

NEW PUPPY POINTERS

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General:

Your new puppy will need time to adjust to the change in environment. So far it has only known it's mother, littermates and us. A well-cared for, well-socialized puppy should easily adapt to the change, but a few things to remember during the adjustment:

Do not over-expose your puppy to stimuli the first few days. This means limit the number of visitors, activities, and trips beyond your home. Too much at once can have an adverse affect on your puppy's development. Once the puppy is settled in, expose them to as many sites and sounds as possible. A puppy that is socialized to the world will be a confident adult.

Establish a routine immediately. Try to feed at the same time, use the same door to take him/her outside, pick a place for the crate and leave it there, put to bed at the same time. These will all help in the adjustment period.

Be consistent from the beginning, if you do not want the puppy on furniture, in certain rooms, etc, start now. Good habits are developed through consistency and positive reinforcement, Do not allow your puppy to do something now that you will not allow it to do at 100+ pounds.

If you have children, teach the children to respect the puppy, it's space, need for alone time and teach them to understand that they cannot torment or hurt the puppy. Many children, for lack of exposure, do not know how to behave with dogs. They do not understand that the dog/puppy can feel pain just as they do. It is the parent's responsibility to teach respect and that they should not pull the ears, whiskers, tail, legs, etc....and that poking it in the eye hurts! Many dog bites occur because of mishandling and improper behavior. A dog/puppy cannot defend itself in any way other than walking away or biting. Teach your children to properly handle, pet, and play with the puppy.

Feeding:

A good food and planned feeding routine will aid in the health, development and housebreaking of your puppy. Here are a few things to consider and a few suggestions:

Pick a food formulated for large breed puppies, the protein and fat contents are formulated for slower growth. Your puppy, if fed well, will attain it's full potential slowly over time, do not rush this by overfeeding or feeding a high protein/fat diet.

Do not supplement your puppy with vitamins and minerals, if you choose a quality food, it will have everything your puppy needs to grow properly. Supplementing can cause rapid changes that can affect his/her health.

3. Garbage in, garbage out. If you choose a cheap dog food you will find that your dog eats more, sheds more, has a drier coat and skin, and you will have much more to clean up in the yard. Everything their body cannot use is pushed out, therefore if your food is made up of garbage, you will get a lot of garbage coming out!

4. Pick quality foods that contain meat listed first, not corn, meat by-products or other things that sound unappetizing! Remember, dogs are carnivores, therefore meat should be the primary ingredient. Chicken and rice seems to work the best and be the most appetizing, lamb and rice also work well but many dogs and puppies do not enjoy it as much. A few quality dog foods that have worked well for us:

Eukanuba Large Breed Puppy

Iams Large Breed Puppy

Science Diet Large Breed Puppy

Nutro Natural Large Breed Puppy
Maxximum Nutrition Large Breed Puppy
Diamond Large Breed Puppy

Of these foods, the dogs seem to like the chicken based foods the best. The Maxximum Nutrition is available at Wal-Mart and while some may frown upon that, it actually has good ingredients, the appropriate protein/fat ratios and is affordable. Diamond is also affordable, but is the lamb and rice and I have found the pups do not eat as well and their stool is a little softer than I like to see. You have to find what works for you and your puppy.

5. Make a schedule for feeding and stick to it. Pups should be fed about three times a day (if possible) up to the age of three months. A likely schedule would be:

6 am
12 pm
6 pm

Take the recommended daily feedings from the bag of puppy food for your puppy's age and weight and divide it by three. That is how much you should feed at each meal. If you cannot feed three times a day, twice is sufficient, space it 12 hours apart. Do not free feed, this can hinder house training and will cause your puppy to be a 'picker' and not eat well. Leave the food down for 10 to 15 minutes, if your puppy does not finish or ignores the food, pick it up and wait until the next feeding time. This will start good eating habits and aid in housebreaking.

Do not feed your dogs table scraps, they don't need it and it can cause loose stool. It will also teach them to counter/table cruise, a bad habit you don't want to start.

Always provide clean, fresh water. I would suggest taking this away a couple hours before you put the puppy up for the evening so that he/she makes it through the night without needing to be let out or having an accident.

Crate training and housebreaking:

These are lumped together because they really go hand in hand. The use of a crate can save a lot of time and effort if used properly and NOT as punishment or overused. The crate provides a secure, quiet place for your puppy to sleep and since most puppies will not soil their bedding, it will keep them from having accidents when you cannot be watching them or overnight. The crate also can keep the puppy from getting into things and chewing up furniture, etc, when you are not home or overnight.

Housebreaking tips:

1. Always use the same door, this will reinforce where the puppy should go when it needs to go outside.
2. Always say 'Outside' when you are heading to the door or out the door. Dogs are intelligent and will learn what this means. Always praise them for going to the door.
3. Go outside with your puppy and encourage them by saying 'Go Potty' sounds a little crazy, but it works. Praise them profusely for doing their business. In the first months, it is best not to play with the puppy outside. The reasoning behind this is that you want the puppy to understand what going outside is for.
4. If the puppy urinates first, do not immediately take them inside, wait a few moments, they will usually defecate shortly afterwards, encourage them to walk around, this gets them sniffing and the movement keeps them on task.
5. Take them to the same area, if they can smell where they have previously gone, they will usually go again.

Take your puppy outside at regular intervals. You will have to figure this out, but a general rule is if the puppy is up, active and playing, every half hour to an hour during the first 4 to 6 weeks. This varies from puppy to puppy and you will figure out your puppies needs.

7. Additional times/rules to follow:

Immediately upon waking up in the morning. Remove puppy from the crate and take them outside.

5 to 10 minutes after eating

After playing

After a nap

After drinking lots of water

Last thing at night before putting them to bed.

Anytime you see them sniffing around and circling, this is usually a good indicator.

8. If your puppy has an accident, don't freak, don't start screaming, don't run at the puppy like you are crazy. You will frighten and confuse them. Do not spank them (they will not understand why), don't rub their noses in it (you are reinforcing the spot).

9. If your puppy has an accident do the following: Loudly say NO and clap your hands or squirt them with a water spray bottle. Pick them up and immediately take them outside and encourage them to go, praise them when they do.

10. Clean up the spot. Use commercial pet stain/odor removal products. Blot the spot first, then put cleaner on it. Allow it to sit for 5 to 10 minutes, then blot up with a towel.

11. If you find a spot 'after the fact' do not punish the puppy by dragging them over to it and rubbing their nose in it, they will not understand and you will just reinforce using that spot.

Through all of this remember that puppies are like babies, they have small bladders and bowels and little control. Most puppies are not fully housetrained until 6 to 9 months, and even then are not usually ready to be left unsupervised. You will have to know your puppy and it's habits and decide when he/she is ready.

Chewing:

All puppies chew, period, some worse than others. To limit the damage, always keep a good supply of toys and rawhide on hand to keep your puppy busy. DO NOT give them old shoes, socks, etc...they don't know the difference between that shoe and the ones you don't want them to chew on. If you find your puppy chewing on something that you do not want them to, clap your hands (or squirt them with a water bottle), loudly and firmly say NO and give them something they can chew on. Suggestions for toys:

1. Rawhide. Do not buy chipped rawhide, they will make a mess, it doesn't last long and they can choke on it. Buy compressed or rolled rawhide and make sure it is large enough that they cannot get the whole thing in their mouth.

2. Stuffedies and rope toys. They have give and satisfy the puppies need to chew.

Kong products. Tough, durable rubber and you can put treats in them. These are great for keeping puppies occupied.

Obedience Training:

Obedience training is a definite must for all dogs, but particularly the large, dominant, powerful breeds. It establishes you as the alpha, creates a bond between dog and owner and puts you in control. Most vet offices have obedience classes on-site or can recommend a place for you to go. Going to a public obedience class also gets your puppy out and around other dogs and people, it is great socialization. If you do not wish

to attend obedience classes or cannot find one that works with your schedule, you can pick up a book on obedience training or I will gladly teach you to teach your dog. Obedience training can be done at home just as well as in a class and even if you do attend classes, you should always be practicing at home. Training should start immediately, however it is best to wait until your puppy is at least 12 weeks old before taking them to public obedience classes.

Leash training should start immediately. Put the leash on the puppy, and slowly start walking, calling the puppy. If they do not come right away, keep walking applying a small amount 'tug', they may resist at first and you may drag them a bit, but eventually they will get the point.

Please contact me if you want assistance with obedience training or have any other questions. I am available at all times to assist you with your puppy.

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