

PUPPY STUFF

EARLY LEARNING

- Dogs have to learn to communicate with other dogs. Socialize your puppy - a lot. Find other dogs who have had their shots, and let them play with each other. Be safe; don't let your puppy smell another dog's stool.
- Dogs have to learn about the varieties of humans and human behavior. Socialize your puppy with people as much as possible. Take him (or her) to a shopping center, walk him downtown...wherever he'll see people. If people wish to pet him, that's fine, under controlled circumstances. Do your best to make sure your pup isn't frightened, since one bad experience can last a lifetime.

HOUSE TRAINING

- We can house train dogs because they are carnivores. All carnivores eliminate away from their den for safety and sanitation. We have problems because our 'dens' are large, and we expect too much too soon.
- Puppies cannot contain their waste voluntarily until they are about four months old. Before that, it's good luck and a keen eye to the signs of imminent elimination.
- Keep your puppy with you, tied to you, or confined when you can't watch him; take him out every two hours. Be patient, persistent, and consistent.
- Teach your dog a phrase that he can connect with the act of elimination. To do that, you wait until the action is happening, then give it a name.
- Never rub your puppy's nose in his stool. At best, it has no effect; at worst, the pup tries to please by eating what he figures you're offering.
- Punishing your dog after the fact never works. If the puppy has made a mistake (or has chewed something he shouldn't, or otherwise been destructive), and you don't catch him in the act, it's finished. If you catch him, then say 'no,' and take him out for awhile. It's much better to avoid the mistake by confining the dog in a pen, a crate, or one puppy-proofed room.

GENERAL TRAINING

- Don't assume your puppy knows he's done something wrong by his cowed attitude. It's more likely he is a little afraid of big bad you, and is waiting to see what your mood is before greeting you warmly. After all, in his world, people can be pretty weird.
- A good way to teach your dog to come to you is to take him to a safe spot when he's a pup, and hide. Be very excited when he finds you. Do it often, make it a game. Teach the pup he'd better keep an eye on you or you'll disappear. Give him a treat when he finds you, then let him go again.
- Teach your pup to sit by holding a tidbit next to his nose, and then moving it back over and slightly above his head, forcing his haunches to the ground. When he's sitting, tell him 'sit,' and give him the treat. Then release him from the position, by saying 'OK.' The treat lowered to the

ground in front of him will help him lie down on command. After he'll do it consistently, wait a bit before giving him the treat...then wait longer, and longer and longer.

MOUTHING/BITING

Most puppies use their mouths to play. There are a few methods to stop this behavior.

- If your puppy is under three months old, when he bites your hands, arms or legs, make a noise that closely approximates the 'Yip' of another puppy. He should stop biting, and look at you. Tell him 'good pup,' and present your hand again. Repeat the process until he begins to understand that he shouldn't bite (it takes a while).
- For pups three months and older, you growl and say "uh-uh" when he bites, then stand up and turn away. If he doesn't stop, move out of the room you are in, or place him in another room for a short time. Start the whole process again (remember, dogs - like people - learn from repetition. Putting him outside for a period of over five minutes does no good, since he quickly forgets why he's out there and will begin doing something else!)
- Teach him "Don't touch." Give him a small treat, saying "take it." Now close your hand, say "Don't touch." When he stops going for the treat and looks at you, tell him "take it," and give him the treat. Do it again, and again, until he seems to understand. After he does, use the same technique when he begins to mouth or bite you in play.
- If you have a champion biter, attach an indoor (light, no loop on the end) leash to your puppy. When he bites, tug the leash sharply, and growl 'NO!' The tug should be hard enough to make him take immediate notice - and produce some instant respect. It's what his doggy mom would do, with her mouth, instead of the leash. The leash, by the way, is also an excellent tool to stop your pup from playing keep away with your socks, glasses, or watch! Just step on the leash, say 'NO!' and take the item from his jaws. You may need to press his lip to his teeth to help him release the item.

JUMPING UP

Most puppies jump up to greet their owners — after all, they know where the most important part of the body is — the face. However, most owners (and their guests) do not like it that much...especially when puppy becomes dog. The easiest way to control the jump is to ignore the pup when he jumps. Turn away abruptly, make no eye contact. When the pup stops, praise him calmly. The dog must do it several times for it to sink in. "When I do this, that happens. Oh, guess I'll try something different."

ALTERNATIVE METHODS THAT WILL WORK — SOMETIMES

- Acquire a squirt bottle, and put water in it. Put the setting on stream, and when the dog jumps, squirt him in the face while saying "no" or "off." This is sometimes effective even on pups who like water — as long as you squirt with fervor. You can also add a little vinegar in the water (about 10%) for dogs who don't respond to the plain water.
- Squat to greet your dog in the first place. He wants to get close to your face...so let him. Command him to sit when he approaches. This takes patience, but will work eventually.
- Leave a leash on the dog (it can be a short "handle" if you prefer). When he jumps, snap the leash down and to the side. The dog should sit. Praise him enthusiastically.

- Hold the dog's paws when he jumps. You must be prepared to hold him there for 3 to 5 minutes, until he's good and frustrated. This works only for the holder, not his family or friends.

ALTERNATIVE METHODS THAT DON'T WORK

- Stepping on the dog's hind toes. They're difficult to locate with the dog's chest obstructing the view...and you can break the dog's toes and end up with a vet bill and a dog that jumps.
- Putting the dog outside. He'll learn nothing except, possibly, to dislike visitors if he's put outside when they arrive. Use a tie-down (a short leash tied to an immovable object — like a wall) to control the dog around guests if he gets too enthusiastic.

PUPPIES AND CHILDREN

- Small children think of puppies as playthings with no pain threshold; puppies think of children as siblings with no pain threshold. It's very important to teach each to respect the other. The puppy should have a crate or bed to take refuge in. The child should also have a safe space.
- If a puppy bites a child in play, the child should "yip" like a puppy, then stand up and leave for a while. In other words, interrupt the play so the pup doesn't think this is all part of the fun.
- If the puppy appears to bite out of anger, it's best to seek the help of a trainer or behavior consultant.

Puppies are adorable, cute, destructive, obnoxious, and another species. Sometimes we forget they are not human. What we are trying to teach them is how to survive in a human pack, with human rules. It's difficult for them and for us. Always remember, they don't speak English, and they need to do something many times before it sinks in. Think of a puppy as a toddler, just learning to walk, still wearing diapers, and curious about the world. Be patient, and you will have the dog you want!