



Training Your Puppy

Puppies are extremely impressionable. How you train your new pet will have dramatic and long-lasting effects. You can make your puppy a better pet and prevent behavior problems by following these guidelines. Using these guidelines a puppy of six to eight weeks can be housebroken within a couple of weeks. Any mistakes the dog makes after that will be your mistakes, and you should consult our clinic for more information.

Housebreaking

Successful housebreaking results from the instinct of dogs to keep their bed clean. You can make use of this instinct by creating a sort of home "den" for them. Dogs are "den animals." Their own private place gives them a sense of security. Confinement is not cruel unless abused.

Do this by constructing or obtaining a crate that will have a door or lid on it with adequate ventilation holes. The crate should be big enough for the puppy to turn around in and even to lie at full length, but no larger. The lid, or door, is required to keep the puppy from climbing out. Airline crates work well.

A puppy does not want to soil his bed and then sleep in it! He might get caught the first night, but he won't the second. However, if the crate is so large that he can relieve himself at one end and sleep in the other, he will do so. Remember that on the very first day it is important to start giving the puppy all his naps in the crate. Puppies sleep 75% of the time. When the puppy awakens from his nap, you immediately lift him out of the crate and carry him outside to a spot that you previously have selected.

You must take him to this spot before and after play, always when he awakens from a nap, and always the first thing in the morning and last thing at night. You must never "just put him out." Instead, you must take him to this spot, urge him to go, and PRAISE him when he does. Within a week, you'll have him going on command. A dog can only understand scolding and praise if it occurs within a half second of the event you are trying to control. Catching a puppy "in the act" is the best time to scold or praise. After the event has occurred, it is too late to scold, or praise, because the puppy will associate your feedback with whatever he is doing at the time, not ten minutes before. Rubbing his nose in his mistake is a worthless technique and only confuses the dog. Feed your puppy the same time every day. This will help keep the dog's digestive system regular and it will be easier to predict when he needs to go out.

Socialization:

Dogs, like their wolf ancestors, are pack hunters. Efficient hunting in a pack requires a high degree of social organization. Dogs relate to people as pack members. It's up to your family to become "pack leaders" by performing simple exercises and stopping aggressive play. Failure to do so may cause other problems. Introduce your pup to a variety of positive experiences. Visit three new places a week (AFTER THE INITIAL VACCINATION SERIES IS COMPLETED) and introduce him to five new people at each place. Take your pup on regular car rides using a carrier to insure safer driving. Brush your pup daily. At the same time, handle your pup's feet and ears and open his mouth for inspection. Massage him all over. If the pup fusses, say "no" firmly. When he is quiet, talk to him in a soft, pleasant voice.



Prevent bad habits:

Provide appropriate objects for chewing and praise the puppy for chewing on these objects. It is best to rotate toys to prevent boredom. Gently punish inappropriate chewing (clap hands, shout) while directing the puppy to appropriate objects. Put your pup in a crate when you are unable to supervise. Don't allow aggressive behavior: mouthing hands, tug-of-war, jumping up, growling, guarding food, and nipping. Competition between dog and owner should never be developed, even when it is playful. To handle aggressive play, stand perfectly still, cross your arms, and close your eyes to tell your puppy you are not interested in playing "rough". When the puppy gives up, go and get an appropriate toy and praise your puppy for playing with it. Don't allow jumping up. Never pet or talk sweetly to a dog that has only two feet on the ground. Turn away and ignore him! Kneeing, hitting the dog under the chin, and squeezing the dog's paw may actually lead to increased jumping. Make definite decisions about manners. Will the new dog be allowed on the furniture? Are any rooms "off-limits"? When you tell your dog "no," you must be prepared to enforce your decision immediately.

PLEASE CONSULT OUR CLINIC AT 770-977-9000 IF YOU ARE HAVING ANY DIFFICULTIES IN HOUSEBREAKING YOUR PUPPY.