



FEATURE

What to Do With Your Puppy.....



Expert Dog Training Advice

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As pet parents, we've all dealt with the task of teaching our dogs to help them adapt to our ways of living. It can be a time-consuming task to take on your own, especially if you're not an expert. That's why we've gathered a group of professional dog trainers to help you with the most common questions new pet parents have, from potty training to puppy nutrition. Read on for their expert advice:

On average, how long does it take to train a puppy?

That would depend on the breed of puppy, its temperament and what you plan to do with the puppy. Large-breed, active dogs might need training for the first few years of life. Most young dogs need plenty of exercise. Active dogs love having a job. Continued training keeps the dogs sharp and interested. I think of training as more of a lifestyle than something that ends.

Some dogs are very smart, active, and will take charge if the owner does not, so most dogs should be trained from 3 weeks old on. – *Deer Creek Animal Hospital* ¹.

How long does it take to potty train a puppy?

It depends on your puppy and you. How dedicated are you to being with your puppy round the clock? What is your strategy? With a solid crate training and watching regimen, you have the greatest chance of success. If you two are working together consistently and staying in a relatively confined space, your likelihood of efficient, successful training increases. In a crate, a dog can hold its bladder and bowels for its age in months + one (so, if your dog is three months old, it will likely, if well trained, be able to "make it" for four hours). With dedication and patience, the average puppy will likely be trained in 7-10 months. – *Philly Unleashed* ².

What's the easiest way to crate train a puppy?

Crate training can do a lot to teach young puppies their boundaries. It's an essential part of housebreaking and taps into a canine's instincts. Dogs prefer to have cosy "safe spaces" that they can retreat to when things get stressful. Because no animal wants to turn their relaxation spot into a den of filth, they will do their best to avoid accidents and destructive behaviour.

The key to proper crate training is to make it as comfortable and inviting as possible. Get creative and go all out! Add a nice bed, some cosy blankets, and fun toys. Anything that entices your dog to get inside is a big plus.

After gently introducing your pup, coax them in with some treats and positive language. Let them investigate on their own and encourage them to climb in when they see fit. You don't want to force anything or dive head-first into hours of confinement. Build up to it!

Let your puppy spend some time in there with the door wide open. Then, try providing some meals and play toys with the door closed. Start with small 10-minute sessions alone before gradually increasing their crate time. Before long, your puppy should have no problem staying in a crate for several hours while you're away.

The most important part of crate training is to keep it positive! Don't turn the crate into a punishment zone, otherwise, your canine companion will never want to get in! Keep things light and introduce some verbal commands as they meander inside. You want to use positive reinforcement to ensure that your puppy feels good about entering and staying. – *Daily Dog Stuff* ³.



Does having another trained dog at home help training a puppy?

So as long as your older dog has been well trained and has a solid bond with you, it can make training a puppy that much easier. Dogs are pack animals that instinctively pick up behaviours from other dogs in their pack, so a new puppy will learn a lot from the actions of your older dog. In this sense though, it can help to assess the current behaviours of your older dog thoroughly and address any necessary changes ahead of time. Just like older siblings teach younger children both good and bad habits, so too can dogs.

As well as the puppy naturally observing and mimicking your older dog in general, you can also proactively use your already trained dog to demonstrate behaviours and responses that you wish to teach your pup. When they see another dog being rewarded for positive behaviours, it can only increase their desire to follow suit.

It is also helpful to consider picking complementary breeds though. Matching a tiny, snappy dog with a large rambunctious dog and expecting harmony is a tall order, and whilst they may form a firm friendship, in the end, the likelihood of injury is high. It also typically helps to go for the opposite sex when bringing a new puppy into the mix. That said, your new dog will have its own personality and unique temperament, so it's important not to expect to identically clone the responses of your older dog into the new addition. Give them time and consistent teaching and otherwise let them be themselves! – *Our Fit Pets* ⁴.

How should you house train a puppy?

Clever humans house train puppies remembering that they are dogs, and they are babies. House training is a human requirement, and not a dog's natural behaviour. A new puppy needs help knowing where is "good to go" and where isn't! So, we decide on their toilet place, use positive reinforcement and give them plenty of opportunities to visit that designated toilet area, wait with them whilst they go in the right place then party with them (including great snacks) when they do. Every two hours, plus after sleeping, drinking, playing, and eating are all good times to take them out – if they toilet indoors YOU are getting it wrong and you need to be better! Clever humans don't punish puppies, after all, we were in nappies for ages before we learned and if we consider that, even the slowest learning puppy is way quicker than we were. – *Canine Principles* ⁵.



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Best age to start leash training a puppy?

The first thing to know about leash training a puppy is patience. You may be asking yourself how soon you can leash train your puppy. I'm a dog trainer, not a veterinarian so be sure to run health questions by your vet. From my experience, you can train an 8-week old puppy about the leash, but you must start off with the proper first step - this is crucial. This is because most puppies will protest the new and strange feeling of the collar on their neck. To make it no biggie to the pup you need to teach leash pressure. This simply means conditioning the puppy that when it feels slight pressure to go with it, not against it. If this foundational training isn't done you will get a puppy that puts the brakes on when it walks, alligator rolls at the end of the leash, or hops up and down. Most new puppy owners stop the leash pressure drill once the pup protests, but this is where the patience comes in. Relax, take a deep breath, bend down, sound inviting to the pup and give a treat once the dog comes towards you.

- *World of Dog Training* ⁶.



What different kinds of training are there for puppies?

There are a few different kinds of training you'll want to do with your new puppy. The first, and by far the most important, is socialising! Puppies' brains are like sponges and they are learning all about their world. They are learning what is safe and what is unsafe. To ensure that our puppies grow up to be confident and joyful adults, we want our puppies to learn that people of all shapes and sizes are good news. Expose your puppy carefully, and with a lot of food rewards, to as many people as you can. You'll also want your pup to learn that the sounds and sights of their new home and city are safe and predict threats.

You'll also need to house train your puppy. Take them outside every few hours to start, giving them time to go. When they do, reward them with a nice treat to say "thanks for making the right call!". When you're inside, have your puppy either under your direct supervision, or contained in a puppy-proof space to prevent inside messes.

And finally, you'll want your puppy to start to develop good chew-toy habits. Prevent access to anything that isn't a chew toy, using either supervision or a puppy-proof pen in your home, and give them a nice supply of different chew toys to experiment with. Once you see what your pup likes, stock up! We want to develop good, strong chew toy habits before we start allowing our puppies more access to our homes. - *Kristi Benson Dog Training* ⁷.

When is the best time to start potty training?

Puppies younger than 12 weeks don't have good control over their bladder and bowels. In fact, for the first few weeks, the mother licks her puppies to stimulate them to go to the bathroom. However, once your puppy is between 12 -16 weeks, they're ready for housetraining, and you should start as soon as possible. Allowing puppies to become comfortable with eliminating in a cage/ house will make potty training challenging. - *Dog Vills* ⁸.

How to train a puppy not to bite?

Puppies bite for many reasons. One is too much pent-up energy. Puppies need lots of exercise. Make sure your puppy gets the proper amount of physical and mental exercise. - *Tether Tug* ⁹.

Does the breed of a puppy affect training?

If you had to look at dog breeds and their effect on training, on the whole, the simple answer would be no. Puppy training methods have been crafted for dogs in general, regardless of size, breed, or temperament. However, with that being said, different breeds have varying tendencies, which make some dogs easier to train than others, so it's important to keep this in mind. - *The Door Buddy* ¹⁰.



What is the first thing you should train your puppy on?

So it's day 1: it's just you and your puppy's first day in your home. The first thing you should teach your pup is all good things come from his new human family members! These good things are food and praise! So make sure you feed them from your hands and not the bowl! Make sure you show them love in your tone of voice, pleasant petting, and touching! Now you're off to a great start! - *USK9*¹¹.



How do I prepare my house for a puppy?

Puppy proof your house by removing all tempting chew objects such as wires, shoes and paper objects from reachable areas, as well as any dangerous objects, such as glass or metal. Also, having an appropriate sized kennel/crate can provide a great foundation for potty training, preventing bad behaviours and providing a comfortable safe place for your puppy to relax and stay under control. Start good habits early! - *KC Dawgz*¹².

How can I train a blind dog?

A blind dog is very trainable. There are definitely more challenges when senses are impaired but a blind dog's smell and hearing are going to be key to training. Dogs need consistency and repetition to understand.

I personally would use treats or a clicker for reward, voice commands (very clear simple words), and physical touch to show him/her the desired action until the dog understands the commands you are training. I would always use a leash when in public. - *Pheasant Bonanza*¹³.

How to potty train a puppy when you work full time?

When I'm home and available, I set my timer and I take my dog to the correct potty spot on a regular schedule to ensure that she is in the right place when the need presents itself. I want to be present for as close to 100% as possible of all potties that occur, so that I can praise and reward my dog for going in the right place. This way she will learn that it's safe and rewarding to potty in front of me and won't feel a need to sneak off and go in my closet when I'm not looking.

If you work out of the house all day and can't be home every few hours to take your pup potty, there are options. One option is to hire a dog walker who can stop by 2-3 times per day to take your dog for a brief potty walk. Maybe a retired neighbour would be interested in walking your pup mid-day.

Doggie daycares are great options for many dogs, especially those who are naturally social and enjoy spending time with other dogs. If these options aren't available to you, or at least not options for every day, then this is my favourite solution. It includes creating a space in the house that provides the dog a safe space to rest and play, have access to water and toys, and also an acceptable area on which the dog can potty without undermining the overall potty training process. Easy, right?



After a week or so, you'll find that your dog chooses an area far from the bed as their go-to potty spot in this confined area. After a week or so, you can make a little space (about 150mm) between the bed and the nearest potty pad, so now there are about 150mm of the floor exposed. Every few days as the dog shows consistency, you can expose a little more floor between the bed and the potty pads until you're down to just 2 pads at the far side of the ex-pen. - *The Academy of Pet Careers*¹⁴.



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How can I train a deaf dog?

First and foremost, recognise that your deaf puppy or dog is a very capable learner. The obvious difference is that you have to get your dog's attention, i.e., get them to look at you in other ways as you cannot just throw your voice around.

With that in mind, as with hearing abled dogs, teaching basic obedience such as sit, down, stand, stay and come with visual cues (aka, hand signals) is a good place to start. With your awareness of what your dog is willing to work for and an understanding and use of non-confrontational body language, training your deaf dog flows from there! - *The Cooperative Dog* ¹⁵.

How do I prepare my house for a puppy?

Surprisingly, it is not difficult to train dogs with disabilities. Dogs are excellent at adapting to situations and appear not to be bothered by their disabilities.

The difficulty arises in being able to "think outside the box" about how to train these dogs. A blind dog still has its sense of smell and sound as well as touch. You can use traditional training methods to teach commands, but using unique aromas can work to help this dog with its environment. By placing a few drops of essence, you can "show" the dog the difference between the front door and back door, what rooms it can and cannot go into, as well as where its toys are - all can improve the dog's life.

Very seldom are blind dogs taught to be off-leash, since they have a diminished reaction time. A deaf dog can learn hand signals for commands and feel you stomp on the floor to get its attention. I have found it much easier to train deaf dogs since they seldom react to distractions around them, allowing them to concentrate more on training than on their environment.

Many times deaf dogs are trained using a stimulation collar and a morse code type signal for commands, including recall. Here again, these dogs should not be allowed outside independently due to reaction time to dangerous situations.

Knowing what the dog's disabilities are will determine what training method to use to teach them. Then modifying how you go about training them provides them with a communication line toward achieving the results wanted. - *Laura Pakis, Certified Professional Dog Trainer and Cynologist at Acme Canine* ¹⁶.

How much water should a puppy drink during potty training?

A puppy should drink the same amount of water during potty training as during any other time in their life; however much they want.

Puppies, like all life forms, need water to survive and be healthy and they are very good at knowing how much water they need to drink. However, if you are using a crate to potty train your pup, which is by far the easiest way, then you should keep track of how much water your pup drinks and when, as well as how much your pup pees and when. If your pup drinks a great deal of water right before they go into their crate, and it's been some time since your pup has gone pee, they will need a trip to their potty sooner than if they haven't had much water lately or recently went pee. - *Dunbar Academy* ¹⁷.

What breeds are better to train for elderly people?

When finding the best fit for an older client, we take many things into consideration. A calmer German Shepherd can be an excellent companion, along with Golden Retrievers, Labradors, Standard Poodles, just to name a few. - *Taylor Made Working Dogs* ¹⁸.

Is every breed capable of training to be around small children, or are some better than others?

There are many stereotypes when it comes to breeds in general. Many of these stereotypes do not apply to the individual dog's personality and temperament. The considerations that may apply to breed are the size of the dog when fully grown and the typical energy level of that breed. What was that dog bred to do? There are some things we cannot/should not expect to change when it comes to genetics: For example, herding dogs are likely to herd the children. There are many breeds to consider in a home with children.





All dogs are capable of training but some breeds are more likely to do well. Within those breeds, each dog should be considered as an individual. I caution parents when choosing a dog based on breed alone. - *Animal Manners* ¹⁹.

• **Please note that all puppy/dog owners should be reminded never to leave their puppy and/or dog alone and unattended (no matter what breed) with very young children.**

Is it better to set a specific time to train my dog or does any moment of the day work?

No specific time is necessary. It can be at any moment of the day or broken up throughout the day. Short and fun sessions are the best! It is best to incorporate behaviours learned into everyday life to get your dog to generalise the behaviours. - *PetSuites of America* ²⁰.

Is it better to train a puppy alone or with other dogs?

The best environment in which to train your puppy depends a lot on his or her temperament. Group classes can be a valuable piece of your pup's socialisation process but how much actual training can you expect to be done? Very shy puppies often get overwhelmed and can go into shut-down mode, while overly gregarious and rambunctious types may become over-excited and have difficulty controlling their impulses. Training your puppy individually has the advantage of allowing her to work in an environment without too many distractions that could sabotage your results and cause both of you to feel frustrated. You also get the added benefit of the trainer's undivided attention.

Which ever route you choose it's very important to know that behaviourists and modern trainers believe that proper socialisation (meaning appropriate for your puppy's personality – one size does not fit all) and establishing a relationship based on trust and love (as opposed to force and dominance) are the top priorities for very young puppies between the ages of 8-16 weeks to reach their potential, as well-adjusted adult dogs. Of course, we want to teach them basic obedience commands but always remember that there's a reason it's called puppy kindergarten and not puppy college. - *The Trained Canine* ²¹.

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