensure there is no tension in either lead and allow the dogs to perform the meeting and greeting ritual of head to tail manoeuvre. Then move along! This social interaction can become uncomfortable and awkward if the dogs are left dangling in each other's close proximity – it's not natural! It's probably the equivalent of our "uncomfortable silence". Alternatively, if you wish to hold a conversation with the owner of the other dog, bring your puppy under control by running the lead under your left foot. Allow enough lead so that the puppy can sit, stand or lay down comfortably but cannot move away. You've parked your puppy! Ask the other owner to keep their dog back.

Socialisation and Environmental Conditioning – NOW!

Get your puppy out and about in the big, wide world. This is the critical or sensitive time for the puppy to have good experiences with all types of people and animals as well as getting to know his world. The socialisation period is thought to be closing at around 12 weeks of age and the environmental conditioning at around 16 weeks.

Play and training are the most effective means of bonding with a puppy during this critical time.

Your puppy also needs to meet and become comfortable in the company of a variety of other people and animals. Include: babies, toddlers, primary school children, pre-adolescents, teenagers, elderly people, disabled people, timid people, loud people, dogs, puppies, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, caged birds, chickens, sheep, cattle, horses, etc.



Environmental conditioning should include: vacuum cleaners, hairdryers, traffic, buses, trucks, motor bikes, different surfaces to walk upon, sudden slamming and thumping noises, loud music, shouting, cheering, car horns, trains, prams, skateboards, bikes. The list could go on forever. Always start at a low intensity, such as being at a distance, in case the puppy is going to have a fearful reaction. Avoid exposing the puppy to experiences that are too intense for him to cope with. The puppy may well become sensitised to the stimulus.

Sound Proof Puppy Training app



Download this app today. It will make your environmental conditioning so much easier!

It's also excellent for adult dogs with fear of noises.

Avoid allowing big, goofy, friendly dogs from galloping up and scaring your puppy. Other dogs must always be on lead and under control when your puppy meets them, particularly on the first occasion. The puppy must be allowed to interact only as he is comfortable.

Off-lead dog parks are *not* a good place to take your puppy.

Fear Response

Your puppy should always feel able to escape from anything frightening. If their flight path is blocked, they may resort to defensive aggression and this may become their choice of defence in future.

While you can provide calming support to your puppy through delivering long, firm strokes and a happy, confident voice, take care that the puppy is not interpreting your consoling voice as you also being nervous.

Keep the lead loose so that the puppy does not feel that he is cornered without an escape. Allow him to run to the end of the lead, but do not go any further with him – stand your ground and wait for him to voluntarily move closer. If you are able to interact with the fear-eliciting stimulus, do so, to demonstrate to your puppy that you are comfortable and safe with the situation.

Use food treats and games in the presence of the stimulus to form a positive association in the puppy's mind. If the puppy is not interested in food treats or games that he normally loves; the intensity of the situation is too high – he is not in any state for learning – reduce the intensity by increasing the distance, reducing the volume, etc. Then gradually increase the intensity until the puppy is eating food treats and playing in the presence of the fully intensity stimulus.

If it is a person or another dog or puppy causing the fear reaction, do not allow them to force themselves on the puppy. Insist that they hold back and where possible, ignore the puppy until the puppy is ready to approach in his own good time. You may need to be assertive in this respect, as many people will want to re-assure the puppy that they are friendly, by forcing themselves on the scared puppy – with all good intentions! It has nothing to do with the friendliness or safeness of the person and/or dog; your aim is for the puppy to learn that his social communications will be acknowledged and responded to appropriately – then he will not need to develop less appropriate means of dealing with situations.

Ensure you use only happy tones of voice. Avoid using warning or scolding tones as these maybe associated to the approach or presence of the other dog and/or person. Many dogs behave poorly towards other dogs under the misconception that their owner expects this as he/she also behaves aggressively when spotting another dog.

Go and love your puppy!

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