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Basic Guide to Initial Puppy Training

Toilet Training

It is important to understand that pups are unable to hold their bladder/bowels at this young age, so any accidents inside are just that, accidents.

- We don't ever tell them off for this because this could in turn cause future behavioural issues revolving around toileting.
- When your puppy has an accident, just calmly pick them up and put them outside.
- Clean their mess up with a pet friendly detergent which also eliminates the odour and make sure to do this out of view of your puppy.
- Don't forget to **really** praise your puppy when he/she toilets outside, offer them a tasty treat, something other than your generic puppy treats. The nicer the treat, the more likely they will want to "perform", so toilet outside again, if they know they're getting a nice piece of chicken.
- Go out with your puppy to the toilet, winter as well, just take an umbrella.
- Do not praise your puppy for using puppy/training pads if the end result of training is that your puppy toilets in the garden. The reason for this is that they cannot differentiate between being on a pad and indoors, so ultimately we are praising them for toileting indoors, which could cause confusion and delay toilet training.
- You will unfortunately find many scenarios where pup will be outside for 20 minutes, not toilet, you bring them in and they toilet indoors right away. This is because outside has lots of new scents so they will become distracted. Whereas inside they are used to the scents and sights so will suddenly "remember" they need the toilet. This is normal, but continue to stick to your training.
- Give your puppy plenty of opportunities to go outside. Most opportune moments are: after a nap, after a play, after a meal, after a drink. Even if they go toilet outdoors, come back have a play, take them out again. Anything that causes the body stimulation can result in toileting.

And always remember, consistency is key!

Recall Training

Recall training can start as soon as possible, you don't have to wait until final jabs to kick-start this training. In fact, it is a lot more beneficial to have some crucial ground training in recall before your puppy is introduced into the big wide world, so that you can hit the ground running.

- Begin by training your puppy to recognise their name. Then start to call their name and every time they come to you, offer a nice tasty treat. Again, not the usual dog treat, maybe a piece of chicken or ham.
- Then you can start moving on to calling them from one room to another. Once you have this part nailed down, you can move on to outdoors in the garden.
- Hopefully, when you take your puppy on his/her first walk on a field you will have some recall training in place. Don't be too discouraged if they don't respond straight away on their first few walks. Remember they are experiencing a lot of new things so will be very distracted.
- Your puppy won't stray too far from you and will see you as their safety blanket, so if you want to do off lead walking, don't wait too long to let them off. Find a nice, enclosed field to do your outdoor recall training.

Socialisation & Desensitisation

- It is really important that we socialise our puppies where possible. This means having controlled meetings with other dogs (once fully vaccinated). By controlled, this means not allowing a free for all play where puppies can become over-stimulated and begin fighting or become very nervous and withdrawn. Hold them close, give lots of reassurance and nice treats, if the situation becomes too rough in play or puppy is trying to avoid the other dog then move away from the situation.
- Socialisation doesn't just start and end with dogs, it is also important to socialise with other people, have them meet people and allow them to offer your pup treats (given by you, the owner) to aid in positive reinforcement. Like above, if puppy becomes worried and tries to avoid, do not force interactions. It must be of your puppy's choice whether to interact or not.
- As important as socialisation is, it is equally important not to overwhelm our puppies.
- Desensitisation is similar, but also refers to other things like desensitising to sounds like traffic and fireworks. Or desensitising them to bin men, cats, children, being handled. These things can be done by CARRYING your puppy (before full vaccinations) on short walks around the neighbourhood and offering yummy treats when they react/interact with anything along the journey.

Commands

Commands can be an integral part of puppy training as it can teach our puppies boundaries and manners. To begin with, we don't want to overwhelm them along with everything else we are trying to instil. However, there are some basic commands we can teach at this age.

- **Sit** - arguably this is one of the easier commands. Some dogs may do it without being asked, however it is still important to *voice* the cue "sit" so that your puppy understands what it means and what he/she must do. Then always offer a training treat to reward and encourage positive reinforcement. There may be occasions when you have to voice your cue and gently tap their bottom down and voice the cue again, then quickly give a treat. Hopefully, with repetition and consistency the command will be learnt.
- **Paw** - Once your puppy has learnt to sit, you could move on to paw. This can be a little tougher to teach, but is very achievable with patience. Ask for his/her paw and gently lift it up in the palm of your hand and then praise and give a treat. Again, over time they will begin to offer their paw naturally.
- **Lie down/Down** - Again, another difficult one, you want to encourage pup to lay down. Try to stick to one cue. This means either say "down" or "lie down" not both, this can cause confusion and frustration in the pup. Start by having a treat, get your puppy to focus on the treat and slowly direct the treat to the ground and slightly away from them to encourage the down motion.

We hope this helps with training your new puppy, if there is anything else you need help with then please get in contact or check out our website for more information on behaviour and recognising body language.

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