



STARMARK ACADEMY™

FOR PROFESSIONAL DOG TRAINERS

Common Puppy Raising Questions:

- How do I socialize my puppy?
- When is the best time to start training?
- How long does potty training take?
- Is crate training a good idea?

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NEW PUPPY, NOW WHAT?

Bringing a new puppy home is a pleasure, but often a challenge. Your family environment is the primary force that creates a puppy's behavior. Furthermore, what a puppy learns during its first sixteen weeks of life will play a tremendous role in how he interacts with the family; and how he responds to circumstances and situations encountered over the course of life.



This is a guideline to help you develop a happy, confident, reliable puppy and great family companion. Use it in conjunction with the direction of a reputable puppy class. Dog training is both science and art, so follow these guidelines and you'll have the best puppy on the block!

Puppy Do's



Your attitude toward the puppy should be consistent and persistent, yet kind-hearted, upbeat, and fun.

- Have your puppy examined and vaccinated by a veterinarian as soon as you get him. Not only will this ensure that your pup is free of health problems, but this early interaction at the vet's office will help him be calmer and more relaxed for future visits.
- Get your puppy a crate. Dogs have an innate desire to den. Crates (preferably the plastic kind) satisfy this natural need. Your puppy should be crated when he can't be supervised. This will keep him safe, and your home free of "doggy disasters". When confined, put a high-quality, interactive toy in the kennel for enjoyment.
- Feed your puppy a premium dog food. These foods have everything a growing puppy needs. It may be tempting to feed your pup table scraps, but this can lead to upset stomachs and possibly bad manners during mealtime.
- Keep the supervised puppy on a leash and collar. This will help you better communicate with your puppy. If you are consistent with this, a puppy will quickly come to love his leash.
- Praise and reward your puppy for everything he does right. During training sessions, use plenty of food reward with your puppy. Start training early. You can start now to teach your puppy how to walk on a loose leash, come back when called, sit, and down. You do not have to wait until he is six months of age. (This is usually when formal obedience training begins because most dogs are more physically and mentally mature) It makes it much easier for you and your puppy if you start teaching them obedience from the very start. Puppies can and do learn. You just go about it a little different than you would an adult, mature dog.
- Get your puppy used to being handled, touched and examined. Clean his ears, brush him and ask your vet or dog trainer to show you how to trim his nails. If your puppy is uncomfortable with being handled, calmly desensitize him to the situation; use plenty of positive reinforcement when the puppy shows correct behavior.

***Your attitude toward the puppy should be persistent, yet kind hearted; consistent, but always upbeat and fun. Responsible dog ownership, often like raising children, requires fortitude. Never give in to an improper behavior.

Puppy Don'ts



- Do not make excuses or try to justify bad behavior. Puppies do not "outgrow" behaviors, they practice them! If your puppy gets away with an inappropriate behavior that he finds enjoyable (raiding the trash, for example), it becomes validated in his mind as proper behavior and will tend to increase in frequency.
- Do not expect any animal (especially your puppy) to have human motives, feelings, or thought processes. While it is fun for us to think of our puppy as a little person, this can sometimes create confusion and frustration in your puppy. Appreciate your puppy for what he is and you will enjoy and create a great, life-long relationship.
- Do not allow children to play keep-away, chase, tug o' war, or general rowdiness. It is a parent's responsibility to teach children how to interact with their dog, not the dogs' responsibility. Many good dogs are given away or destroyed because of unfortunate and usually avoidable, dog bite incidents involving children. Dogs view the world differently from us, and sometimes dogs perceive our acts of affection as threatening gestures.

Puppy Socialization and Imprinting

A common lingering myth pertaining to dogs is that training shouldn't begin until after six months of age. However, by this time the primary developmental stages have long passed and habits, good or bad, have already begun to take hold. Early training and socialization are key factors in a well-rounded dog able to take on the competitive ring.

Learning and socialization begins from the time the puppy enters the world despite an initial lack of senses. The period up to sixteen weeks is fundamental to puppy development and experiences during this time help shape the dog he will become. Interactions with the mother, littermates, and anyone the pup has contact with makes an impression. From the mother the pups learn social skills and how to properly interact with people and other dogs, and are then able to practice with their littermates. It is important that a pup is not removed from his litter too soon (no earlier than seven weeks) as he can miss out on critical learning experiences. Pups removed from the litter too early are often socially inept with people and other dogs due to not having learned all the communication signals from his mother and littermates.

While puppies are still with the litter, the breeder can begin basic socialization and imprinting exercises to allow the puppies to experience various situations they will encounter later in life while in a safe environment. Exposing the pups to as many experiences as possible in a positive manner will help them be more confident, better equipped to handle stress and problem solving as an adult, and more easily trained for their future endeavors. Simple exercises like getting the pups accustomed to being handled, walking over different types of surfaces, exposure to various noises, short car rides, etc. with lots of praise and reinforcement for calm behavior will show the pups that these new experiences are nothing to fear. Allowing pups to be introduced to a variety of different looking people will also help them to become indifferent or non-fearful of anyone they may encounter. In doing these exercises, it is important that the pups remain calm and that the experience is not too stressful, as this can be just as damaging as no experience at all.

Whether or not you attend training classes with your puppy, training should begin the day you bring him home. From the beginning, reward your pup for calm, quiet behavior in the home, eliminating in the correct place, and for playing with his designated toys instead of shoes or household items. Interactive toys help greatly with chew training as they keep the pup engaged. This shows your pup the appropriate behaviors that are expected and rewards him for them rather than waiting for inappropriate behavior and correcting or redirecting it. Clicker training works well for puppies as it delivers a quick, consistent signal and that a reward is on the way. It can be used for reinforcing good behavior in the home, as well as basic to advanced training and helps promote more active learning.



Socialization is the process during which a puppy develops relationships with other living beings in its environment.



Puppy Training Basics



At what age can I start training my new puppy?

You will be training your puppy from the moment you bring it home and start to house train. Puppies start learning from birth. Good breeders encourage handling and socialization from birth. Some training can begin as soon as the puppy can open its eyes and walk. Young puppies have short attention spans but expect them to begin to learn simple obedience commands such as 'sit', 'down' and 'stay', from as young as 7 to 8 weeks of age.

Formal dog training has traditionally been delayed until 6 months of age. Actually this juvenile stage is a very poor time to start. The dog is beginning to solidify adult behavioral patterns, dominance behavior is beginning to emerge, and behaviors learned in puppyhood may need to be changed.

When training is started at 7 to 8 weeks use methods that rely on positive reinforcement and gentle teaching. Puppies have short attention spans, so training sessions should be brief, but daily. Puppies can be taught to sit, down, and stand using a method called food-lure training. We use food treats to entice the dog to follow its nose into the proper positions for sit, down, stand, and stay. Clicker training is an excellent way to begin.

How do I get started using food lure training?

Small pieces of food or a favored toy can be used to motivate your puppy to perform most tasks. Provided the reward is sufficiently appealing, the puppy can be prompted to get the desired response by showing the puppy the reward, giving a command, and moving it to get the desired response. For example, food held up over the puppy's nose and moved slowly backwards should get a sit response; food drawn down to the floor should get a down response; food brought back up should get a stand response; food held out at a distance should get a come response; and food held at your thigh as you walk should get the puppy to heel or follow. By pairing a command phrase or word with each action, and giving the reward for each appropriate response, the puppy should soon learn the meaning of each command.

How often should I give the command?

Ideally you should give the command phrase once and then use your food to move the puppy into positions. Once the puppy has performed the task, add in verbal praise and an affectionate pat which are known as secondary reinforcers (see below). Some trainers also use clickers as secondary reinforcers. If the puppy does not immediately obey on the first command, then you are likely proceeding a little too quickly. If you keep repeating the command, the puppy will learn that several repetitions are acceptable before it needs to obey. Keeping a leash attached can help to gain an immediate response if the puppy does not obey. Remember, early in training your puppy does not know the meaning of the word. Therefore you could just as easily teach your puppy to sit with the word bananas, (or sit in any other language) as you could with the word sit. The key is to associate the word, in this case "sit", with the action of placing the hind end on the floor.

How should I phase out the lure and food rewards?

At first you are going to let the puppy see the food in your hand so that you will have her attention and can use it to guide her into position. As your puppy begins to comply more readily, you can start to hide the food in your hand, but give the command and repeat the motion or signal that she has learned to follow. Soon the puppy will come to expect the treat each time she performs the task. Then, signal and give the command, but when she performs the task, reward only with praise and give the puppy an affectionate pat. Next, you can begin to vary the frequency, giving the "good dog" and perhaps patting each time, but giving the food randomly, perhaps every 3 or 4 times. In time, the puppy should respond to either the hand signal or the command.



How much time should I spend training my puppy every day?

You do not necessarily need to train in a set session daily. Rather, integrate these tasks throughout the day. A goal to strive for is at least 15 minutes of training every day. These can be short 5 minute sessions spread throughout the day. Try to have all family members ask your puppy to do these tasks. Remember to try and train in every room of your house. You want your puppy to sit, lie down and stay everywhere, not just in the training location.

Use these training tasks as you integrate the puppy into your life. For example, ask your puppy to sit prior to receiving her food, sit before you let her in or out the door, and sit before you pet her. These are times when your puppy wants something and is more likely to comply. In this way you are training your dog all the time, throughout the day and also establishing yourself as the leader, the one who controls the resources. Training your puppy prior to getting each reward also helps to prevent problems. Having your puppy sit before getting a food or treat prevents begging, while teaching your dog to sit before opening the door can prevent jumping up or running out the door. Be creative. The time you spend training your puppy now will pay off when you have an adult dog. To have a well-trained dog, you need to be committed to reinforcing the training tasks on nearly a daily basis for the first year of your puppy's life. The more you teach and supervise your puppy, the less opportunity she will have to engage in improper behaviors. Dogs do not train themselves, when left to choose their behavior they will act like dogs.

What can be done if my puppy is too distracted or excitable to control?

Training should begin in a quiet environment with few distractions. The reward chosen should be highly motivating so that the puppy is focused entirely on the trainer and the reward. Although a small food treat generally works best, a favorite toy or a special dog treat might be more appealing. It might also be helpful to train the puppy just before a scheduled mealtime when it is at its hungriest. For difficult puppies or headstrong puppies the best way to ensure that the puppy will perform the desired behavior and respond appropriately to the command is to leave a leash attached to a collar for additional control.

Should I also consider training classes?

Pet owners who are novices at training can begin a training program with these few simple steps. It takes repetition, time and perseverance for the puppy to be able to predictably and reliably respond to commands in a variety of situations. The training class serves many functions. Trainers can demonstrate techniques and help guide you through the steps in training. They can help advise you on puppy training problems, and can help you advance your training to more difficult exercises. The puppy can be learning in a group situation, with some real life distractions. And, considering human nature, the pet owner who takes his or her dog to a puppy class, will be forced to practice (do their homework) throughout the week, if they do not want to fall behind by the next class. A training class is a good place to meet and talk to other new puppy owners and see how all puppies behave.

Training classes for young puppies are also an excellent way to socialize your new puppy to a variety of people, other dogs, and stimuli, in a controlled environment. In addition, you will learn how to prevent problems before they can begin, or deal with them as they emerge, rather than having to find a way to correct problems that have already developed. Your puppy might also make some new friends of the same age. You could then visit these friends (or vice versa) with your puppy for social and exercise sessions. Since the primary socialization period for dogs ends by 3 months of age, puppy classes are most valuable for puppies 8 weeks of age and older. If all puppies in the class have had initial vaccinations, are healthy and parasite free, the health risks are low and the potential benefits are enormous. Discuss when to start and the location of classes in your area with your trainer, training and behavior specialist, and or veterinarian.





Getting Started with House Training

When you bring a new puppy into your home there will be a period of adjustment. Your goals are to help your puppy to quickly bond to its new family, and to minimize the stress associated with leaving its mother, littermates, and former home. If there are already dogs in the new home the transition may be a little easier as the puppy is able to identify with its own kind. However, most puppies, especially those obtained before 12 weeks of age, will form attachments almost immediately to the people and any other pets in the new home, provided that there are no unpleasant consequences associated with each new person and experience.

How do I prevent my puppy from doing damage or getting into mischief?

The rule of thumb for dog training is “set the dog up for success”. Supervise the puppy at all times until it has learned what it is allowed to chew, and where it is supposed to eliminate. Keeping the puppy on a 6-foot leash is an excellent way to keep it in sight, and to train it not to wander off. This is particularly helpful with a highly investigative puppy or for a very busy household. At any time that the puppy cannot be supervised, such as throughout the night or when you need to go out, house it in a secure area. An escape-proof crate, a dog run, or collapsible pen are simple, highly effective, and most important, safe. The puppy could also be confined to a room that has been carefully dog-proofed. When selecting your dog’s confinement area it is useful to consider a number of factors. The dog will adapt fastest to the new area if it is associated with rewards. Have the puppy enter the area for all its treats, toys, and perhaps food and water. The area should have some warm, dry, comfortable bedding, and should never be used for punishment (although it can, and should, be used to prevent problems). Housing the puppy in isolated areas where there is minimal human contact, such as in a laundry room or basement, should be avoided. In fact, often the best area is a kitchen (so that this can also be the dog’s feeding area) or a bedroom (so that it becomes the dog’s sleeping area). Each time the puppy needs to be confined, it should first be well exercised and given an opportunity to eliminate. Another consideration in selecting the type of confinement area is how long you may need to leave the dog alone. Anytime the puppy will be left alone for longer than it can control its elimination, you must provide an area for elimination. A room or collapsible pen with a paper-covered area would be needed. A crate could be used for owners that do not have to leave their puppies confined for longer than 2 or 3 hours.

What is the best way to punish my puppy for misbehavior?

Every effort should be made to avoid punishment for new puppies as it is generally unnecessary and can lead to avoidance of family members, at a time when bonding and attachment is critical. By preventing problems through confinement or supervision, providing for all of the puppy’s needs, and setting up the environment for success, little or no punishment should ever be required. If a reprimand is needed, a verbal “no” or a loud noise is usually sufficient to distract a puppy so that you can then redirect the puppy to the correct behavior.

How can I prevent problems?

Supervise the puppy at all times that it is not confined to ensure that the puppy does not get itself into mischief, or cause damage to itself or the home. Leaving a leash attached is all that is usually needed to prevent or interrupt inappropriate behavior such as garbage raiding, chewing on household items, house-soiling, or wandering off into rooms or areas that are out of bounds. If the leash is attached to a collar you can quickly correct other problems that might arise, such as nipping, play biting, and jumping up. When the puppy cannot be supervised, confinement (discussed above) will be necessary.

What must I do to provide for my puppy’s needs?

Chewing, play, exercise, exploration, feeding, social contact and elimination are basic requirements of all puppies. By providing appropriate outlets for each of these needs, few problems are likely to emerge. Puppies should be given chew toys that interest them and occupy their time. When supervised, the owner can allow the puppy to investigate and explore its new environment and can direct the puppy to the appropriate chew toys (and away from inappropriate areas). Play, exercise, affection, training, and handling must all be part of the daily routine. New tasks, new routines, new people and new forms of handling can be associated with rewards to ensure success. And, of course, the puppy will need to be provided with an acceptable area for elimination, and will need guidance until it learns to use this area.

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How do I house-train my puppy?

All it requires are a few basic rules to house-train puppies within a few days. This does not mean that the puppy will be able to be trusted to wander throughout the home without eliminating. What the puppy should quickly learn is where it should eliminate, and the consequences of eliminating indoors when the owner is supervising.

A. Puppies have a strong urge to eliminate after sleeping, playing, feeding and drinking. Prepare to take your puppy to its selected elimination area within 30 minutes of each of these activities. In addition, although some puppies can control themselves through the entire night, most puppies need to eliminate every 3 to 4 hours during the daytime. With each passing month, you can expect your puppy to control itself a little longer between elimination times. The puppy should be taken to its elimination area, given a word or two of verbal encouragement (e.g. "Hurry up") and as soon as elimination is completed, lavishly praised and patted. A few tasty food treats can also be given the first few times the puppy eliminates in the right spot, and then intermittently thereafter. This teaches the puppy the proper place to eliminate, and that elimination in that location is associated with rewards. Some puppies may learn to eliminate when they hear the cue words ("Hurry up"). Always go outdoors with your puppy to ensure that it has eliminated and so that rewards can be given immediately upon completion, and not when the dog comes back indoors (too late!).

B. When indoors the puppy must be supervised so that you can see when it needs to eliminate and immediately take it outdoors to its elimination area. Should pre-elimination signs (circling, squatting, sneaking-off, heading to the door) occur, immediately take the dog to its elimination site, give the cue words, and reward the puppy for elimination. If the puppy begins to eliminate indoors, use a verbal reprimand or shake can, and immediately take the puppy outdoors to its proper site, so that it can complete the act. Rather than using punishment, it is best to always supervise your puppy. One of the best techniques is to leave a leash attached.

C. When you are not available to supervise, the puppy should be confined to its confinement area. Be certain that your puppy has had a chance to eliminate, and has had sufficient play and exercise before any lengthy confinement. If the area is small enough, such as a pen or crate, many puppies will have sufficient control to keep this area clean. This means that when you come to release the puppy from confinement, it must be taken directly to its elimination area. If the area is too large for the puppy to keep clean, or the puppy is left alone too long for it to control itself, the entire area, except for the puppy's bed and feeding spot, should be covered with paper for elimination. Once the puppy starts to limit its elimination to some selected areas, unused areas of the paper can be taken up. For owners that intend to continue to use paper for training, even when home, the puppy should be supervised when released from confinement, and then returned to this area when pre-elimination signs are seen. Paper training teaches the puppy to eliminate on paper. Taking the puppy outside to eliminate teaches eliminating outside.

Why does my puppy refuse to eliminate in my presence, even when outdoors?

Puppies that are not supervised and rewarded for outdoor elimination, but are constantly being disciplined and punished for indoor elimination, may soon begin to fear to eliminate in all locations in your presence. These puppies do not associate the punishment with indoor elimination; they associate the punishment with the presence of the owners. This typically occurs because the owner finds an elimination some time after the act of eliminating occurred and punishes the puppy. The puppy does not associate the act of eliminating with being punished because too much time has passed.

What do I do if I find some stool or urine in an inappropriate spot?

There is no point in punishing or even pointing out the problem to the puppy. Only if the puppy is in the act of elimination will it understand the consequences (rewards or punishment). In fact, it is not the puppy who has erred, it is the owner who has erred by not properly supervising.

How can I teach my puppy to signal that it needs to go out to eliminate?

By regularly taking the dog outdoors, through the same door, to the same site, and providing rewards for proper elimination, the puppy should soon learn to head for the door each time it has to eliminate. If you recognize the signs of impending elimination and praise the puppy whenever it heads for the doorway, the behavior can be further encouraged. Puppies that have been interrupted or reprimanded on one or more occasions as they begin to eliminate indoors, may begin to try to sneak away, whine or show some form of anxiety, when they feel the urge to eliminate, but cannot escape from the owner's sight. If you can pick up on these cues, and take the puppy directly to the outdoors for elimination and reward, the puppy may consistently begin to show these signals when he or she needs to eliminate, and may even begin to take you to the exit door.



Confinement and Crate Training

Why do dogs need to be confined?

Dogs are highly social animals that make wonderful pets. They can be effective as watchdogs, are excellent companions for play and exercise, and are sources of affection and comfort. However, with the lifestyle and schedule of the majority of families, dogs must learn to spend a portion of the day at home, while their human family is away at school, work, shopping or recreational activities. During those times when you are away and unavailable to supervise, the pet may still feel the need to chew, play, explore, eat, or eliminate.

How can this misbehavior be prevented?

Preventing such inappropriate behaviors when you are absent involves both scheduling and prevention. Scheduling means insuring that the pet has had the opportunity to play, eat, and eliminate before you leave it in its confinement area or crate. Prevention involves keeping the pet in a confined area where it is secure, safe, and can do no damage to itself or your possessions.

What are my options for confinement?

Depending on the structure of your home, it may be possible to dog-proof the house by closing a few doors, or putting up some child gates or barricades. The dog can then be allowed access to the remaining areas of the house. If this dog-proofing is not possible when you have to leave, confine the dog to a single room, pen, or crate. This smaller confinement area not only provides safety for the dog and protection of the home from damage, but also provides a means of teaching the dog what it is supposed to chew, and where it is supposed to eliminate.

Isn't crate training cruel?

Crate training is neither cruel nor unfair. On the contrary, leaving the dog unsupervised to wander, investigate, destroy, and perhaps injure itself is far more inhumane than confinement. Ensure that the crate is large enough and that the dog has an opportunity to eliminate before it's confined and that you return before the dog needs to urinate or defecate. Make sure that the dog gets sufficient food, play, exercise and attention before it is confined.

What are the benefits of crate training?

The two most important benefits are the safety it affords the pet, and the damage that is prevented. The cage also provides a place of security, like a den; a comfortable retreat where the dog can relax, sleep, or chew on a favorite toy. By confining the pet to a crate or room, when the owner is not available to supervise, behavior problems can be immediately prevented. When you are at home, supervision and rewards can be used to prevent undesirable behavior, and to teach the dog where to eliminate, what to chew, and what rooms and areas are "out of bounds".

Will crate confinement help with house-training?

Yes. Crate training is one of the quickest and most effective ways to house-train a dog. Since most dogs instinctively avoid eliminating in their sleeping and eating areas, dogs that use their crate as a bed or "den" will seldom eliminate inside unless they have been left in the crate for too long. Crate training can also help teach the dog to develop control over its elimination. As soon as your dog is released from its crate, take it to the designated area and reward elimination at acceptable locations. Since the crate prevents chewing, digging, and elimination on the owner's home and property, owners of crate trained puppies have fewer behavior concerns, the puppy receives far less discipline and punishment, and the overall relationship between pet and owner can be dramatically improved.

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What type of crate or confinement area works best?

Plastic crates are preferred, as they are more den-like. Alternately, a metal, collapsible crate with a tray floor works well, as long as the crate is large enough for the dog to stand, turn, and stretch out. Some dogs feel more secure if a blanket is draped over the wire crate. Playpens or barricades may also be successful as long as they are indestructible and escape proof.

Where should the crate be located?

Because dogs are social animals, an ideal location for the crate is a room where the family spends time such as a kitchen, den, or bedroom rather than an isolated laundry or furnace room.

How can crating or confinement become a positive experience?

Most dogs quickly choose a small area, such as a corner of a room, in a dog bed, or on or under a couch, where they go to relax. The key to making the crate the dog's favorite retreat and sleeping area, is to associate the crate with as many positive and relaxing experiences and stimuli as possible (food, treats, chew toys, bedding) and to place the dog in its crate only at scheduled rest and sleep periods. You must therefore be aware of the dog's schedule, including its needs for exploration, play, food, and elimination, so that the dog is only placed in its crate, when each of these needs is fulfilled. You must then return to the dog to release it from its crate before the next exercise, feeding or elimination period is due.

A radio or television playing in the background may help to calm the dog when it is alone in its crate, especially during the daytime. These may also help to mask environmental noises, which can stimulate the dog to vocalize.

The crate should never be used as punishment.

How do I crate-train my new puppy?

- 1) Introduce the puppy to the crate as soon as it is brought home and as early in the day as possible. Place a variety of treats in the crate throughout the day so that the puppy is encouraged to enter voluntarily. Food, water, toys and bedding could also be offered to the puppy in the open crate.
- 2) Choose a location outdoors for the puppy to eliminate. Take the puppy to the location, wait until the puppy eliminates, and reward the puppy lavishly with praise. After some additional play and exercise, place the puppy in its crate with water, a toy and a treat and close the door.
- 3) If the puppy is tired and calm, it may take a "nap" shortly after being placed in its crate.
- 4) Leave the room but remain close enough to hear the puppy. Escape behavior and vocalization are to be expected when a dog is first placed into its crate. If the "complaints" are short or mild, ignore the dog until the crying stops. Never release the puppy unless it is quiet. This teaches that quiet behavior, and not crying will be rewarded. Release the puppy after a few minutes of quiet or a short nap.
- 5) Punishment may be useful to deter crying if it does not subside on its own. A shaker can (a sealed can filled with coins or marbles) can be tossed at the crate when the pup barks. Other methods include water sprayers or alarms (audible or ultrasonic). The owner should remain out of sight. By plugging in an alarm, tape recorder, water pik, or hair dryer beside the crate and turning it on with a remote control switch each time the dog barks, the dog can be taught that barking leads to punishment whether the owner is present or not. When the barking ceases, the punishment is stopped. Bark collars and alarms or water sprayers that are activated by the barking are also available for persistent problems.
- 6) Repeat the crate and release procedure a few more times during the day before bedtime. Place the puppy in its crate a few times before the end of the day. Each time, increase the time that the dog must stay in the crate before letting it out. Always give the puppy exercise and a chance to eliminate before locking it in the crate.
- 7) At bedtime, the dog should be exercised, locked in its crate, and left for the night. Do not go to the dog if it cries. Remote punishment can be used to deter crying. Alternately, the crate can be kept in the bedroom.
- 8) If the pup sleeps in one end of its crate and eliminates in the other, a divider can be installed to keep the puppy in a smaller area.
- 9) Never leave the puppy in its crate for longer than it can control itself or it may be forced to eliminate in the crate.
- 10) If the pup must be left for long periods during which it might eliminate, it should be confined to a larger area such as a dog-proof room or pen, with paper left down for elimination. If you don't want to use paper, Purina makes a puppy litter. As the puppy gets older, its control increases and it can be left longer in its crate.

11) Although there is a great deal of individual variability, many puppies can control themselves through the night by 3 months of age. During the daytime, once the puppy has relieved itself, a 2-month old puppy may have up to 3

Play Biting and Mouthing in Puppies



**Remember
that play
biting is a
component of
play behavior
in puppies**

Why is my puppy nipping and biting family members?

Although often thought to be a teething behavior, nipping, mouthing and biting in young dogs is generally a form of social play. Teething is more likely to involve gnawing or chewing on household objects. The first thing you must do is provide ample opportunity for play, without biting. Social play with people could involve chase and retrieve games, as well as long walks or jogging. Although wrestling and tug of war games can be fun, they may lead to play that is too rough or rambunctious. Puppies need to learn bite inhibition. This is something they start to learn while with their littermates. It is one reason that puppies should not go to new homes until 7 - 8 weeks and they have had time to practice social skills with other dogs. It can therefore be extremely beneficial for the puppy to have regular interactive social play periods with other dogs or puppies in the home or in the neighborhood.

How can I stop play biting?

Provided the dog is receiving adequate play, attention and exercise, you can turn the training to bite inhibition. One of the things that they need to learn is how much pressure from their jaws causes pain. Without this feedback, a puppy does not learn to inhibit the force of its bite. Because **all** dogs can and will bite at some time, this lesson is vital for human safety. How is this lesson taught? When puppies play with each other, if puppy A bites on puppy B too hard, puppy B will yelp. If that does not work, puppy B will leave. This sends the message to puppy A that its' bites were too hard and if it wishes to continue to play, it needs to be gentle. However, people often **do not** send this message to their puppy. In the beginning, they often allow the puppy to chew on them without reprimands and the puppy assumes that the behavior is acceptable. Instead, the message people should send is that mouthing and chewing on hands is painful. To do this, often all that is necessary is for **all** family members to emit a sharp "yip" and cease all play and attention immediately. This sends the message to the puppy that the bites are painful and that biting will cause play to be terminated. When consistently administered this will often stop playful biting. This training often works for those family members that are a little more forceful and assertive and who are immediate and consistent in their training. If the puppy persists, chases or immediately repeats the behavior, closing a door and walking out of the room can help to teach the puppy that nipping leads to immediate inattention.

What if yelping does not help?

Other techniques are often suggested for play biting. Some involve discipline, like holding the mouth closed, pressure on the tongue, and more. Remember, sometimes pain can cause aggression and cause the puppy to become anxious, fearful or perhaps more excited. These techniques also require that you grab an excited puppy; not an easy thing to do. Some puppies may even misinterpret the owner's attempts at punishment as rough play, which in turn might lead to an increase in the behavior. Owners who cannot inhibit the puppy with a yelp, could consider a shake can, electronic alarm, air horn, or ultrasonic device, as soon as the biting becomes excessive. The use of a leash and collar allows the puppy to play and chew, but a quick pop on the leash can immediately and successfully stop biting. By simultaneously saying "no biting", most puppies will quickly learn the meaning of the command. As soon as the puppy stops and calms down, the owner can allow play to resume, as long as biting does not begin again.

Remember that play biting is a component of play behavior in puppies. Play is a form of social interaction. Realize that your puppy is trying to play with you even though the behavior is rough. To ensure that you are in control, be certain that each play session is initiated by you and not the puppy, and that you can end each session whenever you choose. One effective strategy when the play gets too rough is to immediately end the play session and leave. Social withdrawal can be a very powerful tool. Leave the puppy alone long enough to calm down. If upon your return the wild playing begins again, leave again. Although it is tempting to pick the puppy up and take it out of the room, this interaction may be interpreted by your puppy as additional play and the biting may continue as you carry the puppy to a confinement location.

Notes:

***Group
Classes are a
great way to
work on
building a
bond with
your puppy!***

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