

Housetraining

The following are the keys to successfully housetraining your puppy:

- Manage your puppy's environment.
- Keep the puppy on a feeding schedule.
- Pick up any food the puppy does not consume after 15 minutes.
- Always reward the correct behavior (eliminating) when and where it happens.
- Always be consistent.

Basic Rules for Housetraining

Introduce a cue (word or words) to him when taking him to the designated elimination area, especially if the puppy is being trained to go outside.

Do not take the puppy for a walk to eliminate. Instead, take him to a designated place to eliminate and give him about six feet of leash to walk around while you are standing somewhat still. Once he has done his business, mark the elimination that has occurred in the proper area and reward him with a treat or take him for a walk as a reward. If you take the puppy for a walk to eliminate, the puppy can easily become distracted with all the different smells and sounds, and he may wait until he comes back inside the house to eliminate.

The other reason a walk is not recommended for elimination is because puppies quickly learn that once they eliminate the walk is over. They will learn to hold it as long as possible so the walk does not end. As the puppy's ability to hold it grows, walks will take longer and longer while waiting for the puppy to eliminate. There will be times when you do not have the time to continue the walk, you will come back inside the house, and he will eliminate on the floor.

Bring a treat with you when you take him outside to eliminate. Offering special treats just for proper elimination can make the training easier. The only time your puppy gets this really great treat is when he eliminates in the designated area. The second he is done with his business, mark the elimination with a word like "yes" or use a click from a clicker, then reward the behavior with the treat. After rewarding the initial elimination, stand still and wait if you think the puppy needs to eliminate again. Once he is finished eliminating the second or third time, mark and reward the proper elimination each time he eliminates. However, do not get too excited when marking the elimination behavior or you might distract him. A verbal "Yes, good boy" in a soft voice will suffice. Avoid giving him the treat inside when he returns from outside. The puppy will want to return inside too quickly to get his treat. He will relate the treat to coming back into the house and not the elimination he just did. Then, instead of completely finishing all his business outside, he will want to go back inside to get his treat.

Manage Your Puppy's Environment

You must constantly watch your puppy when he is not confined to a room, space, or crate. Accidents happen when you try to watch the puppy and cook, watch TV, do homework, or talk on the phone. Young puppies require

constant supervision to understand what is expected of them with their new families and to learn what the rules are.

When you are distracted, you may miss your puppy's warning signals that tell you he is looking for a place to eliminate. Some puppies will sniff the ground, others will circle, some will raise their tails higher than normal, some will sit by the door leading outside, and others will walk quickly and suddenly squat. Every puppy has his or her own style and signals. It is your job to learn your puppy's signals.

When accidents occur—and they will—do not scold your puppy. This is very important! Scolding will cause many puppies to hide when relieving themselves so they do not get in trouble. This is why many new puppy parents end up finding surprises behind the couch or under tables. Elimination mistakes are usually the result of the puppy not being properly supervised. Paying close attention to him when he is not confined to his space will help prevent accidents from happening in the first place.

When an accident is in progress, make a short sound such as clapping your hands together to distract your puppy. Quickly scoop him up, if physically possible, and take him to the proper elimination area either outside or a wee-wee pad inside to finish his business.

Stay with him until he is finished, and remember to mark and reward him with a treat or walk for eliminating in the designated area. Clean the accident area with a product that will eliminate the odor completely. Do not use any products that contain ammonia, however. They only encourage future eliminations in the same place. Use products that are made specifically for this purpose.

Remember to put your puppy in his crate or confined area when you cannot manage his environment. Most puppies want to keep their sleeping area clean and will try to hold it as long as possible before eliminating there.

Puppies need to eliminate on a fairly regular schedule: when they first get up in the morning, after a nap, after play periods, 5 to 10 minutes after drinking, 5 to 20 minutes after eating, before they go into their crates, when they first come out of their crates, and before going to bed at night. During waking hours, puppies may need to eliminate every hour or so.

Small dogs can sometimes be a little more difficult to housetrain. They are very close to the ground, and you may not realize when your puppy is actually eliminating until it is too late. Keep a close eye on little ones to help them learn what you expect from them. Manage their environment carefully.

Teaching Your Puppy to Communicate

If you are taking your puppy outside to eliminate, it will be important to teach him how to tell you he needs to go outside in the future. You can begin working on this now by teaching your puppy to *speak* (bark) to let you know he needs to go outside.

Offer your puppy a special treat and tease him with the treat until he barks. The second the puppy barks, say the word "speak," then mark the behavior by using a word like "yes" or a click from a clicker. Reward him with the treat for barking. Repeat this exercise several times until he will *speak* on cue.

After he has learned to *speak* on cue, every time you take him outside, ask him if he wants to go outside, and give the cue "speak." Mark the behavior and reward him with a tiny treat, then take him outside to his designated elimination area. In time, he will learn to tell you he needs to go outside by barking.

As a general guide, you can confine an 8-week-old puppy for three hours, a 12-week-old puppy four hours, and a 16-week-old puppy for five hours before he will usually need to eliminate. If he does not get a chance to relieve himself within that time frame, you may end up with him soiling his area. Do not get upset with him if this occurs; he simply could not hold it any longer. This was the result of human error, not your puppy's mistake. If he is sleeping, you do not have to wake him up to go outside. Wait for him to wake up on his own before you take him to his designated elimination area. Remember to take the treats with you when you go outside so you will be ready to mark and reward him for eliminating in the proper area. Houstraining takes time, patience, and consistency.

Houstraining Troubleshooting

Suppose it has been more than a month since your puppy had an accident in the house. You think your job is complete and your puppy is now houstrained. Then, more houstraining accidents start to appear. What happened?

- The puppy may have a medical problem, such as an infection, and needs to be seen by his veterinarian.
- You forgot to teach him a cue that lets the puppy alert you to the fact he needs to go outside. If this happened, go back to the basics and introduce the cue (word or words). Cues such as "Outside," "Let's go outside," "Do you want to go outside?" are appropriate. You can use any word or words you choose, just be sure to use the same word or words consistently. Your puppy can learn to respond by getting excited, barking, or sitting.
- You forgot to teach your puppy to communicate with you when he needs to go outside. This can be accomplished by teaching him to *speak* (bark), *sit*, or even ring a bell that is hung on the door you use when taking him outside. You may also use a bell placed on the floor for your puppy to ring to let you know he needs to go out.
- You take your puppy for a walk, and he comes in the house to eliminate. Since puppies are constantly learning, the puppy now realizes that once he eliminates, the enjoyable walk comes to an end. As a result, he holds it as long as possible. You run out of time to keep walking him and come back inside. The walk has ended and the puppy forgot to eliminate while outside or did not want to because he didn't want the walk to be over. Either way, the puppy eliminates in the house. If this has happened, return to the basics and take the puppy to the designated elimination area. Stand there for a few minutes and wait until he eliminates. If he does, mark and reward him. If he does not eliminate in the elimination area, take him back inside and confine him to either his crate or a designated area. Wait 10 to 15 minutes and repeat the exercise. This must be continued until he finally eliminates outside. Mark the behavior (elimination) with "Yes" or a click from a clicker. Now take your puppy for a nice walk as the reward. You will need to repeat this exercise

every time he needs to go out over the next several days until he understands that walks happen only after the elimination occurs.

- Your puppy does half of his eliminating outside and the other half of his eliminating inside. This can happen when treats are given to the puppy inside the house instead of outside where the elimination occurred. The puppy thinks he is being rewarded for coming into the house and, in turn, he hurries to get back into the house for his reward. Your puppy cannot relate the reward to the desired behavior when the behavior is performed at one location and the reward is given at another location. Rewarding your puppy in a different location only confuses him. To address this issue, take the treats outside with you and be ready to mark and reward him as soon as the elimination occurs. If you know he is not done, be patient. Stand there and wait for the next elimination. Once it has occurred, mark and reward immediately at the location of the elimination. After a few days, he will connect the wonderful treats with eliminating and will want to do as much eliminating as possible while outside to receive the rewards.

If you are still having problems with your puppy soiling in the house, please contact our office. Your puppy may be dealing with a health issue.



Home Alone

Dogs are social animals. As a result, many puppies do not like to be left alone. Young dogs from 8 to 14 weeks of age are simply verbal during this period when isolated. If the behavior is ignored when presented, it will dissipate over time until your puppy outgrows this period. Socializing your puppy is an important aspect of building his self-confidence.

Using a Crate

If you are concerned about leaving your puppy in the crate, it may help to know young dogs need to sleep about 18 hours a day. Even when you are home with your puppy, it is a good idea to put him in the crate a few times a day so he gets the rest he needs and you can control his environment.

If your puppy has had a chance to become comfortable in the crate while you are home, this will also help him become more comfortable when you leave. When you put your puppy in the crate, use one special toy your puppy gets only when he is in there. Hard rubber toys that you can put treats into will give him something to work on while awake in the crate.

Before putting your puppy in the crate, always give him an opportunity to relieve himself. This way, you will know if he starts to whine, cry, or bark when you put him in the crate it is not because he needs to relieve himself. It is because he does not want to be left alone. Your puppy is verbally trying to tell you to open the door of the crate to let him out.

Opening the crate for a barking, crying, or whining puppy is a big mistake. Since puppies are constantly learning, you will be teaching him that every time he cries, you will open the crate and let him out. If your puppy has not been properly introduced to the crate or you have any questions about crate training, please let us know and we can give you some helpful information on crate training.

When you are feeling guilty about leaving your puppy alone or in the crate, your puppy will pick up on what you are feeling. Long good-byes before leaving the house will only add to the problem. Without realizing it, you could be instigating the concerned or stressed behavior.

Medication and Homeopathic Therapy

You may want to consider medication or homeopathic therapy for your puppy if he becomes concerned when left alone. Ask your veterinarian which product would work best for your puppy.

Using a T-shirt

Another way you can boost your puppy's confidence is with the help of a T-shirt. T-shirts give your puppy a better feel of his own body and help him to relax. The T-shirt should go over his head and fit snugly on him. You want a T-shirt that goes all the way down to the end of his rib cage. If necessary, cut the sleeves on the T-shirt so they do not confine his front legs. This way, when the T-shirt is on, it will allow him to move around freely and will not be uncomfortable. Shirts that have spandex in them are great for this. Put the T-shirt on the puppy for 15

minutes the first time, and then you can gradually work up the length of time until he can wear his T-shirt all day. Once your puppy is comfortable with the shirt, start putting it on him 10 to 15 minutes before leaving the house. To further ensure his self-confidence with being left alone, start using the T-shirt along with a confidence course you can put together at home.

Desensitization

Another way to address your puppy's concerns is to desensitize him to you leaving the house. You can accomplish this by first breaking down what you actually do before you leave the house. Once you understand your pattern, you can begin to habituate him to each of the steps you take.

If your pattern is to put your shoes on before you walk out the door, then put your shoes on and stay in the house. At first, he may become very concerned about you putting your shoes on. However, when you stay in the house, he will realize you are not leaving, and he will settle down. After a little while, take your shoes off. A half hour later, put your shoes back on again, but stay in the house. Repeat this exercise a few times a day until your puppy ignores you when you put your shoes on.

If the next step in your pattern is to grab your keys, then begin the key-grabbing habituating just like you did the shoes. Repeat each pattern you offer before leaving the house separately until he becomes comfortable with every step. Once he is comfortable with the separate steps, it is time to walk out of the house.

Remember to not give any long good-byes. Walk out of the house for just a minute, then return inside. Once he is quiet, let him out of the crate. Repeat this exercise a few times a day, extending the time you leave him alone. In time, he will realize that when you leave, it does not mean you are leaving him forever. It just means you are leaving for a little while. Once he is comfortable knowing you will return, his anxiety should dissipate.

If you have tried all of the suggestions in this handout and your puppy is still distressed when left alone, please contact our office to discuss additional options.



Socialization

Socialization is the process of introducing your puppy to new people, places, things, and experiences he will likely encounter in his lifetime as part of your family. This may include exposure to the veterinary practice without needing to be examined; visiting nursing homes; going to parks; seeing children running, screaming, and playing; and hearing loud noises, such as trains, motorcycles, and gunshots. You will also want to give your puppy opportunities to meet children, babies, the elderly, and folks in wheelchairs; people using canes, big hats, sunglasses, and costumes; and people in uniforms, such as police officers, postal workers, and delivery truck drivers. Take your puppy for rides in the car, let him walk on different surfaces, go for a ride on an elevator, take a nice walk through a park, or go to a ball game. These are wonderful experiences for your puppy and can be great fun. Allow your puppy to become comfortable with one socialization opportunity at a time until he seems comfortable with each situation before moving on to new or different experiences. You will not want to overload him with too much information too quickly.

It is important that you introduce your puppy to other animal species (such as cats, rabbits, horses, or goats), as well as other dogs. Introduce him not just to other animal members of your family, or next-door neighbors, but to all types—big, small, young, and old. Before you introduce your puppy to other animals, make sure that the other animals are properly immunized. It is important the other animals do not have a problem with puppies, though, or you will defeat the purpose of this interaction.

When introducing your puppy to other people, never hold him to receive a pet. Instead, let him meet the person at his own pace. If he does not want to greet the person, do not force the experience. Thank the person for his or her time and move on. Try introducing him to other people again and again until he is willing to go up to the person and receive a treat that you gave them to give to him. Once your puppy learns that other people are wonderful creatures, you have accomplished your socialization mission with people.

If your puppy is a smaller breed, make sure not to carry him everywhere. You are not protecting him; instead, you are telling him that he is too small to handle anything on his own. If you continue carrying him around, he may bark at other dogs, animals, and people for the rest of his life.

Pushing, pulling, or forcing your puppy in any way defeats the entire socialization experience. It is important that you build gradually on his successes. Socializing your puppy can be a wonderful and fun time for both of you.

A collar, a leash, car rides, sporting events, loud music, trains, planes, automobiles, stairs, and parties to go to are all new and exciting experiences for a puppy.

One of the best things you can do for your puppy is to enroll him in a puppy class if there is one available. Make sure the trainer does not use any harsh corrections on your puppy, and if the trainer tells you to do anything harsh to your puppy, leave the class and do not go back. These early months set the foundation for his future, and young dogs (under 12 months old) go through two to three fear periods. Emotional or physical harm done during the first year can last a lifetime.

Textures

You will want your puppy to be comfortable walking on, over, and through anything you would want to walk through. So introduce him to those textures while he is young. Some examples of textures you can use include grass, sand, cement, gravel, plastic bags, rocks, plastic bags with water sprayed on them (makes them slick), water puddles, bridges, collapsed cardboard boxes, ice, snow, and carpets. Let your puppy approach every new texture at his own pace to build his confidence.

Building Confidence by Using a Confidence Course

A small, easy-to-assemble confidence course can do wonders to build your puppy's confidence. The confidence course should consist of things he can walk on, over, or through. Be creative and use items already in your home. You can use a big plastic garbage bag and place it on the floor for him to walk on. You can use a mop or broom handle for him to walk over. You can use a hula hoop for him to walk over or through. Styrofoam blocks give your puppy something to step over. An umbrella can be used to help your puppy get over a fear of new objects. Be creative and use your imagination. As he becomes used to one new item, add a second item. Always introduce one obstacle at a time until he is comfortable walking on, over, or through the item before introducing him to a new item. You always want to move at your puppy's pace and build on his successes.

When using a confidence course, put his collar and leash on the puppy and ask him to slowly walk through the course. Many puppies, especially in the 6 to 18 months age range, want to fly through the obstacles; however, this does not help anything. When you take your puppy through the course, take a few steps and stop. Pet him for a few seconds and take a few more steps. It is important that he does this slowly. You will want him to pay attention to what he is doing. Slow walking with frequent stops helps him to pay attention. Any item that offers a different experience will work, so use your imagination. In a few weeks, this can help many puppies be more confident, especially when left alone.

Socialization with Children

Puppies and children should never be left unsupervised. Although they often have an affinity for one another and form a very strong bond, it is still a good idea to keep an eye on them when they are together. Left unsupervised, a puppy may bite a child in self-defense. Without proper supervision, it is difficult to identify the instigator and correct the problem. Children are often unknowingly unkind to animals, and the puppy is wrongly blamed for his response to the unkindness.

To some puppies, children are noisy, fast-moving objects with tempting flying hot dogs for fingers. Some puppies take it all in stride, but others become overwhelmed with too much stimuli happening too quickly for their comfort level.

When introductions are made, it is important to supervise the introductions. Children must be taught how to interact with animals safely. At first, instruct children to wait until the puppy approaches them before petting. They should be taught to respect when the puppy pulls away from them and to never bother the puppy when he is in his crate.

For the initial introductions, ask your child to approach the puppy from the side, never straight toward the new puppy. Ask your child to stop about three feet away from the puppy and extend one hand out to the puppy with the palm down. Allow the puppy to come up to sniff the extended hand. Once your puppy stands next to your child, the child can begin to pet the puppy on his side. If the puppy backs away from the child, do not force the interaction. Giving your puppy the time he needs today will help build a strong relationship between your child and the new puppy. Proper introductions will ensure that your child and puppy develop a healthy bond and become friends for life!

When your child does get that opportunity to actually pet the new puppy, explain the importance of petting the puppy gently and speaking softly. During the early stages of developing a relationship between your child and the new puppy, it is important that the child be instructed to avoid petting the puppy on the head, as many puppies are head shy. Once the puppy becomes more comfortable with the child, pats on the head can be added if the puppy does not shy away from the hand reaching over his head. If the puppy pulls away, head pats should not be allowed for a bit longer. Over time, with proper supervision, your child and puppy will have a very special relationship. If you have a few children, introduce the puppy to one child at a time, not all at the same time. They will be very excited, but this is not a relationship you want spoiled. Time, patience, understanding, and consistency are the recipe for a wonderful relationship between your children and their new puppy.

If your puppy is shy, timid, or fearful you will need to move very slowly in building this bond. If the puppy pulls away from your child, explain to your child that the puppy is a little shy right now and will need time to be comfortable. You can let the child offer the puppy a treat. If the puppy walks up for the treat, that is a great start. If the puppy is afraid to approach the child, let the child drop the treat on the floor and take a few steps back so the puppy can get the treat. After a few treat opportunities, the puppy will become conditioned to the idea that when the child is near, good things happen.

If the treats do not encourage the puppy to go to the child, explain to the child that the puppy is not brave enough right now and the puppy may feel a little braver next time. Most children are very understanding about such timid behavior and are willing to wait.

As a safety precaution, tell your children they should never approach a strange dog without the dog owner's permission. Any contact with strange dogs should be supervised by you as well as the dog owner. The same approach outlined above should be made to strange dogs. Always approach a dog from the side and not head-on. Do not reach over a strange dog's head as this could be misinterpreted.



Crate Training

Crate training is an extremely valuable tool for you and your puppy. You will reap great rewards throughout his life by training your puppy to be comfortable in his crate. The crate will become his bedroom. It is a haven where he can get away from energetic children and company. It is a place where he can rest and be left alone. Crate training is the easiest way to control your puppy's environment, and it is helpful in housetraining.

Placing your puppy in his crate is not the same as leaving him in a laundry room or kitchen. Those areas are used and shared by the family, and your puppy needs and deserves his own space.

Children should be told to leave the puppy alone when he is in his crate. More important, children should never be allowed to go into the puppy's crate.

Your puppy's age can be used as a general rule to determine how long the puppy can stay in his crate before needing to relieve himself. This information holds true while the puppy is awake or active. Using your puppy's age in months and adding 1 will give you the number of hours he can be kept in the crate before needing to relieve himself. For example, a two-month-old puppy should not be left in his crate for more than three hours, and a three-month-old puppy should not be left in his crate for more than four hours. This rule holds until the puppy is about six months old, when the puppy can be left in his crate for six to eight hours before he will need to relieve himself. It is not appropriate for any dog to be left in a crate for more than 10 hours a day. Your puppy needs and deserves exercise time, playtime, socialization time, training time, and the opportunity to interact with his new family. A crate is a training tool and should be used as such until the puppy understands all the rules in his new home. As he gets older, unsupervised time alone outside of his crate should be increased gradually.

A very important thing to remember is to never let your puppy out of the crate when he is barking or crying. If you do, you have allowed the puppy to train you! If the puppy has been in his crate for a while and starts to bark, he may need to go outside to relieve himself. Wait a few seconds until he stops barking or whining and then quickly open the door and take him to the designated elimination area. Immediately mark and reward him for eliminating in the proper location.

Begin crate training by setting up the crate in a room where the family is usually present. Place a dog bed or soft blanket inside the crate for the puppy. Leave the door open for a few hours and give him time to get comfortable with the look and smell of the crate.

Once he appears to lose interest in the crate, throw a few tasty treats inside the entrance of the crate to lure him into it. Tie the crate door securely open to ensure the door does not close accidentally and frighten him in the process of learning to be comfortable with his new crate.

If your puppy has not eaten the treats within 15 minutes or so, pick them up. At your next scheduled feeding, place your puppy's food bowl inside the entrance of the crate. Walk away from the crate and watch him.

If your puppy is hungry, he should approach the crate to eat. If after 15 minutes he still refuses to go near it, take the food out of the crate and place it two or three inches outside of the crate door.

Again, wait about 15 minutes to see if he will eat the food. If he will not go near it, move the bowl a foot or so away from the crate and repeat the exercise. Keep doing this until you find a place where he is comfortable enough to eat.

Once he is comfortable eating where the bowl or treats are placed, gradually move the bowl or treats closer to the crate and eventually into the crate and toward the back. Always leave the door tied open so the puppy can go in and out of the crate by himself during this phase.

Next, place a toy with treats inside it in the crate. This time when your puppy goes into the crate, close the door for just a few seconds. Then open the door and let your puppy out of the crate.

Repeat this exercise a few times a day, gradually increasing the length of time you keep the puppy in the crate with the door closed. Once he is comfortable being in the crate with the door closed for about 30 minutes, let him out of the crate. Remember to not open the door of the crate for your puppy when he is barking or crying. If you do, the puppy will learn that if he makes noise, he will be let out of the crate. This is not the lesson you want him to learn.

Most puppies love their crates. There are, however, some puppies who are very afraid of their crate and want nothing to do with it. Under these circumstances, it is better to find another method of confining a puppy than it is to force him into a crate. Other confining options may include a utility room, a bathroom, an exercise pen, or a baby gate in the doorway of a small room. For small-breed dogs, perhaps a baby's playpen would do.

Many dogs from shelters and pet stores have been confined to crates for extended periods of time. These puppies may associate a crate with a negative experience and are often very concerned about being placed in a crate again.

Crate training has many rewards, including being able to leave your puppy alone without any damage to your belongings or accidents on the floor from improper elimination. This will speed up the housetraining process and provide your puppy with his own secure and comfortable bedroom while managing his environment.



Crate Soiling

Crate soiling can be a real challenge for many new puppy parents. Know you are not alone and we are here to help you. Crate soiling can happen for many reasons. For example, your puppy may have been forced to live in the crate full-time prior to arriving at your home. In this situation, he has never had a choice on where to eliminate. As a result, he now may have a preference to eliminate in his crate. Among other reasons for crate soiling are the following (ask to see the Crate Training handout for more details):

- *Your puppy's crate may be too large.* This can be easily addressed by getting a smaller crate that allows your puppy only enough room to stand up, turn around, and lie down comfortably. Alternatively, you may reduce the size of your large crate by placing a space-occupying object, such as a piece of wood, cardboard, or other material, in the crate. There are crates on the market today that have a wire wall that can be adjusted to fit your puppy's size. As your puppy grows, you must move the wire barrier frequently to accommodate his increasing size. Another option you can choose is to create an elimination area in the larger crate. This can be accomplished by placing a wee-wee pad in a doggie litter box. Place the litter box at one end of the crate and give him sleeping quarters at the other end of the crate. This will allow your puppy to eliminate in one area and sleep in the other, making cleanup much easier.
- *You forgot to let your puppy eliminate before placing him in the crate.*
- *You left the puppy in the crate too long.* Puppies can wait for only short periods of time before needing to eliminate. If your work schedule prevents you from letting your puppy out of the crate sooner, consider a pet sitter or doggie day care.

Once you have adjusted the puppy's crate for his size, tried getting a pet sitter to let him out in the middle of the day, and even tried doggie day care, then here is your last step for working on this problem. Keep him in his crate while watching him. Every time the puppy seems to be sniffing the floor in his crate, looking for a place to go, or circling in his crate, and he has been in his crate for more than three or four hours, he may need to relieve himself. Take him outside to the designated area, stand there, and wait. The minute he eliminates, mark and reward him right there with a very special treat he only gets when he relieves himself outside or in the designated area inside. Over time, he will become conditioned to want to go outside so he can get one of those special treats.

This can be a challenging behavior to deal with, but with time, patience, and training consistency, your puppy will learn not to soil in his crate.



Collars

Many puppies do not like their collars, so it is a good idea to give them time to get used to the smell and taste of the collar first. Hold the collar in your hand and let your puppy sniff and put it in his mouth if he wishes to check it out. When he begins to get bored with the collar, take it away.

Next, let him see the collar again and have some wonderful, tiny, tasty treats while you simply drape the collar over his neck. If he is apprehensive, stop. Wait a few minutes and try again. Drape the collar over his neck while distracting him with a tasty treat. Move slowly and with confidence. If he leaves the collar draped over his neck for a few seconds, mark and reward his bravery by telling him what a brave little boy he is and giving him many tiny treats. Repeat the exercise several times until he becomes comfortable with the collar being draped over his neck.

The next time you work with the puppy on wearing his collar, show him the collar and offer him a tiny treat. Then place the collar between your two hands and go under his neck to give him a nice neck rub for just a few seconds. Repeat the exercise, and this time clip the collar on his neck. If the collar has a clip that will make a noise, try to cover the sound by catching the clip before it opens and closes in place. If it is a buckle collar, put one end through the other and quickly fasten it. If the puppy pulls back, stop. Wait a few minutes and give him another nice little neck massage while holding the collar between your two hands for just a few seconds. Tell him what a great little boy he is and walk away. For now, that is enough training.

Later on, try again. Start with the collar between your hands and with confidence place it around his neck and close it. If he struggles, stop what you are doing and walk away from him. Come back in a few minutes and try again. This time, offer him a treat and place a few more treats on the floor for him to eat. While he is eating the treats, place his collar on his neck for just a second. When it slides off, pick it up and hold the collar between your two hands. Drop a few tasty treats on the floor, rub his neck, and attach the collar. If he is still concerned, stop and go back to draping the collar over his neck for a second, giving him a treat, and telling him what a good boy he is. For now, the lesson is over.

Over the next couple of days, repeat the exercises above, starting from the last place he felt comfortable with the collar touching him. In time, he will let you put the collar on.

Simply demanding that the collar goes on now works much faster, but you will have to make the decision whether you want to build this relationship on trust or fear. When you stop doing something your puppy is afraid of, it is a gentle way to let him know you understand and are listening to him. When you listen to your animal's concerns, you are building a stronger relationship that is built on trust.



Exercise and Play

Puppies need both mental and physical exercise. When you meet these needs, your puppy will be easier to manage. If these needs are not met, your puppy can become very bored and create a lot of mischief. This can cause problems for both you and your puppy.

Taking the puppy for a walk a couple of times a day is a good beginning, but this is not enough. If it is possible, find a place where he can be taken off his leash safely to let him run around and play. He will need interaction with you to really get the exercise he needs. This is a great time to introduce him to a few games that will stimulate him both mentally and physically.

When you take him to a safe place where he can be off-leash, bring one of his favorite toys along to play fetch. This could be a squeaky toy, a tennis ball, or anything else he enjoys playing with. Bring plenty of his favorite treats as well.

There are many wonderful games you can play with your puppy to stimulate him mentally and also give him the exercise he needs. If he has a safe, properly immunized puppy friend or adult dog to play with, this can be a great way for him to exercise. He will also learn how to play nicely with other dogs. Playing games are a fun way your puppy can learn new cues and exercise at the same time.

Fetch!

Let the puppy see the toy right before you take him off-leash. In a happy voice, ask if he wants the toy while bouncing or squeaking it. Throw the toy just a foot away from where you are standing and say the cue "Go get it." The second he puts the toy in his mouth, mark the behavior with "Yes" or a click from your clicker. Then give the cue "Bring it here," and lure (let him see the treat) him over with a wonderful treat like a piece of chicken.

Now give the cue "Drop-it." When he does, give him the tasty piece of chicken and tell him what a good boy he is. Repeat this, but throw the toy just a little farther each time, using the same cues. After throwing the toy five or six times, end the game while you are both enjoying yourselves. The next time the puppy has an outing with you, you can play again. Start off with the toy close, and each time throw it a little farther away. It is important to end the play training on a positive note while you are still having fun. If your puppy bites your hand by accident before dropping the toy, the game is over—no excuses. Put him back on-leash and walk away. Wait at least five minutes before beginning the game again or paying any attention to him. This is very important. You do not want to teach him it is okay to bite you under any circumstances.

Chase!

Another game you can play with your puppy while he is off-leash in a safe place is a game of chase. There is, however, one very important rule to this game: *Never* chase him. If you do, you will be training your puppy to run away from you.

With his leash still on, give the cue "Come" in a happy voice and start to run backward a few feet away from your puppy. (Be careful not to trip or hurt yourself.) When he follows and catches up to you, stop and mark his com-

ing toward you with “Yes” or a click from your clicker, and give him a treat. You can repeat this a few times, extending the length of space between where you start and where you stop. Remember to mark his coming toward you each time, and then give him a treat when he reaches you to reinforce the desired behavior.

Note these few rules when playing with your puppy:

- If he bites you by accident, the game stops immediately. No excuses.
- If he jumps on you because he is excited, turn your back on him or step into his space. Once all four of his feet are on the ground, you can then mark and reward him for coming. Never give him a treat unless all four feet are on the ground. If you do, you will be rewarding him for jumping on you.
- Never just pull a toy out of his mouth. Exchange toys for treats using the *drop-it* cue until he understands the cue.

Tug-of-War!

Tug-of-war is another game you can play with your puppy. If he already knows the cue *drop-it*, this is a great game to play. If he does not understand the cue *drop-it*, then this game can be a great way to teach him the cue. Some people believe that playing tug-of-war with their puppies will make them aggressive. This is untrue. This game simply requires rules that need to be followed.

Find a safe toy that is made for this game. A safe toy allows room for the puppy to grab the toy without grabbing your skin. Play the game with him for a few minutes and then give the cue “Drop-it” and offer him a treat as an exchange for the toy. If he does not drop the toy, the game is over. Walk away and ignore him. If he bites you by accident while playing this game, stop and walk away; the game is over.

There is no such thing as an accidental bite. If you make excuses for the puppy that the bite was an accident, he will learn to bite again next time you play the game. After all, biting each other is one way puppies play together. He will not understand he should not bite you unless you let him know that all play and attention stop when a bite occurs.

In a few minutes you can try again, but for now you want him to understand that when he bites, the game stops and you will completely ignore him. In time, he will understand your rules and begin to play this game politely.

Other Activities

You can enroll your puppy in classes for exercise and play. You can choose from Agility, Fly Ball, Earth Dog, Freestyle Dance, or Frisbee. If you have access to a pool your puppy can swim in, that is also a great way to exercise him. If you do allow your puppy in a pool, make sure he understands how to get out of the pool safely on his own right away. This is a safety “must do” when a puppy is allowed in a pool. All of the above-mentioned exercises are great ways to give your puppy the exercise and exposure he needs. Introducing him to new environments and situations are a plus. These all provide physical and mental stimulation.



Biting and Nipping

Biting is a normal behavior for puppies. This is one way puppies play with each other to organize the hierarchy of the social group. So when you and your puppy begin your relationship, your puppy must be taught that your skin is much more sensitive than his. Play biting you is not an acceptable behavior.

Old techniques to stop this behavior, such as grabbing your puppy's muzzle, giving your puppy a shake and saying "No," or pinning your puppy down, can only make matters worse! These types of reprimands can be interpreted by your puppy as an act of aggression. In many cases, reprimands such as these can even escalate the problem. Correction should not be handled with any methods the puppy could misinterpret. When hurtful methods are used to stop this behavior, play biting can quickly escalate to aggressive biting.

You will want to send a clear message to your puppy that biting you or other humans is not an acceptable behavior. You can accomplish this by withdrawing all attention from him when he bites you. Attention, whether positive or negative, is still attention. With that in mind, even scolding the puppy is a reward because he got your attention. When he starts to bite, walk away.

If your puppy is biting your shoe or pant leg, you may find it a little harder to walk away from him. When he grabs your pants or shoes, take him into a small area, such as your bathroom or another small room in the house. Re-create the behavior that caused him to bite you. When he begins to bite, do not say a word—just walk out of the room and close the door quickly.

Be careful not to close the door on your puppy's nose or paws; you will not want to hurt him when doing this. Leave him isolated in the room for a few seconds. Go back into the room and act as if nothing ever happened. Begin to re-create the behavior that caused him to bite again. When he tries to bite at your shoes or clothes, quickly walk out of the room again and close the door. After repeating this a few times a day over several days, the puppy will realize that every time he grabs your clothing or shoes or bites you, he will be left all alone. Through isolation and being ignored, the inappropriate biting behavior will stop.

It can sometimes get confusing to you and your puppy when playing together. Was the bite on purpose or was it an accident? To be safe, always assume it was on purpose. Stop the play and walk away from your puppy. Most bites are on purpose, so continuing the play will only confuse your puppy.

Try not to offer reasons for the biting behavior. Words such as "My puppy did not mean it," "It was an accident," and "It was really my fault, not my puppy's" can cause more harm than good. Trying to be understanding and helpful by offering reasons why the behavior happened can only make matters worse and confuse your puppy.

Your puppy may think biting is a wonderful game. If that happens, the biting behavior will increase in intensity as you continue to allow and reinforce it. The more demanding your puppy is with this wonderful game, the harder he may begin to bite. Before you know it, the biting will escalate, and the puppy will think it is part of the game and biting you is an acceptable behavior.

Another thing you can do is put your puppy in the crate for a time-out. Wait for him to settle down and then open the crate slowly to let him out. If he tries to bite at you again, simply close the crate door and leave him in the crate for a little longer. Then wait for him to settle down and try to open the crate again. You may have to repeat this exercise many times a day over a few days for your puppy to understand.

When putting your puppy in the crate or into his space for a time-out, do not drag him by the collar. When he is dragged by the collar, he may become afraid of your hands reaching for him. This technique could result in your puppy being afraid of hands and cause him to shy away from you when you try to reach out to pet him. Instead, either pick your puppy up, if you can do so without getting hurt, or have a short, two-foot leash attached to his collar. This way, when he bites you, you can use the leash to bring him to his crate and lead him.

Remember, do not open the crate for a barking dog. When you do, you are teaching your puppy that you can be trained. Many puppies are capable of barking for a very long time. This is how they wear down their owners. But you must use tough love here if you want him to learn quickly. When the puppy carries on for 30 minutes, it is tempting to let him out for a little quiet in the house, but do not let him out. If you do, the puppy will only bark longer next time and matters will get worse, not better. Always wait for that moment of silence before opening the crate for a barking dog.

Hugging, kissing, and holding your puppy is a human need, not a puppy's. Many puppies do not like to be held quite as long or as often as many puppy parents might think they do. You should not expect acceptance of hugs and kisses from your puppy. Your puppy needs time to understand you and your ways. Many puppies will allow the hugs and kisses once they are comfortable with their new family.

Since he is constantly learning, he will figure out that kissing, holding, and hugging will not harm him, especially if you listen to his request to stop or be let down when he asks. By giving him the time he needs to get used to some of our human idiosyncrasies, he will become comfortable with this human hugging and kissing thing. After all, how comfortable would you be if someone walked up to you and smelled your butt? That is a natural behavior for dogs, just like hugging and kissing is for us.

Puppies can interpret being held as being confined, which is something they do not like. To ask you to let them down, some puppies will start off licking your arm or hand—that is their way of politely asking to be let down. When the request is missed by you, the only option your puppy has to let you know he wants to get down is to start biting at your hand, arms, or clothing. By paying attention to your puppy's signals, you can avoid this situation.

If, after trying these methods, your puppy is still biting, please call our office. There may be a physical or emotional problem going on that should be addressed immediately.



Jumping

Many puppies will jump up on their new family members for attention. In response, many people will reach down and pet their puppies without realizing the consequences. Rewarding the puppy with attention when he jumps on you ensures the behavior of jumping on people will continue. As your puppy grows in size and weight, jumping can get out of hand, be uncomfortable to live with, and be potentially dangerous.

Never pay attention to your puppy if he does not have all four paws on the floor. If your puppy is already jumping, take him into a small room of the house and re-create the scenario that caused him to jump on you. The second he starts to jump up on you, quickly walk out of the room and close the door. Wait 20 or 30 seconds, go back into the room, and greet him just like you did before. If he jumps on you again, repeat this exercise several times until he can keep all four paws on the floor when you walk into the room. This may take a few weeks, so after a few tries in each session, ask your puppy to *sit*, then mark and reward him to end your training session on a positive note. If you walk into the room and he does keep all four paws on the floor, mark and reward him immediately by petting him or giving him an ear scratch.

As the behavior starts to diminish, you can put your puppy on a leash and let him out of the room. If he jumps on you when he is outside of the room, cross your arms over your chest and look away from him. Once all four of his paws are on the floor, mark the behavior with the word "yes" and give an ear scratch as a reward. Crossing your arms over your chest serves two functions: It ensures your face is protected and it protects your arms and fingers from being bitten or scratched by your puppy while he is jumping.

If crossing your arms and ignoring him does not seem to work, it is time to use a leash. Put a four- to six-foot leash on him. Give him about three feet of leash and then step on the remainder. When the puppy tries to jump up, the leash will cause him to self-correct. The second all four paws are on the floor, mark and reward with an ear scratch. Once you feel the puppy understands that you do not want him to jump on you, introduce treats when he self-corrects his jumping behavior without the help of a leash.

When your puppy tries to jump up on you, you can take a step forward into his space. This will cause him to want to back up. To back up, he will need all four paws on the floor. The second all four paws hit the floor, mark and reward the four paws on the floor.

You can also try taking one giant step backward. Your puppy will not have your body to lean on and his front paws will have to go on the floor in order for him to keep his balance. The second all four paws are on the floor, mark and reward with an ear scratch.

If your puppy jumps on guests coming into your home, you can ask them to take a giant step backward or take a step forward toward your puppy. The second the puppy's feet hit the floor, ask your visitor to mark the behavior and then give the puppy a little ear scratch as a reward. Guests should also be asked not to pet your puppy unless all four paws are on the floor.

Grabbing your dog's paws and squeezing, or kneeling your dog in the chest, are hurtful methods and in most cases are not successful training methods. You can also end up with additional behavior problems. For example, these methods may cause your dog to not trust you touching his paws, making nail trimming a difficult task. Kneeling your dog in the chest can cause physical harm to your puppy, perhaps even a cracked rib.

If you enjoy your dog jumping on you but others do not, you can train him to jump up on cue. This behavior can be trained by giving the jumping behavior a cue (word) every time he jumps on you. You can use the word "up," if he jumps up on you without being invited, then use one of the methods described above to stop or ignore the uninvited jump.

A jumping puppy can be a danger, and accidents can occur. Jumping puppies can accidentally knock over an elderly person or a child, causing physical harm. A jumping puppy can scratch skin, rip clothing, and sometimes cause unintentional bites to the face.

Even if your dog loves people, he still needs to practice self-control and good manners. Greeting people with all four paws on the floor is a much safer, gentler, and more appropriate way for your puppy to behave.



APPENDIX D: SAMPLE CLIENT HANDOUTS (PUPPIES)

Aggressive/Bully Puppies

If at any time while working with your puppy you feel threatened or concerned, contact our office for a referral to a veterinary behaviorist. Do not try to solve this problem alone. There are wonderful professionals who can help you and your puppy.

There are three main things you want to teach your puppy. First, you and not the puppy control all resources. Second, the puppy must learn self-control. Third, you want to build your pet's confidence and desensitize him/her to the "triggers" that may be causing aggressive or bullying behavior

The following examples of clear guidelines you need to establish between you and your puppy will teach him that you control all resources and help him learn self-control. Be patient because learning self-control is not an easy lesson.

- *Your puppy does not receive meals until he is sitting quietly.* If your puppy jumps up or nips at you, put the food in the refrigerator or cabinet and walk away. Offer it again when your puppy calms down. Go into the kitchen and get the food bowl. Ask your puppy to "sit." If the inappropriate behavior continues, repeat the exercise until the bowl can be put on the floor and your puppy waits until you release him to eat. You can use the cue "free dog" as the release, and let him eat his meal.
- *When you go outside for a walk, ask your puppy to "sit."* You walk through the door first, and then release him to come outside with you.
- *When you come back inside from your walk, ask your puppy to "sit."* You come in the house first, and then release your puppy.
- *You decide when your puppy receives attention, not your puppy.* This can be a big one for many puppies. When your puppy comes over to you and jumps up, turn and walk away. When your puppy nudges your arm asking to be petted, ignore him and walk away. Whatever you do, do not pet your puppy when he is demanding your attention. When your puppy barks at you, ignore him and walk away. These are all attention-seeking behaviors, and your puppy needs to practice self-control. You want him to learn that being quiet, patient, and polite is the only way to get your attention!
- *You decide who gets to lie where and when.* If your puppy is lying down comfortably in the middle of a room or in the hallway, ask him to move so you can pass. If your puppy does not move, tap him lightly with your foot and ask him to move again. Giving your puppy a cue such as "excuse me" would work well with this. Do not step over your dog.
- *You decide where your puppy gets to sleep, not your puppy.*

Barking

Barking is a natural way for dogs to communicate. Sometimes this communication can be excessive and quite annoying. To be effective in changing this behavior, take a little time to understand what triggers your puppy's barking.

Your puppy may be barking for several different reasons, which may include any of the following:

- He has way too much energy and needs more exercise than what he is currently receiving.
- He is bored and needs toys for some mental stimulation.
- He is fearful and needs more socialization and/or desensitizing opportunities.
- He has been carried around too frequently and needs to experience life with all four paws on the floor to build his confidence.
- He is offering a normal alert bark. This bark is to let you know something is different.

Like any behavior, you do not want to accidentally reward him by paying too much attention to his barking. When too much attention is given to any behavior, it will increase in intensity and duration. Since puppies consider any attention to be a reward, you may be rewarding a behavior you are trying to stop, which will increase the behavior. It is important that you do not try to reason with your puppy. Reasoning takes time, words, and most of all, your attention. Your attention is the one thing your puppy will always want from you.

The following are some things to think about and consider doing with your puppy to stop excessive barking.

Exercise

Puppies in general need lots of exercise. If your puppy is not getting enough exercise, then increasing his activities may help rein in his barking behavior. Taking him for a walk is exercise, but not enough for a young dog. If you have a fenced yard, then playing fetch with him outside is a great exercise. If you have a friend who has a safe dog that is up to date on vaccines, you could invite the other dog over for a playtime with your dog in the backyard. If you live in an apartment, a good game of fetch indoors can serve as an exercise opportunity for him as well. Playtime is very important to a young dog. Besides getting exercise, playtime teaches your puppy how to interact with people. Belly rubs, fetch, and puppy-in-the-middle are all games you can play with him while teaching manners at the same time.

Boredom

If your puppy is bored, offer him new things to figure out on his own. You can purchase a few hard rubber toys that you can put some treats in for him to work for. Give your puppy one toy a day to play with until he figures out how to get all the treats out of the toy. Then put that toy away and offer a new toy the following day. Exchange toys frequently so your puppy does not get bored with the same toy. You can fill these toys with a little canned dog food, treat spreads, treats, or peanut butter. Letting your puppy figure out how to get the treats out of the toy is great mental stimulation for him. (*Caution:* Do not use peanut butter if anyone in your home is allergic

to peanuts.) Most of these toys can be placed in the dishwasher for cleaning, but check the manufacturer's recommendations first. When puppies have access to all of their toys at the same time, they can quickly become bored with all of them.

Socialization

Many puppies who are excessive barkers lack socialization. They bark excessively because they do not understand enough about the world around them and find it a fearful place. If your puppy needs more socialization, take him to different places with you. Slowly introduce him to different people, places, and things.

Socializing your puppy is one of the most important things you can do for him. If there is a puppy socialization class you can enroll him in, do so. This is a wonderful opportunity for him to be socialized with other people and puppies. Walks in the park or at a playground can also be a great way to socialize your puppy. Make sure any other animals that your puppy meets prior to completing his vaccines have received all of their vaccines as well. When taking your puppy to any outdoor activity, it is important that you protect him. If a stranger comes up and wants to pet him, let the puppy go to the stranger; do not force your puppy to hold still for a pet from anyone.

Notice if your puppy seems more concerned with one person than another. Is he showing more concern to people with glasses, or hats, children, men, or people in uniform? Whatever the stimulus is for him, look for a pattern of his concerns. If you do find something he seems consistently concerned about and barks at, then this is good information to help him become more comfortable with that stimulus in the future. This can be done by desensitizing him to the stimuli he is concerned with. Let us know if this is the case so we can help you desensitize him. If you are having a challenge getting him to walk on a leash, please let us know that too, and we will be happy to help you teach him how to walk on a leash nicely.

If you are carrying your puppy around, put him on the ground and let him start to experience different situations and life on his own. All four paws on the ground will help build his confidence. Confident dogs are not excessive barkers. They give alert barks to their family to let them know something is different or has changed. All they want is acknowledgment from you that they have done their job well.

Excessive Alertness

Some puppies take their protection role in the family a bit too seriously. Once your puppy has barked, alerting you to something, first check out what your puppy is alerting you to. There may actually be something you need to pay attention to.

Sometimes, just checking out what your puppy is barking at, saying words such as "Thank you," or "That will do," or "Okay" is all that is needed for him to know he has done his job. When you do give him a cue, say the cue in a soft voice. If you yell or speak too loud, he will think you are joining him in the bark and you too are concerned. Once you let him know in a quiet voice that he has done his job, simply walk away.

When you walk away and stop paying attention to him, there is a good chance he will stop barking. This is because you are no longer giving him attention. Your lack of concern about his reason for barking may serve as an example of "Oh, that must not be important," and the barking will stop.

If that is not enough, check out what he is barking at, and then call him over to you in a happy voice. At first, stand only a foot or so away from him. The second he turns to come to you, mark the behavior and encourage him to come to you with a healthy treat as the reward. You will soon find that when your puppy barks at something and you acknowledge his alert, he will simply stop barking.

Other Options

You can also interrupt your puppy's barking pattern by making a short, sharp, and/or unusual sound to distract him. A good example of this sound could be a plastic bottle with some loose change or rocks in it. Give it a single hard shake when your puppy is barking. The second he stops barking, give him a verbal cue, either "Thank you," "That will do," "Quiet," or "Okay." He will stop to see what the noise was. The second he turns his attention to you, by looking at you, mark the behavior with a word such as "Yes," or give a click from your clicker. Then reward him with praise, a pet, or a healthy food treat for looking at you and stopping the excessive barking.

You can also leave the room when the puppy is barking. By leaving the room, you are taking all attention away from him for his inappropriate barking. If he is barking at something outside, you can consider covering the windows where the behavior is occurring.

Head Collars

Having your puppy fitted for a head collar and then using the collar to address the barking behavior is another way to help him understand that you want him to stop barking once an alert has been given and acknowledged by you. Our office can fit your puppy with a head collar, but please make sure you check the fit frequently as puppies grow quickly and we do not want his collar to become too tight.

Once the puppy is comfortable with the head collar, attach your leash to the collar and stay with him. Create a situation or have a friend create a situation that would normally cause him to start barking excessively. Let him bark a few times, then give him the cue. You may use "Thank you," "That will do," "Quiet," or "Okay," or any other word(s) you would like, to consistently let him know he has done his job. Once you say the cue, gently pull the leash to the side to close his mouth. The second he stops barking, mark the quiet behavior with a "Yes" or a click from the clicker, and reward him with an ear scratch, a treat, or a pet while releasing the tension on the leash the second he stops barking. If he starts to bark again, repeat the cue and pull on the leash again until he stops barking. You will have to repeat this exercise several times a day over a few weeks until he understands that when you give the cue "Thank you," "That will do," "Quiet," or "Okay," he is to stop barking.



Toy Guarding

Puppies should learn from the beginning of their lives with their new families that humans are the givers of all good things and, when necessary, the takers of all good things. If your puppy growls when he is being approached while playing with a toy, address the behavior now. Puppies do not grow out of bad habits—bad habits just get worse if not addressed. You must remind your puppy who the toy giver is if he feels the need to guard toys.

If your puppy guards all of his toys, then all of the toys must be taken away. If your puppy guards one specific toy, then that specific toy must be taken away. This can be done while your puppy is in the crate or in a secure area.

Once all the toys have been put away, offer your puppy his least favorite toy to play with for a minute or so. Then, using one of your puppy's favorite treats, give the cue *drop-it* or *leave-it*. Whichever cue you choose, stay with that cue; do not change to a new cue later on. When your puppy drops the toy for the treat, mark the behavior with "yes" or a click from your clicker and give him the treat in exchange for the toy. Repeat this exercise just a few times a day.

Once the puppy begins to quickly respond to the *drop-it* or *leave-it* cue, it is time for the next step. Put away the toy you were using, and the next day bring out another toy he likes to play with, but not his most favorite toy.

Repeat the exercise with the new toy just a few times a day over the next few days, until he quickly drops the toy when he hears the cue "Drop-it" or "Leave-it." Once he will consistently listen to your cue of "Drop-it" or "Leave-it," it is time for the next step.

Take your puppy's favorite toy out and give it to him. Give him five or ten minutes to enjoy his toy, then walk over to him and give the cue "Drop-it" or "Leave-it," and offer him a very special treat. If he does not drop his toy, you can use a higher-valued treat, such as chicken or cheese, to lure the toy away from him. Once he finishes the treat, give him back his favorite toy and walk away. For now, let him play with his toy undisturbed for at least a half hour. Then repeat this exercise a few more times that same day, always allowing him time to enjoy his toy for a while first. Repeat the cue with his favorite toy a few times a day over the next few days. Remember to mark the release of the toy, reward him with the treat, and give him the toy back to play with. Over time, he will learn to quickly drop whatever is in his mouth when he hears the cue. Once he gets to this level, rewards should be intermittent: one reward this time, three rewards next time, zero rewards the next time, and two rewards the next. Keep him guessing. Will he get one, three, or no treats when he gives the proper behavior?

Unless your puppy has something dangerous, never pull the toy out of his mouth. This will only cause him to want to guard the toys more fiercely, and you could get hurt.

If you offer the cue "Drop-it" or "Leave-it" to your puppy and he growls at you at any time, just say "Too bad" and walk away. Do not look at, play with, scold, or say any more words to him. For now, leave the room and completely ignore him. If he follows you to another room in the house, completely ignore him for the next five minutes. When it is time for him to go outside or to eat a meal, pick the toy up and put it away. In fact, if he continues to

growl at you after you have tried the above methods, and the only toy he still guards is this favorite toy, simply throw the toy away.

You will not want to punish him for growling, as a growl is an important early warning system dogs give that asks others to stay away. A growl is the prerequisite for the bite. If you are concerned for your safety, stop and walk away.

If at any time your puppy becomes aggressive and tries to bite you while shaping this behavior, contact our office. It is extremely important that this behavior is addressed now before it is too late.



Bolting Out Doors

Bolting out the door is a very dangerous behavior for both your puppy and the people he may meet. He can get lost or hurt, or if someone approaches him, he may bite out of fear.

The step-by-step process outlined below to address this behavior is based upon the *sit* and *stay* cues. Remember that it is important to keep eye contact with the puppy when training *stay*.

Place a small rug near the door your puppy has tried to bolt out of. Make sure the rug is far enough away from the door so you can open and close the door without the puppy having to move. Practice *sit* and *stay* on this rug with your puppy. Remember to always release the puppy from a *stay*. If your puppy bolts out of every door in your home, then start off with one door until he can hold his *sit/stay*. Once he is doing well at one door, you can train the same behavior again at another door in your home. Usually after two or three doors, your puppy will understand that “*sit/stay*” means “*sit/stay* no matter which door he is at.”

Once he is doing well with the previous step, you can introduce the door actually being opened. Put him on his leash and ask him to “*sit/stay*” on his rug by the door. Hold onto the leash or step on the leash, open the door, and immediately close the door. Return to the puppy, mark and reward him if he held the *sit/stay*, and release him. If he did not hold the *stay*, put him back in the exact same position he was in originally and give the cue for “*sit*” and then “*stay*.” Wait a moment, then mark and release him for staying still. Repeat this exercise until you can open and close the door quickly without him breaking the *sit/stay* cue.

Gradually increase the amount of time you can hold the door open without him breaking the *sit/stay*. Each time, return to the puppy, mark and reward him if he held the *sit/stay* position, and release him. If he did not hold the *stay*, put him back in the original location and into a *sit/stay* again. Wait a moment, then mark and release him. Repeat this exercise until you can keep any of your doors open for 30 seconds and your puppy holds the *sit/stay* cue. Remember to always mark, reward, and release him from the cue.

Now have a friend ring the doorbell or knock on the door. Your puppy will probably run to the door to see who is there. Calmly walk to the door with leash in hand, call your puppy's name to get his attention, and put his leash on him. Put him into a *sit/stay* on his rug, hold onto the leash, and open the door slowly. If he holds the *stay*, have your friend come in to the house, return to the puppy, mark and reward him with a jackpot, then release him. If he did not hold the *stay*, put him back in the original location and into a *sit/stay*. Wait a moment, then mark and release him. Repeat this step until the puppy can hold his *sit/stay* until your friend is inside of your home and then quickly release him. At this stage, ask your friend to ignore the puppy completely and not make eye contact. You want your puppy to keep eye contact with you until he is released.

Then repeat what you did in the last step, but ask your friend to calmly greet your puppy while he is in the *sit/stay* position. If he breaks the *sit/stay*, your friend should immediately ignore the puppy while you put him back in the original position and into a *sit/stay*. Have your friend try to calmly greet your puppy again, and this time offer

him treats while your friend goes to pet him. If he can hold his *sit/stay* while being petted, quickly mark and reward him.

Repeat this a few times until he is consistent at paying attention to you while your friend pets him. Once he is consistent, you can stop offering treats while he is in the *sit/stay* and have your friend softly pet him. If he holds the position, jackpot him with many small treats for a job well done. If he is still breaking the *sit/stay*, ask for a *sit* and then quickly reward and release him. For now, training the *sit/stay* at the door is done. By ending this training session on a positive note, your puppy will have an opportunity to think about what just happened and look forward to the next training session. You can work on this behavior later in the day or the following day. Keep your lessons short, and always end a training session on a positive note.



Chewing

Chewing is a natural behavior for puppies and adult dogs. It will be important to have safe toys for your dog to chew on throughout his life. Puppies will put just about anything in their mouths, so it is your job to make sure your puppy knows what is appropriate to chew on and what is not.

With a new puppy in the house, it is a good idea to puppy-proof your home. This can protect your puppy from hurting himself and save your shoes, clothing, pillows, toys, and your home from destructive chewing.

Plush toys and most squeaky toys are not much help in relieving the discomfort of cutting new teeth, nor will they satisfy the puppy's need to chew. If you do not want the puppy to chew on shoes, do not give him an old shoe to chew on. The same holds true for all other items in your home. The puppy cannot distinguish between old or new, and expensive or inexpensive, so make sure chew toys are chew toys and not other items.

If your puppy has something in his mouth that should not be there, offering him a safe toy in exchange for the inappropriate item can be your first step in addressing this behavior. However, you cannot spend the rest of your life walking around the house trading items for toys with your puppy. You will want to teach your puppy what the cue "Leave it" means. You can teach him what this cue means in a few different ways.

For the first method, you can show the puppy a treat and hold it in your hand or put it on a chair or coffee table. When the puppy goes toward the treat, say "Leave-it" in an authoritative voice. If your puppy tries to get the treat, move the treat out of his reach quickly. If your puppy stops the forward movement, and turns his attention toward you instead of the treat, mark and reward him with a different treat and remove the treat you asked him to leave alone.

Repeat this exercise several times over many days until you can put the treat right on the coffee table or right in front of the puppy's nose and say, "Leave-it," and he looks at you instead of the treat. When he leaves it completely alone and does not try to take it, and he looks at you consistently, he is now beginning to understand what the cue "Leave it" means.

Once your puppy is good about leaving the treat alone while you are right next to him, try placing the treat on a table and taking one or two steps away from the treat. When your puppy goes near the treat, give the cue "Leave-it," but stay close to the treat in case he tries to grab it. If he goes for the treat, say the cue "Leave-it" quickly in an authoritative voice. If he stops going for the treat, mark the behavior with "Yes" or a click on the clicker and reward him with a different treat. If he does not stop going for the treat, quickly remove the treat before he gets it. Repeat this many times until you can give the cue "Leave-it" and take a few steps away without him trying to grab the treat. In time, he will learn that when you give the cue "Leave-it," he is to drop whatever he has in his mouth or simply not put the object in his mouth in the first place.

A second way you can teach your puppy the cue *leave-it* involves a soft, rubbery treat (like a piece of cooked chicken hot dog). Show the puppy the treat and then place the treat under your shoe. Make sure you are wearing close-toed shoes. At first, your puppy may scratch and dig at your shoe with the treat under it to try and get it. Do not say a word; stand up straight and wait. The second he looks at you instead of the treat, mark and reward the be-

havior with a different treat. Repeat this exercise many times until he consistently looks at you instead of trying to get the treat from under your foot. Never give the puppy the treat you want him to leave alone, or you will confuse him. You can use the treat under your foot later on, but not while you are training this behavior.

Once your puppy stops trying to get the treat from under your shoe and looks up at you consistently, you can take this a step further. Next time, put the treat on the floor under your shoe while saying "Leave-it" in an authoritative voice. Uncover the treat so your puppy can see it. If the puppy tries to get the treat, cover it with your foot immediately so he cannot get it. Wait a few seconds and try again. Repeat this exercise until your puppy looks at the treat on the floor, ignores it, and looks at you instead.

Once your puppy has been successful with ignoring the treat, it is time to make it a little more challenging for him. This time, throw a few treats on the floor and say "Leave-it." Make sure the treats are close enough together so you can cover them quickly if he tries to get one of them. Repeat this exercise several times until your puppy can look at all those wonderful treats on the floor, ignore them, and look at you. Once he has successfully accomplished this many times over many days, he will know what to do when you give the cue "Leave-it." "Leave-it" means, if it is in his mouth, he is to drop it. If he is thinking about putting something in his mouth, the cue "Leave-it" also means do not to touch that item.

The steps in the second method above are nicely demonstrated in the [Puppy Smarts Chewing](#) video.

Dogs enjoy chewing throughout their lives. It is important that your puppy and adult dog have safe toys and bones to chew on. Hard bones, rubber toys, and toys that you can put some treats in for the puppy to work for are perfect chew toys. Besides meeting his need to chew, toys you can place treats in will also offer him mental stimulation.

If your puppy or adult dog seems to be chewing excessively, there may be other reasons for this behavior. Your puppy may have a dental problem that needs to be addressed with your veterinarian. If he is between six and nine months of age, his permanent teeth are erupting, and chewing may increase dramatically. During this stage in your puppy's life, it will be a good idea to confine him to his crate when he cannot be supervised, even if he has been trustworthy in the past. This is an age when chewing is at the top of his priority list, and just about anything can be fair game.



Pay Attention

It is essential for every puppy to learn his name. When your puppy learns to turn his attention to you when he hears his name, it can help with any behavior you are teaching him. Having his attention makes training easier.

To train him to pay attention to you whenever he hears you call his name, take a wonderful-smelling treat and let him sniff it. Once he smells that wonderful treat, say his name. At the same time, bring the treat up between your eyes. When he looks you in the eyes (where you have the treat), mark the behavior with a “yes” or a click from your clicker and give him that great treat. If you lose his attention, you may have moved your hand too quickly from his nose to your eyes or the treat you are using to lure him has no value to him. Find a treat he really enjoys when training this behavior. Try again, only this time move slower.

Again, the second he looks at the treat between your eyes, mark and reward him with the treat in your hand. Practice a number of times a day until he becomes accustomed to looking you in the eyes every time he hears his name and follows the treat up to your eyes.

Once he is consistently looking you in the eyes every time you show him the treat, it is time to begin losing the lure (the exposed treat in your hand). Try the same exercise without the treat in your hand but using the same hand motion. This time when he looks up at you, mark and reward him with a jackpot (many small treats given one at a time). Repeat this step several times a day over the next few days. When he looks at you every time you call his name using the hand gestures, it is time to move to the next step.

Now, with your hands at your sides, call his name. The second he turns to look at you, quickly mark the behavior and reward him with a jackpot of treats. Continue working on this behavior over the next few days. Once he is consistently looking you in the eyes every time you call his name, it is time to make it a bit more challenging for him.

While your puppy is lying on the floor playing with a toy, call his name. When he stops playing with the toy to look at you, mark and reward him with a jackpot of treats. Repeat this only a few times a day over the next few days. Once he is consistently willing to take his attention off his toy to look at you, it is time to add other distractions, but just once in a while. These other distractions could include calling his name while people are playing with him, while he is playing with other animals, or even while he is eating his meals.

Training your puppy to take his attention off anything he is doing to pay attention to you is a wonderful skill and something for you to be very proud of. When you have his attention every time you call his name, training new behaviors will be easier.



Come

Come can be an easy cue to teach your puppy and should be turned into a game to make it fun. Teaching your puppy to *come* on cue will protect him from danger throughout his life. There are two important rules to consider when training the cue *come*.

- Never scold your puppy when he has come to you, no matter how slowly he comes.
- Never call your puppy by his name when you will be doing something he may not enjoy, such as giving him medication or giving him a bath.

There are a couple of different options for training the cue *come*. In the first option, when your puppy is lying down quietly, show him a tasty treat in your hand (lure) and walk about three feet away from him. In a happy voice, say his name and the word “Come” (cue). The second he takes his first step toward you, quickly mark the forward movement with a word like “Yes” or a click from your clicker. Encourage him to come over to you to get the tasty lure. When he does, quickly mark his forward movement and reward him with the treat when he reaches you. Give him some special attention by playing with and rubbing him, and tell him he was a good boy in a pleasant and happy voice.

Later on in the day, when he is lying down comfortably, repeat the exercise. Show him the treat, say his name in a happy voice, and give the verbal cue “Come.” Remember to mark his forward movement immediately, and give him the treat when he gets to you. Repeat this exercise several times a day for the next few days.

Once your puppy is coming to you consistently on cue, you will want to lose the lure (showing him the treat), and replace it with the reward (not showing him the treat). (For more information about the difference between lures and rewards, ask your Patient Behavior Advocate for the Lures and Rewards handout.) To accomplish this cue without a lure, begin with your hands in the same position as they were when you showed him the treat, but do not have a treat in your hand. Use his name first then give him the cue “Come” in a happy voice. Mark the immediate forward movement with a word or a click, and give him a jackpot of treats as his reward when he reaches you. After he has successfully *come* on cue three or four times, you can begin to extend the distance between the two of you.

As part of the second option, if you have more than one person in your home, you can play monkey (puppy)-in-the-middle. Have two people stand a few feet apart and take turns calling him. Both people should have many small treats to offer him as the reward for coming. For the first two or three times playing this game, use the reward as a lure until the puppy gets the hang of the game and comes quickly to the person who calls him. The person who calls the puppy should use a happy voice when saying his name along with the cue “Come.” The person who is not calling him should stand up straight and ignore him.

Once he has successfully come to both people a few times in a row, extend the distance between the two people a few steps at a time. In the beginning, it is okay to show him the lure treat, but as time goes on, it is important to

turn the lure into the reward and hide the treat. In the future, you do not want him visibly checking out your hands from a distance to see if you have a treat before he is willing to come to you. Before you know it, he will be flying back and forth between the two of you and having a wonderful time as he is learning the new cue.

You will want to repeat this exercise many times with different family members until he comes to all family members consistently. Once he does, he is ready for the next step in training this behavior.

The Next Step

In the next step, it is time for a game of hide-and-seek. While your puppy is in one room of the house and you are in another, say his name and give the cue “Come” in a happy voice. Use your happy voice to encourage him to come find you. The second you see him, mark his forward movement and give him a jackpot of many small treats when he gets to you. This was much more difficult than when he could see you, so let him know how proud you are of him.

Repeat this exercise a few times a day over many days. When he comes to you quickly every time you call his name, it is time to start adding distractions.

Adding Distractions

A distraction can be a toy, another person, or anything your puppy will want to pay attention to more than to you.

Give your puppy a toy to play with and walk a few steps away. Say his name and give the cue “Come” in a happy voice. When he looks up at you, encourage him to come to you. Mark any forward movement, and offer him a jackpot of rewards. Then, tell him to go play, or use another word that releases him. This is to let him know that even though you may be interrupting his playtime, he can get a treat from you and go back to playing with his toy. Repeat this a few times a day over the next 10 days, extending the distance between the two of you until you can give him a toy, walk out of the room, call his name with the cue “Come,” and he drops his toy to see what you want or have for him. Once he is consistent at coming to you when he is playing with his toy, you can now add another distraction—a person.

Ask someone to start playing with the puppy. Then, standing just a few feet away, say his name in a happy voice and ask him to *come*. If he looks at you, encourage him to come until he reaches you, and offer him a jackpot of treats and lots of petting, and tell him what a good boy he is.

If he is too distracted with the other person, walk over to him and lure him. Let him smell the treat for just a second and walk away. Encourage the other person to continue playing with him. Then, quickly call his name and offer the cue “Come” in a happy voice. Do this quickly, as you do not want him to forget you have that wonderful treat waiting for him. Once he is consistently coming to you while someone else is playing with him, begin to extend the distance between the two of you until you can be at the other end of the house, call him by name and give the cue “Come,” and he will come even though he is getting attention from someone else. You will want to repeat this exercise many times with different family members until he comes to all family members consistently.

The next step in training this behavior is with other animals in the house. You will take the same steps as you did with the other distractions. Always move at your puppy's pace—do not progress too quickly. You want him to be successful when learning new behaviors, and failure can result if the training process is rushed.

Distractions Outside the House

Once your puppy is consistent with handling distractions inside, it is time to move the training outside. When you are beginning to train him to *come* on cue outside, you will always want to keep him safe.

Dogs do not generalize well, which means the *come* cue may be brand new to him outside. With a loose leash on the dog, face him and take a few steps backward. Say his name and give the cue "Come" in a happy voice. The second he looks at you, encourage him to come; then mark and reward him for coming. Once he does come to you, it is important to release him to go play again. Words such as "Go play," or "Free dog," will work as a release—just keep the release consistent throughout the puppy's training.

Repeat the "Come" cue a few more times outside until your puppy comes to you consistently. As he becomes more consistent, you can use a long line to extend the distance between the two of you. At this point, the behavior is not as established as it should be for him to be allowed off-leash. Taking your puppy off-leash too quickly can lead to many problems and could be dangerous for him. Being outside without a leash or long line is a privilege that must be earned. If you take him off-leash before the puppy is ready, he may run away from you to play. Once he figures out he can run away from you when he does not have a leash on, training the *come* cue and other behaviors becomes more difficult. Wait to unleash him until he is consistently coming to you outside with many different distractions.

After a few months of consistent behavior, you can begin training him to *come* on cue off-leash in a fenced area. When you take him off-leash, ask for the *come* while close to him and slowly extend the distance a foot or two at a time.

A word of caution: Avoid training the *come* behavior too many times in the same day or having the training sessions occur too close together in time. You do not want to habituate him to the cue *come*.

It is very important that the puppy is always rewarded for coming to you, no matter how long it takes. Coming to you should always be a pleasant experience so that in time he will know coming to you is always an opportunity for a nice treat or that something good will happen. Once he is conditioned to *come* on cue, you can begin to offer the rewards intermittently.



Down

There are three basic steps when teaching your puppy this cue:

- *Lure.* Put the puppy into a *sit* position and then place a treat in your hand in front of the puppy's nose. Move the treat slowly down between his front legs to the floor. When most puppies' noses go between their front legs, the back legs slide back and they go down, which is exactly what you want. A slippery surface works best for this training, as it offers little resistance to the puppy sliding down to the floor.
- *Mark.* The second the puppy's body hits the floor, say a word such as "Yes" or give a click from a clicker to mark the behavior. This lets him know that was the behavior you wanted.
- *Reward.* Give the puppy a different tasty treat in addition to the one you just used to get him into the *down* position. Make sure he receives the treat while his body is still on the floor, or you will be rewarding the wrong behavior. The correct position is body on floor to receive his reward.

Once the puppy is consistent at downing promptly every time you show him the lure, change the lure into a reward. This can be accomplished by moving your hands the same way, but without any treats. Add the verbal cue "Down" at the same time you are moving your hand to the floor. The second his body hits the floor, mark and reward him quickly. With a little time and practice you can stop using your hands entirely and merely give the cue "Down." The finished behavior has three basic steps:

- *Cue.* Say the cue "Down."
- *Mark.* Say "Yes" or a click the moment the puppy's body hits the floor.
- *Reward.* Give the puppy a treat.

It is very important to change the lure into a reward only for completing the behavior, or the puppy will listen to you only when he sees a treat. The first time he *downs* without you showing him a treat, jackpot him for a good job. A jackpot is many tiny treats given to him in a row. Instead of just one treat, a jackpot will be four or five tiny treats in a row. This is to let him know he did a great job.

Helping Your Puppy Generalize the Cue

If you are teaching your puppy to *down* in front of you, start asking for the *down* at your side. This will be a new behavior you are requesting since dogs do not generalize well. When you teach your puppy to *down* at your side, train the same way you did when asking for the *down* when he was in front of you. Once he is consistent in front of you and at your side, it is time to introduce new environments, such as a different room, then outside, then from across the room, and so on. Each step takes time. This is a progression toward teaching your puppy that when you give the cue "Down," he learns in many different places and from many different positions that "Down" means you want his body on the floor.

Often, a new puppy parent thinks its puppy is stubborn, hardheaded, or has selective hearing because the puppy will not *down* when asked for the cue. In many cases, it is because the puppy parent did not teach the puppy the cue in many places or with distractions. Another reason why some puppies do not *down* on cue is because they

were habituated to the cue. This can happen when puppy parents repeated the cue more than once by saying “Down, down, down.” This can confuse the puppy and he will get used to hearing “Down” (one time) with no behavior required of him, which makes the cue ineffective. If you must repeat the cue, take a step to the right or left first, get your puppy’s attention, and then repeat the cue—once.

Troubleshooting *Down*

Some puppies resist the above method. You can address this resistance in a couple of ways.

The first option is to begin by sitting on the floor with your puppy between your legs. Bend one leg up and slide your hand under your bent knee with the treat in it. Show your puppy the treat. As your puppy puts his head down toward the treat, bring it under your leg so the only way he can get the treat is to lie down and get under your bent knee. This may be a little difficult, but you should have to use this method only a few times before he is willing to *down* on cue.

Once your puppy is consistently downing from this position, you can then train the behavior with him next to you on the floor instead of between your legs. From that point, ask for the behavior while you are kneeling on the floor and then from a standing position. Remember to always mark and reward when he gives you the desired behavior.

Another way to train this behavior is to pay attention to your puppy. When he goes to lie down on his own, say the cue “Down,” mark the behavior, and give him a treat to reinforce the *down*. When you repeat this several times over several days, the puppy will learn the cue *down* on his own with a little help from you. Remember, once he is downing consistently, move to different rooms and add distractions while perfecting this behavior. This method of training is about catching your puppy doing what you want, giving it a name (cue), then marking and rewarding to establish the new behavior.

If you find that your puppy seems to be resisting the *down* cue, do not push his body down to the floor. There may be a medical reason for this resistance. Instead, contact our office and set up an appointment. Many puppies that have resisted the *down* cue were later diagnosed with a physical problem.



Drop-It

Drop-it is a great cue and should be taught to every puppy. Trying to pull items out of a puppy's mouth can be challenging, dangerous, and misunderstood by the puppy as an act of aggression by you. Teaching *drop-it* starts off as a game of exchange: I will give you this if you will give me that.

When you begin to train the cue *drop-it*, make sure you have some wonderful treats to give the puppy in exchange for what he has in his mouth. When he is playing with a toy, walk over to him and give the cue "Drop-it," and offer him a piece of chicken or other wonderful treat in exchange for his toy. The second he drops his toy for the treat you have offered, mark the behavior with "Yes" or a click from your clicker and give him the treat. This will teach your puppy two things at the same time: The puppy will learn to drop objects in his mouth when you give the cue "Drop-it" and it will also help him not to guard his toys.

Repeat this many times with many different safe puppy toys over the next couple of weeks. If he grabs other items in the house, use these items to train this behavior as well. If he releases the item in his mouth when he hears the cue "Drop-it," mark the behavior and reward him by giving him one of his toys in exchange for the item he should not have in his mouth. Do not begin training with objects you are having trouble getting him to release. Start off with easy objects and work your way up to the more challenging ones. You always want to set him up for success and then build on those successes. That is what is called shaping a behavior. You start off with small successes until he is doing exactly what you request.

As your puppy becomes faster at releasing what is already in his mouth, begin to offer the exchange less frequently. For example, the next time you say "Drop-it," he may get an ear scratch and be told he is a good boy. The next time, he might get a treat, and the next time just a verbal "Good boy." Yet another time he might get three treats instead of just one. By keeping him guessing on whether he gets a treat, an ear scratch, or kind words, you will keep his attention on you and make it enjoyable to listen to the cues you give him. Once you feel he really understands what the cue "Drop-it" means, you can start adding distractions. This could be other people in the room while you are training him, or perhaps outside in a safe, enclosed area.

After a while, the puppy will understand what "Drop-it" means. This will make playing fetch with him easier to train since he will already know the cue.

If, for safety's sake, you must physically take something out of your puppy's mouth, gently take your hand over the puppy's muzzle and, using your thumb and index or middle finger, gently squeeze at the back of the jaw between the upper and lower teeth. Reach inside his mouth and take the object out of it. Once the object is out, tell the puppy what a good boy he was and give him a treat. This procedure should never be done in a mean or hurtful way and should be used only when the puppy's or another's safety is at risk.

If your puppy is growling at you, an alternative way to get something out of his mouth is to toss a tasty treat a couple of feet away from him. When he drops the item to go get the treat, pick the object up quickly and put it away or throw it away.



Grabbing or Training *Leave-It*

Depending on what your puppy is grabbing, there are a few ways to address this behavior. Grabbing can include taking clothing, food from children, treats, pillows, plants, and toys, among other objects.

Leave-It

When your puppy is grabbing at almost anything he should not be, a good cue to teach is *leave-it*. This is nicely demonstrated in the PuppySmarts Chewing training video. Once the puppy understands what the cue *leave-it* means, you can begin using the cue whenever he goes to grab something he should not. Each time your puppy obeys the cue, mark and reward the appropriate behavior. It is best to train this cue while the puppy is playing nicely with one of his toys. Simply walk up to him and say "Leave-it," and offer him a nice treat in exchange for the toy. Once he releases the toy, give him the treat. When he is done with his treat, give him back his toy to play with. Repeat this a few times a day until every time he hears the words "Leave-it," he immediately drops the item he has in his mouth.

Clothes and Shoes

When your puppy is grabbing at clothing and shoes, there is another training method you can use to address this behavior. Put your puppy in a small room (like a bathroom) and re-create the behavior. For example, suppose the puppy grabs shoes or pajamas when you walk by him. In the small room, try to walk as you did the moment before he grabbed your shoes or clothing. The second he grabs the article, quickly walk out of the little room and close the door. The puppy will let go of the item when the door is almost closed. Be careful not to get the puppy's muzzle in the door jamb; you do not want to hurt him.

Once you close the door, walk away for 10 or 20 seconds. Go back into the room and act as if nothing happened. Talk and play with your puppy as you would normally do to create the grabbing behavior once again. Once the puppy grabs the article, walk out of the room quickly and close the door. Do not say a word. After repeating this exercise five or six times, he will figure out on his own that when he grabs your shoes or clothing he is left all alone. Since he does not want to be left alone, he will stop the grabbing behavior.

Repeat this exercise several times a day over the next week. By the end of the week, he will understand that grabbing clothes or shoes is not an acceptable behavior. Always mark and reward him with your attention when he stops himself from grabbing or when he simply does not try to grab your clothing. This is the behavior you wanted and you need to let him know that.

Treats

Grabbing treats is another area you may need to address with your puppy. Most people do not want their puppies biting them when they offer treats. If your puppy lunges or grabs treats from your hand, here is a way to stop this behavior. Take a dog bone treat and place it between your index and middle finger. Position the treat so the longest part of the dog bone is in the front of your hand. Offer your puppy the treat with the front of your hand facing the dog. Before you give the treat, say the word "Easy" in an authoritative voice and offer him the treat.

If he tries to grab the treat from your hand, put the treat away and just say the words “Too bad” and walk away. In about 10 to 15 minutes, offer him the treat again, holding it the same way. Tell him “Easy” and offer him the treat again. If he tries to grab or lunge at the treat, again say “Too bad” and put the treat away for an hour or so.

Repeat this exercise many times over the next week until he consistently takes the treat from your hand gently. Once he is reliably taking the treat from your hand gently, it is time to put the treat between your thumb and index finger and offer him the treat. Make sure to hold the treat far enough back so if he does lunge or try to grab the treat he does not grab your thumb at the same time or rip the treat out of your hand.

Using this new way of holding the treat, say “Easy” in an authoritative voice, and offer him the treat. If he grabs or lunges for the treat, put it away and walk away from him. This time wait 30 to 40 minutes and repeat the exercise. Repeat this exercise until he consistently takes the treat from your hand in a gentle fashion. In time, he will learn how to take treats gently from hands.



Hyperactive Puppies

Puppies are full of energy and require lots of exercise. Just like children, they need lots of opportunities and time for play. The timing of exercise, attention, and playtime should be your choice, not the puppy's.

When your puppy tries to get your attention by jumping, lunging, biting, licking, barking, or nipping at your clothes, it is important that you ignore him and walk away. Paying attention to your puppy when he is demanding your attention is not a good idea.

Keep your puppy close to you when working with this behavior. Put your puppy on a leash so you will have more control. You may find it easier at times to step on the leash when he is acting out. This will protect you or others and allow you to ignore him when necessary. When you step on the leash, allow your puppy enough room (about two to three feet from the clip to your foot) so that he does not feel pinned down. If he acts in a way that warrants stepping on the leash, look away and wait out his demanding and excitable behavior. It is important that your puppy not be able to hurt you by jumping up, grabbing your clothing, or nipping at your skin. The more opportunities you have to work with this behavior, the faster it will stop.

Here are some basic guidelines to help you teach your puppy self-control and good manners:

- Never allow your puppy to initiate play with you or other family members. You or the other family members should always be the ones to start play, not your puppy. However, if your puppy brings you a toy and you have the time to play with him, ask him to sit and then play with him as a reward.
- You should decide when playtime is over, not your puppy. Keep play sessions short (about five minutes) so that you can be the one to decide when playtime is over.
- Offer petting, scratching, and other forms of attention only to quiet puppies. Any rambunctious behaviors are ignored.

If the puppy jumps up, cross your arms over your chest to protect your face, arms, and fingers, turn your back on the puppy, and take a step forward. If he jumps up again, step on the leash to make sure he cannot hurt you, and take all your attention away from him.

Take all attention away from your puppy if he tries to demand your attention. This includes nudging your arm with his nose or barking at you for attention. Do not say a word. Look away, stand up, and walk away from him.

When your puppy is settled and quiet, walk over to him, softly pet him, and say "Yes, good, quiet." If he jumps up on you, walk away and try again when he is lying quietly. When he accepts the quiet petting, mark the quiet behavior with "Yes, good, quiet," and reward him with a soft, long pet. This will send a clear message to him that he will get your attention and rewards when he is quiet.

When it is time to feed the puppy, ask him for a *sit* before offering the meal. If he jumps up, do not feed him. Place the meal in the refrigerator or in a cabinet and walk away. Wait a minute or two for him to calm down and repeat the exercise. Once he remains seated for just a few seconds, quickly place the food dish on the floor and release

him from the *sit* position. This will help teach him patience and self-control. If you are not successful after trying a couple of times, feed your puppy his normal meal. Set aside time to work on the *sit* cue with him before trying this exercise again. (If the puppy is not proficient with the *sit* cue, ask your Patient Behavior Advocate for the handout on teaching *sit*.)

A demanding puppy becomes a demanding dog, and demanding dogs can become aggressive dogs quickly. When you take all energy and attention away from this demanding and excitable behavior, it will diminish.

If your puppy is so out of control you cannot manage him, put him in his crate for a time-out. This gives him some time to calm down and may be necessary for only a few minutes. If you put him in his crate, do not open the door of the crate when he is barking. Opening the crate when your puppy is barking means he is making demands and training you.

Remember, everything should be done when *you* say, not when your puppy demands it. After consistently working with him for a few weeks, you should begin to notice a change in his behavior.



Leash Pulling

When your puppy pulls on a leash, he is trying to get from point A to point B faster than you are. When your young dog pulls on the leash, stop walking and wait for him to turn and look back at you. The moment he turns his attention toward you, mark the behavior (paying attention to you) with a word like “yes” or click your clicker and have him come to you for the reward. Consistency is the key. You must stop any forward movement every time he pulls on the leash. Wait for him to pay attention to you and then mark and reward the correct behavior. You can also take a step or two backward or change direction if he is still pulling on the leash.

Another way to address leash pulling with your puppy is to tether him to your waist with a leash. A six-foot leash should be used when using the tethering method. Make sure your puppy is light enough to not pull you off balance. You do not want to get hurt in the process. Begin using the tether inside the house at first. Once he has adjusted to being within the leash distance from you, try the tether outside. This method can get him used to going only a few feet ahead of you.

When the puppy is where you want him, next to your side or walking on a loose leash, gently give him a few little pats on the head or mark with “yes” or a click from your clicker so he begins to understand what you want him to do: to walk on a loose leash. Every so often, you can give him a treat for being such a good boy.

These methods work with some puppies, but not all. Many puppies have lots of energy and can experience a bit of a challenge walking at our slower pace. For these dogs, some wonderful training aids can help with leash pulling. Two of the tools you can use are head collars and halters. When using any kind of head collar, you will want to first desensitize your dog to wearing it. Some dogs are concerned when you first try to fit them with head collars, and a halter may be a better option to start with.

Your Patient Behavior Advocate will decide which head collar or halter is best for your puppy, based on the challenges you are facing and the bone structure of your puppy. Head collars and halters are training tools and should be used as such. Once your puppy has stopped pulling on the leash, you can gradually go from the head collar or halter to a flat-buckled collar, based on whether your puppy is still trying to pull.

When taking your dog for a leisurely walk as a reward for relieving himself, do not expect him to walk at a heel position. Heeling (dog taught to walk exactly at your knee and hold that position) is good to use in a crowded situation or in the obedience ring. It is not a normal position for any animal for walking. Heeling does not give the puppy an opportunity to check out all the interesting smells that attract his attention. It is believed that dogs learn many things about other animals through their ability to smell where other animals have been. Give your puppy that opportunity.



Leashes

To get your puppy comfortable with his leash, clip the leash onto the collar or harness. Once attached, take a few steps in front of him while holding the leash in your hand. Say the words "Let's go." If your puppy starts pulling away or freezes, offer him a treat a few inches in front of his nose. Keep the food just far enough away that he will have to take one step forward to get to it. The second the first step is taken, mark the forward movement with "Yes" or a click from your clicker and give him the treat for his bravery.

Repeat the exercise, but this time place the treat far enough away that he will need to take two or three steps to reach the wonderful treat you are offering. Coax and encourage him to move forward. Do not pull or force him to move forward with the leash.

Once he does take those steps, mark and reward the forward movement quickly. Repeat the exercise many times until your puppy is joyfully waiting for the next treat and willing to take more and more steps to reach it. Once the puppy realizes the leash is a good thing, then it is time for a real walk. Always have some treats ready to use as rewards in case he gets a little concerned along the way.

If you do not want him to pull you when on a leash, do not pull him. If he starts biting on the leash, ignore the leash biting and keep on walking. It is better to replace a leash or two now than many leashes later in his life. When your puppy receives attention from acting out when biting on the leash, then the behavior will increase in intensity and duration. If the leash biting is ignored, it will diminish in intensity and duration and it will stop.



Loud Noises

Loud noises, such as motorcycles, gunshots, thunder, loud music, garbage trucks, and so forth, can bother some puppies. If it does not bother you, nine out of ten times it will not bother your puppy. If it does bother you, then in many cases it will also bother your puppy. He will pick up emotional cues from you and act accordingly. Always show confidence in what you are doing with him. He will sense it and be more comfortable.

If your puppy is concerned about loud noises, introduce him slowly to different sounds. You can distract him with an ear scratch, a toy, or a treat. Gradually increase the intensity of the noise as he becomes comfortable at each level. Proceed at your puppy's pace; you want to desensitize him gradually to loud sounds.

If you live in a quiet place, you may want to expose him to a sound CD. Just because it is quiet today does not mean five years from now you won't be living somewhere with violent thunderstorms, backfiring trucks, or Fourth of July fireworks.

The process of desensitization can be used for any object or situation that frightens your puppy. Remember, it is a gradual process, and taking small steps is extremely important. If you have any additional questions, please contact our office, as desensitization and/or medication may be needed in some cases to help your puppy cope.



Shy, Timid, and Fearful Puppies

Fear is an unpleasant emotion for humans and animals. Keeping this in mind will assist you in being patient and understanding with your puppy as you help him build confidence through socialization and desensitization. It is extremely important that you move slowly in the socialization and desensitization processes. Always work at your puppy's pace. Try not to force, pull, or demand anything unless you, your puppy, or others are in danger. Never scold him harshly or punish him in any way. This will only make him more concerned with his new world.

Getting timid puppies to wear a collar, walk on a leash, or allow anyone to pet them can be very challenging. The best thing you can do is to let your puppy experience new things at his own pace. If he pulls away from you, stop what you are doing. If your puppy freezes, stop what you are doing. The faster you stop what you are doing, the easier it will be for both you and your puppy the next time the same situation occurs.

Dogs are very good at trusting us. We can build this trust if we let them know quickly we are listening to them (by watching and interpreting their body language) and we are willing to accommodate their fear by responding to them. Stopping what you are doing when your puppy gives you a signal that he doesn't want you to continue lets your puppy know you are paying attention to his concerns. Knowing you are listening will help him trust you and begin to trust others.

When Dealing with Strangers

Other people should not try to pet your puppy unless he first actively moves toward them for a pet. Many shy, timid, and fearful puppies are more willing to get a treat than to be petted by strangers. Have the new person offer your puppy a treat. If he does not want to take the treat from the stranger, have the person throw a treat gently toward him, so he will not have to get too close to the person to receive it. Do this many times with different people until the puppy is comfortable walking up to a stranger for a treat. Strangers can gradually drop the treats closer and closer to themselves until he feels comfortable getting the treat right out of the person's hand. Repeating this exercise a few times a day over a few weeks can help build your puppy's confidence.

The Do-Not-Carry Rule

Carrying your puppy from point A to point B should be done as little as possible. When you or other family members are constantly carrying your puppy, you are sending him a message that he cannot handle anything on his own. Although it may be difficult for you to not carry your puppy a lot, letting him experience life with all four paws on the floor will be better for him in the long run.



Sit

There are three basic steps when teaching your puppy this cue:

- *Lure.* Put a treat just above the puppy's nose and move the treat slowly up over his head so he will need to look up to follow the treat. When most puppies' noses go up, their rears go down into the *sit* position, which is exactly what you want.
- *Mark.* The second your puppy's rear hits the floor, say a word such as "yes" or give a click from a clicker to mark the behavior (rear on floor). This lets your puppy know that was the behavior you wanted.
- *Reward.* Give your puppy a tasty treat, but make sure he receives it while his rear is still on the floor or you will be rewarding the wrong behavior. The correct position is rear on floor to receive his reward. A reward reinforces the behavior the puppy gave you, in this case, it is the *sit*.

Once your puppy is consistent at sitting promptly every time you give him the command and show him the lure, change the lure into a reward. This can be accomplished by moving your hands the same way, but without any treats in them. Add the verbal cue "sit" at the same time you are moving your hand over his head. The second his rear hits the floor, mark and reward him quickly. With a little time and practice, you can stop using your hands entirely and merely give the cue "sit."

It is very important to change the lure at the beginning into a reward only for completing the behavior, or your puppy will listen to you only when he sees a treat. The first time he sits without you showing him a treat, jackpot him for a good job. Instead of just one treat, a jackpot will be four or five tiny treats in a row. This will let him know he did a great job.

The finished behavior has three basic steps: cue, mark, and reward.

- *Cue.* Say the cue "sit."
- *Mark.* The moment the puppy's rear hits the floor, offer a "yes" or a click.
- *Reward.* Give the puppy a treat to reinforce the *sit* behavior he just gave you.

Helping Your Puppy Generalize the Cue

If you are teaching your puppy to sit in front of you, start asking for the *sit* at your side. You are asking for a new behavior, as dogs do not generalize well. When you teach your puppy to sit at your side, train the same way you did when asking for the *sit* when he was in front of you. Once he is consistent in front of you and at your side, it is time to introduce new environments, such as a different room, then outside, then from across the room, and so forth. Each step takes time. You can also begin to add other places, being given the cue by different people, and adding distractions. Now he will understand that *sit* means put rear on floor.

Many new puppy parents think their puppies are stubborn, hardheaded, or have selective hearing because they will not *sit* when they ask for the cue. In many cases, however, it is because the puppy parent did not teach the puppy the cue in many places or with distractions. Another reason that some puppies do not *sit* on cue is because they were habituated to the cue *sit*. This can happen when puppy parents repeat the cue more than once by saying “sit, sit, sit.” Repeating a cue habituates the puppy to the cue. If you must repeat the cue, take a step to the right or left first, get your puppy’s attention, and then repeat the cue once.

Troubleshooting *Sit*

Some puppies resist the above method by backing up. You can address this resistance in several ways. You can ask for the cue in a corner so that the puppy is restricted as to how far he can back up, or you can try asking for the *sit* on a different surface.

For some puppies, you can use a rug or pillow as a different texture to sit on. This can make a difference when the cue is first being taught. Once the puppy is consistently sitting on the special surface, you can train him in new places on different surfaces.

If you find that your puppy seems to be resisting the cue *sit*, do not push or force his rear down to the floor. There may be a medical reason for this resistance. Instead, contact our office and set up an appointment for a complete examination.



Stay

When teaching the cue *stay*, it is easiest to train from the *down* or *sit* position. Just like *down* and *sit*, the cue *stay* requires a release word. You can use the words “Free dog” or “Okay.” If you are a fan of the movie *Babe*, you can even use the words “That’ll do.” Whichever word or words you choose to release your puppy from a *stay* position is fine as long as you remain consistent.

When teaching this cue, first ask your puppy to do *sit* or *down*. Say the word “Stay” verbally, and use the hand signal of an open hand, fingers together in front of his face. Stand up straight, be still, and wait a few seconds. Mark the behavior quietly with a “Yes” or a click from your clicker and then reward and release him from the cue.

Never offer the mark or reward for staying unless he has not moved. If you put him in a *sit/stay* position, the mark and reward are given only if he is still in the same position he started from. If he breaks the *sit/stay* before you get the chance to mark, reward, and release, do not offer the mark or reward. If he breaks the *sit/stay* after the mark but before the reward, do not offer the reward. When you offer the mark or reward when the puppy has moved before being released, you are rewarding the wrong behavior. This will only confuse him. You asked for a *sit/stay* so the *sit/stay* is what you mark, reward, and release.

When you begin training the *stay* behavior, you can gradually increase the length of time before you mark, reward, and release. Start off by asking for a three-second *stay*, and then ask for five seconds, then ten, twenty, and thirty seconds. Each time you ask for the behavior, remember to mark, reward, and release the *stay* cue.

It is important to keep eye contact with the puppy when training this behavior. Watch your puppy closely for signs that tell you he is going to break the cue. He may begin to wiggle or adjust his body, a sign that he may be losing interest. Once you see any of these signs, quickly mark, reward, and release him from the *sit/stay* (or *down/stay*). By paying close attention to his body language, you can help him be successful. If you do not see the signs, he may break the behavior before you have had a chance to mark, reward, and release him.

Once your puppy is staying for 30 seconds in one room of the house, begin to train the *stay* in other rooms until he has learned the cue *stay* in a few different rooms.

Now that he can reliably stay for 30 seconds, it is time to lengthen the space between where you are standing and the puppy. Start off asking for the *stay* right in front of him. Once he is in the *stay* position for a few seconds, repeat the word “Stay,” as well as the hand signal; then take a step back away from him. If he is staying quietly after a few seconds, step back into your original position. Give the mark, reward, and release. If he breaks the *stay* cue when you take the step back, simply return to him and put him into the exact same position again. Ask for the *sit/stay* in the same location you did the first time so he can begin to understand that *stay* means to stay exactly where you put him.

Next time you train this behavior and you get ready to take a step away, make it a very small step. Repeat the *sit/stay* cue verbally and with the hand signal. If he can stay for just a few seconds, step back into your original position. Mark, reward, and release him. Always give your puppy a chance to build on his successes.

Repeat this exercise many times over many months while gradually extending the distance between you and your puppy. Each time you train the cue *sit/stay*, start off in front of him. As you begin to lengthen your distance, take steps backward. Do not turn your back on him yet. The cue *stay* must be well established before you can turn away from him when you ask for the cue. Right now, he is just learning to deal with the distance between the two of you.

When the puppy can hold the *sit/stay* and you can back away 10 or 20 feet, he is ready for the next step in training this cue, adding distractions.

While he is in a *sit/stay* or *down/stay* position and you are across the room from him, repeat the *stay* cue both verbally and with the hand signal. Take a few steps to the right, stop, and face him, repeating the hand and verbal cue. If you notice him twitching, he may be getting concerned and ready to break the cue. Repeat the cue “Stay” as you walk back to where you started. Encourage the *stay* every step of the way, and if necessary repeat the cue “Stay” until you are standing in front of him. Once you are in front of him, quickly mark, reward, and release him. Repeat this exercise many times over many weeks until you can take steps to the right and left and he holds the *sit/stay* or *down/stay* position.

Next, you can make it a little more challenging for the puppy. When he is in a *sit/stay* or a *down/stay*, take a ball and gently roll it across the floor. If you see him squirming and wanting to go get the ball, repeat the cue both verbally and with the hand signal as you walk back to him. Once in front of him, mark and reward with many small treats this time for a job well done, and release him. Once he has been released, let him go get the ball and play together for a few minutes. Repeat the exercise later that day or later during the week until he can be still when he sees the ball roll across the floor.

With all training exercises it is important to remember that dogs do not generalize well. As a result, they must be taught the same cue in many different locations, possibly with different people, and with many different distractions until they can understand *stay* means stay where you are, even if toys, children, and wonderful treats are just a few feet away.

The cue *stay* can be a real challenge for puppies to learn. (Humans, too, can have a challenge with learning to stay still.) Be patient, and take small steps forward in your training. It is your job to help your puppy be successful at learning our language. Whenever training, always end your training sessions on a positive note. If he is having problems staying still, ask him to *sit*, and mark and reward him for the *sit*. For now the training session is over. Short sessions that end on a positive note, sprinkled throughout the day, will achieve wonderful results.



Grooming

Brushing and Combing

Brushing your puppy is an important bonding time for both of you. This is a wonderful time to build trust in the relationship. Check the brush and comb you are going to be using to make sure they do not scratch your puppy's skin. Some combs and brushes have sharp edges, and they can hurt. When this happens, your puppy will become concerned every time you try to groom him. If you are using a slicker brush, use one that has cushioning for the teeth and make sure that the actual teeth have been rounded off so they are not sharp. By checking tools before they touch your puppy, many grooming concerns can be eliminated.

If your puppy is afraid of the brush or comb, and he tries to bite you or the grooming tool, stop brushing or combing him immediately. Offer him the brush or comb to feel and taste. If he wants to bite it, let him. Give him a minute or so to check out this new object with which you are trying to touch him. When he looks away, that is a sign that he has finished checking out the new item and you can begin again.

Once the puppy has had an opportunity to explore the brush or comb, slowly start to brush him again. If he pulls away or cries, immediately stop again. Talk to your puppy and give him some pets and treats to take his mind off what just happened. Do something else with him for a while and try again later in the day.

The next time you try to brush or comb him, offer a few tiny treats as you use the back of the brush or comb to slide on his body. This will offer him a different kind of petting feeling without teeth. Talk softly, reassure him, and offer treats to reward this quiet behavior as you are using the back of the comb or brush.

After a few strokes, turn the brush or comb over and lightly do one stroke. If he accepts the stroke, be sure to praise him and keep the treats coming. If he tries to bite, cries, or squirms, stop again. Ask him for a simple cue such as *sit* and then mark and reward him and end the grooming session on a positive note. You can try again later the same day or the next day. For now, do not give the puppy too much attention and go about your normal daily activities.

Some puppies can be very sensitive about being groomed and will need time to work through this procedure. The most important piece of this exercise is to teach your puppy that you are paying attention to his concerns and stopping when he asks you to. In time, he will learn to trust you enough to allow brushing and combing. Remember that this is not a race, and it is important for you and your puppy to have a positive experience. Grooming your dog can be a wonderful bonding opportunity, and every dog needs grooming.

Work with your puppy using the brush and/or comb every day. Stop if your puppy cries, squirms, or tries to bite you. If the problem persists after several days, consult with your veterinarian because your puppy may have a medical issue you are not aware of that is causing this reaction. If your veterinarian does not find a medical reason for your puppy's reaction to being groomed, do not give up.

Give your puppy the time he needs to become comfortable with this procedure. In time, he will begin to trust you and learn that brushing or combing will not hurt him. When this happens, he will become comfortable with being groomed and this can become a special time for both of you.

Ear Cleaning

Checking your puppy's ears and keeping them clean can prevent infections and funguses. A number of products are on the market to keep your puppy's ears clean. Ask your veterinarian which product is best for your puppy.

Floppy ears can be a haven for yeast to grow, and this can be very uncomfortable for your puppy. To clean your puppy's ears, only use products specifically made for dog ears. Baby oil, rubbing alcohol, or non-ear cleaning solutions are *not* recommended. Products such as these can cause more harm than good to your puppy.

Many ear problems have a strong odor. If your puppy's ears have an odor, make an appointment with your veterinarian. Ear problems need attention as soon as possible. The longer you wait to take your puppy to the clinic, the worse the problem will become and the more painful it will be for him.

When checking your puppy's ears, the first thing you will want to do is to get him comfortable with having his ears touched. You can start off by petting his ears. If he does not like you touching his ears, then stop petting them for now. If he pulls away at any time while you are touching his ears, do not force him to accept the touch. This will only make him more concerned. Stop what you are doing and offer him a few little treats to take his mind off your touching his ears.

Offer your puppy a treat with one hand, and pet his ear with your other hand. If your puppy is now comfortable and does not pull away, you can lift up his ear and put it back down. If he still seems comfortable, you can look inside each ear and smell it.

If he is sensitive to his ears being touched, you will want to desensitize him to having them checked and/or cleaned. You can do this by spending a minute or so a day touching his ears. Do this several times on each ear until your puppy seems comfortable and shows no signs of concern. Next, try picking up one ear flap between your thumb and fingers. Lightly hold onto the ear and gently slide your hand out to the end of the ear. If the puppy shows any concern by crying, squirming, or trying to bite you, that is his way of asking you to stop. When you honor his concerns, over time, he will learn that you can be trusted. Once trust is established, life can be easier for both of you.

A few minutes later you can try again. Again, pet his ears with one hand while offering him a treat with the other hand. Try again to pick up the ear with one hand, and slide your hand down the ear gently while offering the treat with the other hand. Repeat this as many times as you need to, stopping every time he shows signs of concern. If he is still concerned after one or two minutes, stop for now, give him a nice pet along his back, or do something else you know he enjoys and try again later. You always want to end training sessions on a positive note.

Within a few days, the puppy will become more comfortable with having his ears touched. Once he is comfortable with the ear slides, pick up one ear at a time and look down into the ear canal. You will not be able to see all the way down into the canal, which is why smelling your puppy's ears is so important. The odor will alert you that

something is wrong. Sometimes you will see redness or the ears seem to have a buildup much like ear wax in humans. This can be a sign of a fungus in the ear. If your puppy's ears have a bad odor or seem discolored, make an appointment for him to see your veterinarian immediately.

Checking your puppy's ears at least once a week and following an ear-cleaning regimen that your veterinarian recommends will help keep puppy's ears healthy and clean.

Nail Trimming

Many puppies have a concern with having their nails trimmed. This is actually very understandable. To your puppy, his feet are the major means of escape when in danger of any kind. With that in mind you, will want to let him know that touching his feet or trimming his nails is safe for him.

Your puppy will need nail trimming throughout his entire life. When nails are not properly trimmed, the living center of the nail (the quick) will continue to grow along with the nails. When this happens, it can cause discomfort and result in physical problems.

When trimming your puppy's nails, the first thing you will want to do is to get him used to having his feet touched by desensitizing him. The easiest way to accomplish this is by following your puppy's lead. Always move slower if you have a fearful puppy. Fearful puppies should be encouraged and rewarded for being brave with any new experience.

You can begin these exercises while you are holding your puppy in your lap or while sitting on the floor with him. Learning moments are everywhere for young puppies, so take advantage of them whenever possible with short learning moments.

Take your hand and slide it down your puppy's leg and pick up one paw at a time. If he is okay with you doing that, then take a finger and slide it between each toe of that paw. If he is comfortable with you playing with his feet and sliding your finger between each toe, you can repeat the exercise on each paw. If he pulls away or cries, stop immediately.

Wait a minute or so and offer him a treat with one hand as you slide the other hand down his leg again. If he pulls away, stop. If he is more interested in the treats than what you are doing with the other hand, then continue. Every time you start and stop, make sure you start sliding your hand from the top of his leg. This is an exercise of trust and confidence, so always start at the top, where he was comfortable. Then work your way down toward the paw.

Remember, if your puppy is not comfortable at any time, it is okay to stop and try again later that afternoon or the following day. If you stop when he shows concern, over time he will begin to trust you. Continue to repeat the exercise until all of his paws have been desensitized to your touch.

Once he is comfortable, the third or fourth time you touch his paws and slide your fingers between them, it is time to introduce the nail clippers. Let your puppy sniff, lick, or bite the newly introduced clippers. Once he is done exploring the clippers and ignores them, it is time to introduce the new sound the clippers will make. This can be done by opening them and closing them before you actually use them. Make sure you do not have any part of the puppy in the clip-

pers while opening and closing them. If the puppy is bored and looks away, then you can begin the nail trimming process.

When trimming your puppy's nails, you want to clip them right before the quick. If he has clear nails, you can see the pink color of the blood vessel. If his nails are black, start near the tip of the nail and slowly clip small pieces at a time, moving up the nail. A tiny black circle in the center of the nail should be your warning that you are at the beginning of the quick, so stop. If you are not sure where the quick is or at what angle to hold the clippers, ask your Patient Behavior Advocate for some guidance.

If at any time your puppy pulls away, remember to simply stop what you are doing. Play with him for a while and try again later. You do not have to trim all of his nails on the same day when you are getting him comfortable with the nail trimming process. For now, the focus is on desensitizing him to having his paws touched and nails trimmed.

With time and patience, your puppy can become very comfortable with getting his nails trimmed. If you force him to have his nails cut, you will instill fear that can last a lifetime, making nail trimming a very difficult process for you and for him. Once mature, some dogs actually end up having to be sedated to have their nails trimmed. This makes a simple process very difficult and costly. Investing the time in your puppy now will eliminate this problem in the future.

When you trim your puppy's nails, always have a product such as Quik Stop® on hand in case you do cut the quick by accident. This product helps to stop the bleeding quickly.

Teeth Cleaning

Cleaning your puppy's teeth regularly will promote healthy gums and clean-smelling breath. Many puppies, though, are a bit concerned with having someone inside their mouths. Since your puppy's teeth will need daily attention, you will want to get him comfortable with you working on them.

To make this a pleasant experience, you will want to desensitize his mouth. Start off slowly and take your puppy's lead. Whenever he pulls away, squirms, bites, or cries, stop what you are doing. If you stop when he shows any sign of concern, he will soon begin to trust you.

When your puppy's concerns are ignored and you continue what you are doing, he can become fearful or show signs of aggression, which makes teeth cleaning harder on both you and your puppy. By acknowledging his concern and stopping what you are doing, you build trust with him.

You can begin desensitizing his mouth by rubbing your finger on the outside of his lips gently. If he is comfortable with this light touch, you can slip your index finger into the mouth and rub his teeth and gums gently with your finger. After a few days, if you have stopped every time he showed any sign of concern, he will become comfortable with these touches. Now it is time to introduce him to his toothbrush.

Let him smell, lick, or bite on this new object. When he becomes bored with the toothbrush and looks away or ignores the brush, it is time to introduce it to his mouth.

Begin by wetting the brush a little and using the dental cleanser you received from our office. Never use human-grade toothpaste; it is harmful to your puppy. Wet the brush to make it a bit more slippery so it does not stick to his lips.

Once the puppy is comfortable with having his teeth brushed, you can add a cue such as “Toothbrush time” or whatever word or words you would like to use to let him know it is time to get his teeth brushed.

Since dogs are capable of learning by example, let your puppy be in the bathroom with you while you brush your teeth. When you are done cleaning your teeth, tell your puppy it is his turn to brush his. Many puppies will wait patiently and enjoy having their teeth cleaned.

Remember to move slowly when desensitizing your puppy’s mouth. Stop when he shows any sign of concern. Repeat the exercises a few times a day over many days. Your reward for the time and patience you give him now will last a lifetime.

