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The New Puppy

Before you Bring the Puppy Home

Before you bring the puppy home, you must make sure that the home, and the family, are well prepared. If you have children, now is a good time to make the rules as they tend to get carried away when playing with puppies, which could ruin your training. You will achieve the best results if the children are included in the day to day care of the puppy.

Remember, the puppy is not a toy to be played with, so teach the children how to correctly handle and play with it. Tell them that it is far better for them to sit on the floor and throw a toy or play tug-of-war with it, than to chase it around and pick it up. When playing with a puppy (for example tug of war) always tug from side to side **NOT** up and down as the bones in the dog's neck are still developing and you could cause damage.

One hard and fast rule that must never be broken, is that when the puppy is in its bed it must never be disturbed, as puppies need plenty of rest and its bed should be regarded as its sanctuary.

Your Garden

Have you thought about your garden? If there are parts of your garden that you do not want the puppy to go on, these must be fenced off. You can not expect a puppy to understand that some part of the garden are out of bounds whilst other parts are fine to romp around in. Choose an area that you want the puppy to use as a toilet, always take it to that spot, so that it will soon learn to use it.

Fencing

Do you have adequate fencing? It is no use having a low fence as the puppy will soon learn to get over it. The puppy will then do the same thing to a higher fence when it is fully grown. If a dog has never been able to get over a fence, he will probably never try. Can visitors approach your door without crossing the puppy's area? Is the gate self closing to prevent it being left open?

Check the fence for holes, and if found, block them off. Also make sure there is nothing beside the fence that your new dog can climb, in order to gain extra height for jumping the fence.

Sleeping Arrangements

The puppy's bed should be made a material that will not easily be chewed and be large enough for it to be confined in. The bed should be located where it is out of the way, quiet and free from any draughts. Remember that puppies are naturally very inquisitive, and like to chew things, so make sure that any cables or plugs are out of reach, as well as vegetable racks, rubbish bins, wash baskets, etc. Prevention is a lot cheaper than cure!

You will need a plentiful supply of blankets for the puppy's bed. These will need to be washed regularly to prevent them from becoming smelly.

Toys

Give the puppy a collection of chewable toys that it can regard as its own. There is no need to buy these toys, as they can easily be found around the home, eg. plastic milk containers or soft drink

bottles with the lids removed, cardboard tubes, squeaky balls, etc. These will give the puppy hours of fun. Find a suitable container to keep them in.

Be careful giving any dog socks or pantyhose to play with because, if the dog swallows these items, they may not be digested and could get stuck in the dog's digestive system. Also, the puppy will find it hard to distinguish between old socks and new ones.

Bowls

Your puppy will require at least two bowls, one for water and one for food. It is better to buy a more expensive, heavier bowl that will not be chewed easily, than to go through several cheap plastic ones. Buy bowls that will not tip over and are easy to clean.

Brushes & Combs

If you have a long-coated dog, you will require a metal comb and a brush. A smooth coated dog will need a rubber brush. This brings out the loose fur far easier and quicker than a bristle brush. An old pair of pantyhose rubbed along a smooth coated dog will leave its coat shining. Do not leave your brushes and combs where the puppy can chew them.

Lead & Collar

You will need a lead and collar before you start walking your puppy. A soft leather or webbing collar is a must for a puppy, as it will teach it at an early age to be restricted. If you have a very small breed you may find a cat collar is sufficient. The lead should also be of soft leather or webbing, with a snaphook, rather than chain, which is harsh on the puppy and on your hands.

Bringing the Puppy Home

When the big day finally arrives and you have made all the necessary arrangements and set down the rules, make sure the day is clear of all other commitments. Remember this puppy is coming into a totally new environment, away from anything familiar. The worst thing you can do, is to bring the puppy home and then leave it alone for two or three hours.

It is important for you to understand your puppy, as it does not understand you. Put yourself in its place for a moment. The only way it will learn, is by constant demonstration and repetition of words. The puppy will no longer have any mother, brothers or sisters to run back to, for comfort and reassurance, if the going gets tough. Therefore you must be all things to it - provider, friend, companion, teacher and playmate. So with this in mind, **TRAINING SHOULD NOW BEGIN.**

Feeding

Food will be one your puppy's main interests in life. A new house and a different type of food can easily upset a puppy. We suggest the following guidelines:

- 1 Where possible try to obtain a diet sheet from the breeder. This will enable you to continue feeding the puppy as it is used to, rather than changing the diet too suddenly.
- 2 Choose suitable containers as previously described.
- 3 Sloppy or milky foods may cause diarrhoea (use lactose free milk).
- 4 Feed puppy on its own, away from distractions.

- 5 Teach puppy to sit and wait before being fed. (Refer to training section).
- 6 Maintain a regular feeding timetable, if possible.
- 7 Do not leave uneaten food accessible. Remove and do not feed puppy until the next meal time.
- 8 Limit liquid later in the day, to aid toilet training.
- 9 Never feed raw offal or bones from rabbit, chicken, fish or chops.
- 10 Add calcium supplement. Check with your veterinarian regarding quantities.
- 11 The quantity of food should be in keeping with the size of the puppy.

NEVER give cooked bones as they become brittle and can get stuck in the dog's throat.

ALWAYS soak dry food to avoid the puppy getting bloat.

Suggested Menu

- Breakfast: Weetbix, porridge, farex, nutri-pet.
- Lunch: Scrambled eggs, vegetables, tinned puppy food.
- Tea: Meat, rice, grated cheese, carrot, stew.
- Supper: Dry food eg. dog biscuits, puppy nuts.
- Extras: Beef or brisket bones, chew bars, dog biscuits.

The First Night

The first night with your puppy could be a traumatic experience for both of you. Decide where you want your puppy to sleep and stick to it, bearing in mind that it will not always be a small puppy. Bedtime must now become a well thought out and planned affair. For at least half an hour before you (not the puppy) wish to go to bed, play with it. This will hopefully tire it out, for a while anyway.

After the puppy has eaten a suitable supper, you must take it to the toilet spot in the garden and wait for it to go to the toilet. Now tell the puppy that it is bedtime and place it in its bed with a few toys. This will then be a sign for the puppy that the day has come to an end, and that you expect it to go to sleep.

No doubt there will be some howls on the first night. It is vitally important that you handle this in the correct way. **Ignore the howls** as much as possible.

If you do not ignore the howls you are giving in to the puppy and it will soon learn that if it howls, it is going to receive your attention.

If you ignore it, it will soon learn that no one is coming and will just go to sleep.

When putting the puppy to bed, you could try putting any of the following things in with them:

- A ticking clock as this will represent a heart beat.

- A radio as the puppy will be hearing other voices and it should calm them down.
- A hot water bottle to represent the comfort of its litter brothers and sisters.
- A piece of old clothing as this will have your scent on it and should relax the dog.

Toilet Training

Toilet training should prove no problem if you are quick and alert to your puppy's needs. It will need to pay frequent visits to the toilet area in the garden that you have chosen for it. At first, always pick the puppy up and carry it to the spot: after each meal; immediately it wakes up; and any time in between that you think it needs to go. Give it a word as a command and keep repeating this word while it is on the spot.

Never just put the puppy outside and leave it to go wherever it wishes as it will not learn to associate the command with the spot in the garden. As soon as the puppy has obliged give it lots of praise, tell it how clever it is and take it back into the house. If you are diligent, and watch the puppy carefully, you will soon get to know when it needs to be taken to the spot again. A sure sign will be when the puppy puts its nose to the ground, its tail up in the air, or runs around in circles or for the back door.

There is bound to be the odd mistake, but it will be your fault not the puppy's. If your puppy gives the signs of wanting to relieve himself, and the phone rings or someone comes to the door, then pick the puppy up and carry it. Do not leave it at this point, otherwise it will relieve itself inside. If you catch your puppy in the act then say "NO", pick it up and take it outside to the toilet spot.

When taking your puppy outside to go to the toilet, try being as calm as possible. Aggressive behaviour can stress the dog and it won't go to the toilet.

Confining the puppy overnight, preferably in a cage, will make toilet training a great deal easier and quicker. Very rarely will a puppy make a mess in its own bed if it can avoid doing so. Make sure that you follow the feeding guide, by limiting the amount of liquid food given in the later part of the day. Be prepared to get out of bed at least once in the middle of the night for a few nights.

When you hear the puppy getting restless, then take it out to the spot, giving the command, and wait for it to oblige, which it should do in not time at all. Praise the puppy and return it to its bed. Do not play with the puppy as this will excite it and make it hard for it to settle back down. The puppy should now be settled until the morning when you should immediately take it back to the spot.

Often a puppy, or even an older dog, will be unclean at night because it is afraid of being alone. In such cases, try sleeping the puppy in a room where it is able to hear or smell someone's presence.

Disciplining

Dogs are conditioned to live within a family pack structure. In the wild, a particular dog will dominate the remaining members of the pack. It is very important to remember this when you are disciplining your dog. In the home environment you and your family are the pack. The dog must not be allowed to consider itself superior to any member of the human family pack. In all dog / owner relationships, the owner must dominate the dog, thereby being the equivalent of a pack leader.

Dogs learn by linking cause and effect. You teach your puppy by showing it pleasure or displeasure depending on the situation. Both responses must be clear and immediately given.

If this is not the case, the puppy will not associate the praise / reprimand with the deed done. It is far better to catch the puppy in the act of misbehaving. For instance, it is no use calling the puppy to you and then reprimanding it for something that it has done, as it will associate the reprimand with having come to you.

Voice plays a very major part in praising or disciplining your puppy. Imagining someone talking to you in a foreign language. It is not what is said, but how, that is the cue you are looking for. It is even harder for the dog. Commands must be direct, and in a tone of voice which makes it clear that it is a command, not a request. There must never be any doubt in the puppy's mind that you are in control. Try to use only single words where possible, as a puppy will never learn to understand burble.

If voice command is not sufficient, and the puppy is on a lead, give it a short sharp jerk. This will usually make the puppy sit up and take notice.

If the puppy is not on the lead, a good way of correcting is to take hold of it by the scruff of the neck or the side of the jowls with both hands, look it straight in the eyes, and give it two or three firm shakes. When correcting the puppy by the scruff of the neck always shake from side to side for the reasons mentioned above. The puppy will accept this type of reprimand as it is very similar to the type of discipline handed out by its mother. Never correct your puppy by hitting it, as it will very quickly become wary of your hand which can lead to fear biting.

Chewing

As you are learning to understand each other, you will become further aware of your puppy's need to chew, and its bound to chew things that you don't want it to. If this occurs, discipline the puppy, then supply it with its own toy. Do not give the puppy the opportunity to be mischievous, by leaving it loose in the house while you are away. Make sure it is left in a secure place with its own toys or a bone.

Obedience Training

Sit: The puppy should be taught to sit straight away. This particular exercise can be taught in conjunction with feeding, where the puppy must be taught to sit and wait, before it is allowed to eat a meal.

The sit is best taught by holding the back of the collar with one hand (with upwards pressure), and at the same time gently pushing the hindquarters into the sit position. Tell the puppy to "sit" in a firm voice. Make sure you praise the puppy immediately the sit is accomplished.

Wait: Teach the wait by first clipping a lead on the collar and holding it short. As you tell the puppy to "wait" place your hand in front of its nose and, at the same time, halt it with a backward movement of the lead. At first, the puppy should only be expected to wait for a few seconds, but as its confidence grows, it should be expected to wait to be fed, before going through doors, getting in and out of cars, and anywhere you command it.

Down: It is easier to teach the down position from a sit. There are several different methods of teaching the puppy, depending on the size of both puppy and the handler. Praise must be given while the puppy is in the down position.

- With a smaller puppy the easiest way, is to put downwards pressure on the shoulder blades **NEVER** on the back.
- Place one hand on the puppy's chest and push backwards and slightly sideways.

- With a larger puppy, while putting pressure on the shoulder blades **gently** pull its front legs forward.
- Kneeling at the side of the puppy, place your lower arm behind one foreleg, and with the same hand, hold the other foreleg and move your whole arm forward, gently placing the puppy into the down position.

Coming when called: Always make coming to you, a pleasant experience for your puppy. Start teaching the puppy to come to putting it on the lead. Call it to you, and if it fails to respond, give the lead a gentle jerk to gain its attention, and then praise it as it is coming towards you. Do not call the puppy when you have no way of correcting it, as it will only learn the bad habit of ignoring you. Once it has got the idea on a short lead, then try it on a longer line. Reward the puppy when it comes to you no matter what has happened before.

Jumping Up: It is most important that your puppy is never allowed to jump up at anyone. Always get down to its level when greeting it, and ensure that all four feet are on the ground, before you pat or praise. Once again there are several methods, depending upon the size of both you and your puppy. The strong command "NO", must coincide with what ever method you decide to use. Don't use the command down if you intend to use this word for the down position. What you really want it to do, is to get off, not lay down.

- 1 When the puppy jumps up, hold onto the front paws, until it resists strongly.
- 2 Knock the puppy off balance using your knee as it jumps up. Be very careful using this method as it can cause damage if done incorrectly. Use as a last resort.
- 3 Attach the lead to the puppy, and get someone to approach you. As the puppy jumps up, give a sharp jerk backwards using the lead. Also be careful when attaching a lead and correcting as the puppy is still developing and it is very easy to cause damage.

Biting: Do not allow your puppy to bite or mouth you in any way at all. What starts out as fun with a tiny puppy, soon develops into the first stages of dominance over you. If the puppy tries to bite or mouth you, firstly give it a sharp "NO" and, if necessary, give it a firm shake by the scruff of the neck. This correction must be both instant and forceful. Be very aware of this problem when children are playing with the puppy. If this fails, roll the dog's lip into its mouth so that when it is trying to bite you it is in fact biting itself.

NEVER hit the dog on the nose, mouth or head.

Car Travel: Right from the start decide where your puppy will travel in the car, and stick to it. It is a good idea to have someone else with you to assist in the beginning, by ensuring that the puppy remains in the correct place. It is dangerous for both yourself and the puppy, to have it moving around in the car.

Never allow a dog to have their head out of the window, as dust and stones can cause injuries, as well as cold air getting into ears and eyes.

Try using a car harness. Also **NEVER** allow your dog to sit on your lap.

Health

Vaccinations: It is most essential that your puppy received the correct vaccinations at the appropriate age. A puppy should be vaccinated for the first time at 6 weeks, with a vaccine that

covers Kennel Cough, Canine Hepatitis, Canine Distemper and Parvo Virus. These are the four most common causes of death from disease in dogs. A further vaccine is required at 12 weeks, followed at 16 weeks by a final injection. An annual booster is then required to keep your dog immune. Your puppy is not fully protected until all three vaccinations have been administered.

Worming: Parasitic worms can pose a very real threat to the health of your dog, as well as your whole family. Symptoms of worms in your puppy could include coughing, vomiting, weight loss, dull or dry coat, pot belly, diarrhoea and general weakness.

Puppies should first be wormed at two, four, eight and twelve weeks, then monthly until six months of age and after which a broad spectrum wormer should be administered every six months. Your veterinarian is the best person to advise you on the type and amount required. The feeding of garlic is highly recommended in the control of worms.

Fleas: Like worms, fleas can also pose an obvious health risk to both your dog and family. In fact, a dog that is infested with fleas, will be infected with tapeworms, as this is part of the flea's life cycle. At the first sign of irritation, your dog should be checked for small brown insects or black flea droppings in the roots of your dog's coat. To effectively eradicate the fleas, both your dog and all its bedding etc. must be treated with the appropriate powder, spray or shampoo. A follow up treatment is also recommended, as flea eggs can lay dormant for many months.

Symptoms of Ill Health: Any dog that shows any signs of diarrhoea or vomit containing blood, should immediately be taken to your veterinarian, as this could be the first sign of one of the more serious diseases. Other signs of ill health include coughing, high temperature, listlessness, lack of appetite or dehydration.