

# Training and socializing:

Proper training is essential for a long, happy and safe relationship with your dog, setting the foundation to ensure your dog stays physically fit, mentally alert, socially engaged and emotionally happy. To make dog training an enjoyable and fulfilling activity, a great choice is to use a positive reinforcement approach that is rewards-based, fun and effective. Dog training based on using positive reinforcement helps pet parents understand how dogs think, learn and communicate. In turn, the pet parents will understand how to encourage and reward appropriate and polite dog behaviors for real-life situations. This builds and nurtures the bond between the pet parent and their dog.

Start out right with your new puppy. While behaviors like jumping up on you and chewing on your shoelaces may be cute at first, they quickly become tiresome or even dangerous with an adult dog. Only encourage behaviors that would be acceptable in an adult dog.

Keep training sessions short and upbeat. Puppies have very short attention spans, and, like children, respond better to praise than punishment. Keep small, easily eaten treats on hand as rewards for desired behaviors. Positive reinforcement also increases self-esteem and self-confidence in an adult dog.

Before training anything, start with name recognition. The idea behind name recognition is to teach your dog that her name means something wonderful is about to happen! Start your first session when you have your dog's attention. With some dog treats on hand, say your dog's name and then using an indicator (a word like "yes"), immediately give her a treat. Wait a few seconds and then repeat. Do this for five minutes several times a day.

A regular schedule of feeding, potty breaks and bedtimes will help ease your puppy through the transition into your home and make housetraining much easier. Use an enzymatic cleaner to clean up accidents and eliminate odors.

Once your puppy has settled in, begin introducing them to basic grooming and having every part of their body touched and handled. This will make future grooming and veterinary visits much more pleasant.

Introduce your puppy to new surroundings, new footings and new people in a variety of settings. Once their vaccinations are up-to-date, puppy training classes are wonderful ways to socialize them with both new people and new dogs. Socialization now will help avert aggression and fear responses later.

Do not take your new puppy outside of your yard until at least two weeks after their initial set of vaccinations to reduce the risk of infectious disease exposure.

## 4 tips on how to socialize your puppy

Before you can expect your puppy to react positively to new situations, you'll want to make sure that you and your puppy are prepared. There are some key factors to keep in mind when socializing your dog and training them to react properly to different scenarios as well as some things to be on the lookout for to ensure that they are safe.

1. **Start early.** Just like all behaviors, learning how to encounter new situations earlier will make it an easier task. By beginning to socialize your puppy at a young age, you can help minimize potential behavioral problems that could develop later on in life.
2. **Keep it positive.** Puppies learn best when you keep their socialization training positive and reward-based. Puppies are eager to repeat behavior that is reinforced with their favorite treats and/or an enthusiastic reply from you. Pet families should keep patience in mind when training, and remember to always reinforce polite, appropriate behaviors from their puppies.
3. **Keep it minimal.** In addition to keeping initial training sessions short, you'll want to consider other ways that training can become overwhelming to young puppies. This includes how many new situations and new dogs you introduce them to at a time. In fact, puppies play best in pairs, so divide the puppies in your playdate into dyads by matching their size and play style for maximum effectiveness. This type of pairing is critical for effective and safe play sessions.
4. **Keep it supervised.** Puppies should not meet each other and be left alone. Your supervision is important to keep play healthy and so you begin learning more cues about your puppy's behaviors and body language.