

Puppy Operating Instructions



Fawn Pierre

The Puppy Expert

415 730 5149

You and Your Puppy's To Do's

I know you want your young pup to develop into a happy-go-lucky, well-behaved, good-natured adult dog, which above all, lives to a fine old age. Without a doubt, appropriate puppy education is the single most important factor to ensure this outcome. The nature of the puppy's socialization and training depends very much on the changing physical and mental capabilities and constraints during the various stages of personality development from birth to maturity.

Ease of learning changes considerably throughout the dog's development, just as very young puppies commonly experience difficulties trying to master and remember new instructions, older dogs often show similar severe learning constraints when attempting to change their behavior and temperament. For example, it is much harder to teach older dog good habits, if it has already been allowed to develop bad ones. Moreover, modifying temperament problems becomes progressively and considerably more difficult as the dog grows older.

Socialization, confidence building and temperament training must be accomplished during puppy hood. So many training and behavior problems are created within the first week the pup is at home and so, think ahead - a spoonful of prevention is worth truckloads of cure. Without a doubt, education is the key to effortlessly and enjoyable raising a good-natured and well behaved adult dog.

When to train your puppy?

At all times during training (which is 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) keep in mind, at this point in your puppy's education, you are not telling him/her what to do, you are implementing a verbal action system, i.e., you are teaching your pup the association between the word and the action...showing him HOW TO DO IT. Dogs are VISUAL learners, not verbal. Training a puppy above all else requires managing their environment completely. This means you do not put them in a situation where they can make a mistake. And don't become "white noise" in your puppy's life. Puppies require repetition and management more than anything else. Just keep singing to yourself the theme songs from Sesame Street, Barney and Blue's Clues and treat them accordingly!

Home Alone Training

Being Alone is not natural for dogs

If you ever plan to leave Your puppy home alone you must begin training alone time while you are home. Remember NEVER; EVER leave her unattended while she is free in the house... Start with short sessions in the crate with a stuffed Kong.

Bring your puppy with you when convenient. But leaving her home for short periods during the day is also important, as this will teach her to be comfortable staying home alone.

While at home when you cannot supervise her intermittently leave her in the crate or x-pen area. This will ensure that she does not have to follow you EVERYWHERE when you are home. It's nice having her follow you everywhere, but you don't want her doing that forever (it gets old fast when she is 3 years old and still following you every time you go to the bathroom, get a drink from the kitchen, wash your hands, answer the phone...you get the idea). Ideal times to crate Your puppy are endless... While watching TV,

Puppy Operating Instructions

Paying bills, talking on the phone, eating dinner etc...Having her in the crate while you are home allows her to experience short absences, instead of one long scary one.

Housebreaking

Location, location, location

So far so good! The accidents your puppy has had are a matter of being in the wrong place at the right time. Dogs are naturally clean animals: given a choice, they will urinate and defecate away from their sleeping and eating areas. However, it is not obvious to puppies that carpets and floors are inappropriate elimination sites. They must be systematically taught to discriminate indoors vs. outdoors and to exclusively use the latter. The key to house-training is getting a solid history of rewarded trials in the desired area.

Make sure you establish a reward history for your puppy by taking her out to the same place on leash at frequent intervals and rewarding with exuberant praise and a treat when she has eliminated. A small area outside is the best spot. Keep a container of treats in the area so that you can immediately reward her for elimination in that area. There must be a training effect with an immediate reward, as you will later be reprimanding for any elimination inside the house-- you don't want her to associate that with you. The dozens upon dozens of times you have rewarded her for going in front of you while outside will make later reprimands easier to interpret. You can also reward her with a walk and a play session either with a toy, or with you. When she puts the connection together, you will notice that she will eliminate more quickly. These are the laws of learning in action, and dogs are loyal to them. By no means should you reprimand after the fact. Puppies must have immediate (within 1 second) consequences (reward or reprimand)

Focus on providing immediate consequences for your puppy

Avoid accidents inside at ALL COSTS. Every accident inside is one you could not reward outside, you catch inside and must reprimanded which sets you up as the bad guy, And two you failed to catch inside which gets the habit rolling.

When you have established a strong reward history, you may now reprimand for any mistakes indoors while you are present. If there is a mistake, you must catch it in the act. Any later and you could be reprimanding something else. Say Your puppy pees then takes a few steps and sits down and you reprimand, guess what you just reprimanded--sitting. ! Be extra conscious of what you are reinforcing and what you are reprimanding!

If you have done a good job at rewarding outside elimination, it will take between one and three reprimands to finish the job. That is if you catch three in a row. Big mistake, if you catch one, miss one, catch one, etc...housebreaking will become a protracted process

The Potty Training Procedure Housebreaking laws...keep this page handy

- Make sure you have treats on you when you take her out to pee.
- Buy a leash that you can leave on her while she is not confined to the crate.
- Decide precisely where her bathroom will be in the yard. Bring her directly to that spot at least every 20 to 30 minutes awake times.
- Go there regularly: first thing in the morning, last thing before bed, 10 to 20 minutes after meals and water, each and every time she comes out of her confinement, and frequently (every five minutes or so) during playtime.
- Cheer your puppy and reward the moment she goes in the appropriate place.
- Cheer and reward at the right moment, Cheer and reward at the right moment, Cheer and reward at the right moment
- Confine to one room: never, ever give her access too more than the kitchen or easily cleaned area
- Pick up food and water—do not allow free access to food and water. This is the key. If you control “in-put” you are better able to predict “output”
- Supervise whenever she’s uncrated, especially if she’s “full”. If you must take your eyes off her, even for a minute, crate her or bring her with you.
- Interrupt mistakes immediately with a fast verbal reprimand. Catch her as she starts to go, not afterwards. After interrupting her, hustles her outside to the bathroom area: praise if she finishes there. Then clean up the indoor mess
- Never punish late: if she made the mistake 1 second prior, you are too late. You must catch her in the act to reprimand effectively
- Catch her in the act of doing it right: follow these rules so you can be the good guy most of the time.

The hardest part is making sure your pup is being watched at all times or in his confinement space. I call it the blink factor--once you blink or turn your back, even for a moment--your pup WILL have an accident.

Puppy Operating Instructions

Biting/Mouthing Exercises!

Your puppy's life depends on a soft mouth!

As you have experienced a puppy is simply a vehicle for it's mouth! Puppies are genetically programmed to bite. In a litter of puppies they bite each other continuously. Puppies bite at our hands and clothing because that is the way puppies like to play—with their mouths and many times with their paws. It is fun, and they enjoy the attention. Many puppies particularly like it if we try to wrangle them off of us. You may think you are reprimanding them, but most likely, if the behavior persists, you are actually positively reinforcing it! Have you ever seen two or more puppies playing? They like to bite each other, wrestle, and basically be 'ruff and tumble! But when one bites the other too hard, or plays too rough, the bitten puppy will yelp and stop playing. The yelp is the no reward marker and the cessation of play is the time out! (see time out section). This is how we teach them to inhibit the force of their bites which is a bite that is soft and inhibited.. Why? Every dog is a potential biter—every single dog on the planet!—under certain circumstances, particularly if taken by surprise. The dog that learns bite inhibition can bite without causing any real damage. So teaching your puppy to have a soft mouth BEFORE you stop the biting altogether is hugely important. Have you ever given a dog a treat and had them practically take your hand off? Well that is a dog that did not have the proper soft mouth installed as a puppy. More importantly the puppy whose bite is punished or doesn't learn to inhibit its bite will develop into a dog that could do grave damage. I wish Zeigfried and Roy had taught bite inhibition to their cats. Get the idea?

OK, OK!!! So how do I teach a soft mouth to my puppy?!

The best technique for hard bites is to remove the thing that your puppy wants most... YOU! First set yourself up in the long-term confinement area or other area that you can leave quickly. Your other option is to place your puppy in a time out are, like the bathroom or pantry. As soon as you feel a hard bite dramatically yelp OUCH! or nO! And remove yourself from the pup's presence either by leaving the puppy-proofed area or putting her into it for a penalty area for 10 to 20 seconds. After the penalty phase is over, resume where you left off without a grudge. Expect to repeat the process four or ten times within a 2 to 5 minute period before seeing a change in behavior. The important thing here is the pup learns that there is an immediate consequence for the hard bite: Being without a playmate and ALONE! Repeat several times a day everyday!

Time Outs or Reward Removal (especially for biting and jumping up)

A 'time out' is a Negative Punisher when the target behavior is decreased. Time outs are one of the most humane and pet-friendly punishments we can use, when used with thought and care.

Time-outs should not be excessive. A long time-out can be stressful and lead to other unwanted behaviors. 30 seconds is more than enough and seems to be quite effective. Don't look back at puppy or try to push puppy away when you say 'ouch'. Simply get up and leave, closing the door behind you.

First, make certain you correctly identify and mark the inappropriate behavior by using a verbal mark like "too bad", "No" or "Ah-ah".

1. You catch Your puppy doing something you don't like

2. Tell her "Ouch" or "Wrong!", "Enough," TOO BAD" whatever-- followed by a dramatic verbal bridge of displeasure ("ok, that's it! I'm outa here DOODLE HEAD! You have crossed the line!") Repeating your make believe horror until you have arrived at the time out location which should take no more than 3 seconds until you can either leave the room or place her on a (TO)

3. Ten second penalty phase!

4. After the penalty phase is over, resume where you left off without a grudge. Go back to her and in your most happy, wiggly-giggly voice start playing (or what ever she was doing before the timeout commenced) again. The important thing is that Your puppy's learns that there is an immediate consequence for her actions. Being without a playmate and ALONE!

It may take puppy a little while to figure out the link between his biting and the time-out, but the marker will make it clearer. It is important to say 'ouch' or other marker in a neutral tone of voice, and say it exactly at the moment that puppy bites too hard.

Repeat several times or until you notice a marked difference in the behavior.

More important, don't neglect Your puppy's good behavior --playing properly with you and her toys, settling down, greeting you with all four paws on the ground, remaining quiet in the crate, etc, Praise her effusively for these things most of the time and instructively reprimand unacceptable behavior. sit exercises

Puppy Operating Instructions

Every waking moment Your puppy is learning what works and what does not work in her world. It is an amazing time of discovery for her (and you). If left to her own devices she will make her own choices. Now is the only time that you can easily teach what you will accept and what you will not accept. Later unacceptable behaviors are habits, and we know how hard habits are to break as adults.

Handling Exercises

This is a great couch potato exercise!

Even though your puppy may not seem to have any handling problems with the family or friends, I suggest you practice handling her all over at different times of the day during different activities. Such as during play, while she is sleeping, eating and chewing.

Touch your puppy all over. If you find a sensitive place, proceed slowly with yummy treats. Touch followed by (not at the same time) a treat until she is begging for more. The key is to work slowly, and if you even suspect Your puppy is a little intimidated or uneasy, go right back to square and this time, work even slower.

Have friends practice collar grabs and light body grabs

Concept of life rewards

In a puppy's world the rewards are endless! You, food, other dogs, people, smells, grass, play, toys, and on and on! From now on, ask your puppy to sit or lie down before and during all enjoyable activities. This is your puppy's way of saying "please and thank you"! This is basic doggy courtesy and it is your way of communicating that you are part of the fun!

Sit and down Exercises

As shown in class lure your puppy into a sit with your hand facing up and a treat hidden between all four finger and your thumb. then with your hand facing downward try luring into a down. The down is usually much more difficult to accomplish.

1. For the first few sessions use the food and reward for every position change... This is stage one training--Targets shown up front, rewards given for every correct response once you have zero hesitation for each position change...

2. only give the reward for several position changes or stage two training... Targets shown up front, rewards given intermittently If you want to add verbal commands make sure that each hand signal is getting a zero hesitation response rate...anything less and it is simply white noise...

add verbal commands:

1) "SIT"

2) ONE SECOND PAUSE

3) HAND SIGNAL

One second pause

4) GOOOOOOD! and treat.

Following and Hiding--the beginning of loose leash walking

From the beginning, you want to teach your puppy that it is his responsibility to watch where you are going and not the other way around. Actively ask your dog to follow you with a mighty "let's go" as you are walking quickly in one direction. Then exclaim "this way!" and change your direction. If your pup begins to turn left then you must automatically go right. Whatever your puppies direction, do the opposite. If he is going slow then speed up, and vice versa!

His following abilities can be substantially improved by hiding each time he either gets too far ahead or preoccupied behind. You are teaching him to keep at least on ear, eye, or nostril on you all the time.

Collar and body Grabs

Collar and Body Grabs-- don't forget to do collar and body grabs, throughout the day, over and over again with good consequences following!

Puppy Operating Instructions

Food Bowl and Object Exchanges

Many dogs are possessive of their food bowls and other valued objects think of these things as the equivalent of human valued objects...money, luxury items. It is your job to teach him to like and feel confident about having people around these things. So for the meantime, never let your puppy eat alone. Sit with your puppy while he eats his meals. Even better feed your pup in installments.

Measure out his food and every few minutes or throughout the day approach and put a handful inside, while he is eating practice some handling, pick up the food bowl and put it back down with a special bonus inside: some wet food, a tasty treat, a piece of food, some leftovers, anything nutritious and good. When Pup has his Kong or a chew toy say give or drop it, take the toy, then give a treat, and then give the object back, "take it". Repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat

Never let your puppy eat alone

Sit with your dog while s/he eats his meals, even better feed your puppy in installments--measure out his food and every 5 minutes or so approach his bowl and put a handful of kibble inside, practice some of your handling, pick up the bowl and put a liver treat or a piece of chicken in the bowl...Your puppy will begin to think "Hey every time my human picks up the bowl extra special things happen COOL!!!"

It is quite natural for dogs to guard their food (just like we guard our money to buy food) and other toys and objects (valuables/jewelry). Before the dog does what is natural, teach the dog that exchanging stuff is fun and profitable through food and object exchanges