

NUTRITION

Give your puppy the best quality food you can afford. Puppy food, not adult food should be used for at least 12 months. This period can be longer for some breeds (usually large or giant breeds).



Consult your breeder or breed club for advice.

Avoid food or treats from overseas. Food treatment to allow items to pass Australian quarantine can use sprays and chemicals. Be aware "pet quality" meat is not subject to food quality regulations and can be sourced from abattoirs that process sick, old or diseased animals.

Any changes to the puppy's diet should be done gradually so as to avoid tummy upsets (diarrhea).

Cooked bones are very dangerous and should never be given to puppies and dogs. Raw bones should be appropriate to the size of the dog.

GROOMING

The amount of grooming your puppy needs will very much depend on the breed he is. We generally associate grooming with hair only, but some breeds will need further attention to other areas. For some breeds occasional brushing by the owner is fine, others may need the services of a professional groomer on a regular basis. Dogs that primarily live outdoors tend to shed less hair. Some short haired breeds, such as the Labrador can shed a surprising amount of hair. Poodles, and (most) "Oodles" don't shed, but will need regular clipping to keep a tidy appearance. There are many brushes and combs available. Consult your breeder or breed club for the most appropriate one for your dog's coat type.



If your dog requires professional grooming, make sure to desensitize him early to items he may encounter in the salon such as blow dryers, scissors and electric shavers. Your groomer will thank you for it. Handle the dogs feet and nails regularly so make sure he doesn't object when it's time for a trim.

Practice restraining your puppy in a variety of different positions. Your vet and groomer will thank you for it. Remember not to turn it into a wrestling match. Praise good calm behavior with yummy treats. If the puppy is becoming agitated or aggressive, keep the sessions short. Children should be well supervised during this type of training.

RULES FOR RECALL (COME)

Every time you call your puppy, he must realize that coming to you is always a good thing. Never call the puppy if you don't intend to follow it up, he will just learn to ignore you.



Perhaps even more important, is to never call the puppy then punish it. If you need to do so, go fetch the pup. Coming when called should always be safe. When you go to the park, practice calling him in, and then let him go play again multiple times. Dogs that are only called when leaving the park will learn to avoid you as the only time you call them immediately precedes the end of play.

When first training your puppy to come in an unfamiliar or unfenced area, use a long line for safety. You may be able to outrun your puppy now, but this will not be the case for much longer. Taking the puppy off leash in the street will not only invite a hefty council fine, but runs the risk of having your puppy distracted by a dog or cat across the road which may have very bad consequences should he decide to run. Always train the recall in partnership with a good solid STAY.

DOG PARK SAFETY

Staying safe at the dog park requires vigilance and a good understanding of canine body language. Basically, loose wiggly movement is good, a dog who is stiff or shows teeth or hackles is one to avoid. Fights can occur very quickly without much warning. Dogs who are "making a display" with lots of noise and spittle are the most common. There are of course those that mean business and the consequences of meeting them can be dire. Beware of owners who say their dog just wants to play as roughhousing from a large breed can be just as physically damaging to a small breed as an aggressive attack. Teach your dog manners, as the "Tarzan" approach (running full on into a dog or person and body slamming them) annoys both people and adult dogs. A good approach is to hold off visiting the dog park until your dog has learnt to obey you, has a solid recall and is ideally de-sexed. Socialize him with dogs at a good Obedience dog school before tackling the "wild west show" that is the dog park.

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Baby Puppy Training Tips



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Start off on the right paw...then do more!

SOCIALISATION WITH PEOPLE

The puppy must be happy to be around people. The best time for this starts the day you get your baby puppy home. The timing of this is critical as by 13 weeks of age, your puppy has already formed the basis of the attitude he will have towards people for the rest of his life. A dog that is afraid or aggressive towards people has limited options for a full life. If he is a larger breed this is even more the case.



Your puppy cannot meet enough strangers during this early period, and the meetings must be pleasant.

Introduce your puppy to strangers both in and out of your home using part of his food allocation, along with some yummy treats for use with people outside your family's demographic. For example, if there are no children in the family, seek out children of people you know or attend sporting events where children are present. Do not let children hold the puppy on their own as puppies can be easily injured at this age if dropped.

You should aim for 100 new people a week to meet your puppy over the imprint period to 13 weeks old.

HOUSETRAINING

The puppy's early experiences will affect how difficult it will be to houstrain (toilet train) him. If you are very lucky the breeder will have commenced the process for you. A puppy that has been brought up with littermates and mother will instinctively move away from the nest to defecate or urinate. A puppy that has spent a time in confinement, such as a pet shop window, will not have been able to do this and will unlearn the habit of moving away from its bedding to do its business. Assuming the puppy still has the instinct to move away, confine the puppy to a smallish area that has bed, water, toy and toilet. The toilet should be as far as possible within the area from the bed. Always use this confinement system when you are not physically (or mentally) interacting with the puppy. A puppy who has free range of large areas in the home will take a very long time to



houstrain due to the access it has to "incorrect" areas, such as under the dining room table etc. Remember, a puppy does not know the rules and praising him for getting it right will expedite progress much more than constantly punishing him for getting it wrong. Make sure to clean up any mistakes with a good enzyme cleaner rather than plain water as he will be attracted by the smell to return to the same spot. There is NO POINT punishing a puppy after the event as he will have no idea why you are angry. I often hear owners say, "He knows he's done wrong" – guess what, he doesn't! He just knows you are angry and is reacting to your body language and tone. Next time he may sneak away and eliminate in a more private place, such as behind the lounge!

Allow one hour of "holding capacity" for every month in age. He will also need to go after a sleep, a feed or rowdy play. Predicting this need and taking him out to the appropriate place, then rewarding him for success with food treats will ensure your puppy is houstrained in no time, and can have more freedom to free range in the home.

BITING

Biting is natural and is something the average puppy will practice quite a lot. Think of this as an opportunity to give the puppy feedback that biting human skin is not ok and let him know every time you feel his teeth on your skin. A puppy that does not bite much should be encouraged to do so in play to get this feedback in. An adult dog with no bite inhibition is a dangerous animal, whatever the breed.



DESENSITATION

Getting your puppy used to various sights and sounds that are present in the world he lives in will help him greatly when he becomes an adult. Phobias and anxieties are expensive and time consuming to treat in the adult dog so early pleasant exposure to as many different things as possible is highly recommended. Remember, forcing a puppy into situations where he is frightened, will detrimentally affect his coping skills as an adult. Be gentle, and positive when introducing new things.



CANINE ADOLESCENT SEXUALITY

Dog adolescence begins at approximately 5 months. This can be a frustrating time for both owners and puppies. Hormones will begin to affect your puppy with some undesirable consequences. Males who are entire will often have their first fight between 5 and 7 months old when visiting the dog park. If they are not confined they will roam in search of a mate and can get lost or killed on the road. Once the male starts lifting his leg to pee, rest assured, his hormones have kicked in and his puppy "permit" has now expired. Other adult males will see him as a rival and often react aggressively, and he is often ill-equipped to deal with them physically and socially.



Females will come into a period known as "heat" and can get pregnant as early as 6 months old. A female that whelps this young will be at great risk of complications including death and the puppies will likely not survive. The fertility period lasts a week or more and she must be isolated from entire male dogs at this time. This cycle will repeat every 6 months or so for her entire life. Around 5 months is a good time to neuter (males) or spay (females) if you have not already done so. Aside from a reduced risk of testicular or mammary cancers, your dog will avoid many undesirable personality quirks such as house marking, humping, fighting and unwanted pregnancy. Temporary sterilization is also available, ask your vet for more information.

THE NAME GAME

In the first few weeks, use your puppy's name a lot. Remember to use it coupled with an adjective. For example, rather than calling "Pepper, Pepper, Pepper" use "Pepper Come" or "Pepper Sit" or whatever command you are seeking.

Remember, he does not know the rules of your household, nor will he, without constant repetition from you in a kind educational manner. The training you put into these early weeks, will form the obedient, happy dog you will enjoy owning for a very long time in the future.