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Playing





What to Expect in Your Puppy's First Year

In the early days of his life, your puppy's whole world consisted of his Dam's quiet, nurturing warmth and the close comfort of his littermates. As his eyes opened and his hearing developed at two to three weeks, his world and experiences began to broaden—he learned how to get his little legs under him, and he began to wrestle with his brothers and sisters.

Bit by bit, play and other interactions with his Dam and siblings helped him learn important lessons about how to behave with others. His breeder was sure to provide loving human interaction as well. Staying with the breeder and his family group and continuing to learn from them for his first eight weeks was crucial in helping your puppy develop a healthy, secure personality.

Now it is up to you to give him the care

he requires everyday. There is a lot involved—he needs nutritious food, plenty of attention, gentle training, safe toys, a comfortable home, and proper veterinary care. He'll give boundless love in return. This important first year of his life is a fun and exciting time for both of you. As he grows physically, the wonderful bond between you will grow too.

Understanding your puppy's needs in the weeks and months ahead will help you give him the right start as your healthy, happy companion for life.

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Keep in Mind...

Like any baby, your young puppy needs to sleep for much of the day. Keep playtimes short and give him lots of down time. Don't force him to keep up prolonged activity, and resist the urge to show him off to everyone right away.

8 - 12 Weeks

Health and Nutrition Reminders

Your pup's immune system is not fully developed until he is 12 weeks. To protect him from several serious diseases, it's crucial to keep up with his vaccine schedule as recommended by your vet. It's also very important to keep him away from other dogs, and from areas where other dogs may have soiled the ground until he's 12 weeks old.

Don't give him people food, but do feed him multiple times a day with a high quality puppy food that has the nutrients his growing body needs.

Training Tips for this Stage

Introduce pre-training activities—although your puppy has a very short attention span, you can begin gently developing a few basic behaviors such as wearing a collar, following on a lead, and coming when called. Keep each session about 3 minutes long with emphasis on fun, using plenty of treats and praise.

Since his immunity isn't established, your pup can't go to training classes or public places. But it's important for him to start meeting a variety of people in the safety of your home—simply have visitors gently interact with him when possible.

Not until about 12 weeks, as your puppy gets control over his bladder and bowels, can more focused housetraining begin. Right now, be sure to take him out frequently—after every time he eats, drinks, awakes, or has a bout of activity; and at least every hour or so in between. When not with him, provide a safe, confined place, including a place for him to sleep and separate “potty area” to relieve himself.



Physical Development

Your puppy is getting his act together physically—he's still quite roly-poly, but learning to coordinate his growing body well enough for playful jumping and tumbling. Toward his 12 week, he'll start shedding his puppy teeth as his adult teeth emerge. By the 12 week, bladder control is improving.

Behavior-Changes and Challenges

As your puppy shifts his dependence to you as his leader, you'll become the center of his world. He'll probably like to lie down on top of or beside your feet. He's very curious, has a short attention span, and is easily distracted. Although he had little sense of fear in earlier weeks, at some point between 7-9 weeks he may be suddenly cautious of anything new in his environment. This “fear period” is normal. He may be fearful of abrupt movement or loud sounds. Try to prevent undue trauma during this phase. Much as a toddler explores with hands and fingers, young puppies like to investigate things using their mouths. Combine this with the increasing urge to chew as permanent teeth start to come in and you have one mouthy customer! Be prepared for him by providing him lots of safe chewable toys.

12 - 16 Weeks

Physical Development

Your puppy's sense and motor skills are well developed now. He still needs to sleep a lot, but he's full of energy when he's awake. His bladder and bowel control are continuing to improve.

His adult teeth are still coming in. While this is happening, sometimes puppy teeth don't fall out, as they should. Have your vet check your pup's mouth on the next visit.

Behavior: Changes and Challenges

Your pup is very inquisitive and interested in exploring the world around him. Right now his brain is geared towards soaking everything it can. This coincides with a crucial phase in his development: He is in what is called the critical socialization period. Through 4 months of age this is the single most important period influencing how your dog will behave as an adult. Now is when the foundation is laid for the rest of his life in terms of his attitude toward you, other humans, and other dogs.

It's extremely important for your pup to have good experiences now, being introduced to all kinds of people and things he will encounter during his life. Luckily, with his immune system finally matured, it's safe to take him to a wide variety of public places. It is also important for him to play with other dogs to as much as possible. Play with other dogs ensures that your pup will be dog friendly as an adult and teaches him the basic, important rules of intercanine behavior.

It's not a substitute for your own efforts to socialize your puppy regularly, but a great help is to enroll in a local puppy class. These fun, informational gatherings expose your puppy to a variety of people and other dogs each week.

Keep in Mind

This is the crucial time to lay the foundation for a lifelong loving, positive relationship with your dog. Take the time to have fun with your puppy!

Health and Nutrition Reminder

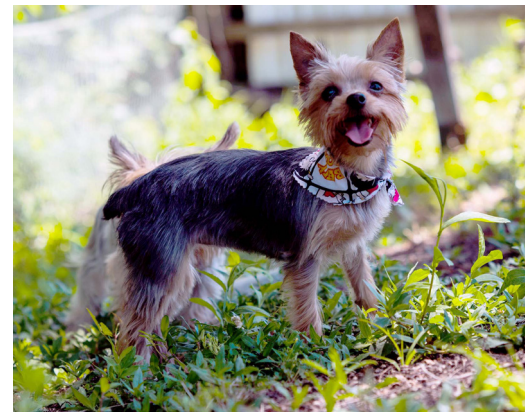
Talk with your vet about starting your pup on a heartworm preventative.

Training Tips for this Stage

Houstraining can begin in earnest. Take your puppy out frequently and praise him lavishly every time he eliminates outside or in designated area. Don't get lazy and let your puppy roam the house unsupervised. Accidents are not the puppy's purposeful misbehaviors; they are indications that you are not keeping tabs on him. The goal is to get him to go outside before an accident occurs. If you can catch him in the act, calmly hustle him outside, and then praise him if he finishes there. If an accident occurs while you are not looking, don't punish him. He won't understand and it will damage your relationship. Frequent outings, persistence and watchfulness, and lots of praise are the keys to quicker houstraining.

Although your puppy is rambunctious and easily distracted right now, don't get tough in training him. He's still sensitive emotionally and psychologically. Fears can occur easily and inhibit learning. To nurture the bond with your pup, try hand feeding him. Feed kibble to him bit by bit. Play a Game: Call his Name, Back Away, and then give him food when he comes to you.

You can also begin basic grooming. Praise him while you gently brush him, handle his mouth and paws, and trim his nails.



Health and Nutrition Reminders

Continue feeding your pup three times a day until he's 6 months old. Have your vet explain to you how to recognize a healthy weight for your pup, with a large breed especially, excess weight in puppy food could predispose him to hip dysplasia. Ask your veterinarian about flea- and tick-control programs. Flea infestation in your home can be hard to eradicate, and ticks can carry disease.

Inspect your puppy's ears regularly to check that they are clean and free of odor or discharge.

Discuss spaying/neutering with your vet. It makes no sense to breed your dog unless an expert in his breed has determined him to be of exceptional quality, and unless you're willing to put in the time and effort to gain tile extensive knowledge that is required in making responsible breeding decisions.



4 - 6 Months

Physical Development

This is a period of major growth for your puppy, and his high-spirited bursts of activity likely feature much clumsiness. Combine all this with a still relatively short attention span, and you have one rambunctious canine on your hands!

Behavior Changes and Challenges

At around 4 months, your puppy will go through an "avoidance period" similar to the fear period he experienced at 7 to 9 weeks. During this phase he will probably be hesitant about doing new things and suspicious of new situations and places. If he tends to be on the shy side, now is a time to ease up and be sure to keep things fun. Never push him or punish him for his anxiety.

If his usual demeanor is especially bold, this might be a time where he simply backs off a little and looks to you for support; in that case, it can be an opportunity where he's especially receptive to training and you can encourage his responsiveness to you.



Training Tips for this Stage

Continue socialization to a wide variety of people, other animals, places, sounds, and sights.

Houstraining may deteriorate over time, especially if you start taking it for granted. Remember the times when your pup is especially likely to have to „go“ -after eating, drinking, or playing, and upon awakening.

Keep working on teaching him basic manners to walk agreeably on a leash, come to you when called, and sit or lie down on command-always keeping it fun by using lots of treats and praise. Sessions should still be

short, no more than 15 minutes, but you can have numerous sessions throughout the day. Remember that habits your puppy learns now will persist when he's much bigger. You might not mind him jumping up on you now, but it might be less desirable when his paws hit your chest.

Remember that pups cannot take pressure or harsh treatment. Gentle repetition in short sessions is the key.

Keep in Mind...

Your pup is especially prone to anxiety at this age. Calmly explore new situations with him, but don't push him or punish him if he is reluctant.





6 - 9 Months

Training Tips for this Stage

During your puppy's adolescence it's important to keep training basic commands. Going to obedience classes will help, but remember that helping him keep up his good manners at home is up to you. One key to remember: Your pup will be much easier to live with during this period if he gets enough exercise. To help reinforce good manners and prevent your teenager from getting into destructive mischief, keep your pup with you as much as possible when you're home. You might try having him on a leash with you while you're in the house, and teach him to lie beside you. It may take him a while to settle down, but with patience he will. You can also keep him near you for short periods in a comfortable crate or pen.



Behaviors Changes and Challenges

This is another period of major growth, and your pup is probably also starting to feel the effects of increasing hormones in his body. Your raucous adolescent is feeling vigorous and active, and getting enough exercise during this stage is especially important.

Health and Nutrition

Although you can reduce the number of feedings to twice a day, keep feeding a quality puppy food during this phase of rapid growth. Remember to keep on schedule with parasite/heartworm preventative. Consider scheduling spaying or neutering with your veterinarian, if you haven't done so already. For male dogs, neutering has been shown to significantly reduce unwanted behaviors such as roaming, urine marking, fighting with other dogs, and mounting. Spaying female dogs prevents unwanted litters, as well as eliminates the problems of housing the female during her heat period. Spaying a female at an early age—ideally, before her first heat period, which can occur as early as 6 months of age—also greatly reduces her risk for several diseases.

Physical Developments

This is another period of major growth, and your pup is probably also starting to feel the effects of increasing hormones in his body. Your raucous adolescent is feeling vigorous and active, and getting enough exercise during this stage is especially important.

Keep in Mind...

Raising your dog through this energetic “teenage” stage can be a challenge but keep giving him loving attention and the guidance he needs, and you'll both come through it gracefully!

9 - 12 Months



Keep in Mind....

Some dogs at this age may occasionally show defiance by challenging your leadership. It is a natural part of their development. If this happens, be calm and firm and insist on good manners.



Physical Developments

Although your canine friend will still seem a puppy at heart in some ways, most breeds will attain adult size by 12 months. (Some large and giant breeds may not quite reach adult size or weight for up to another 6 months.) Most males will begin to lift their leg to urinate by 12 months. If they have not been neutered yet males will experience a lifetime high peak of hormones. Some will go through a temporary period of mounting.

Behavior Changes and Challenges

Stresses in your pup's routine can cause setbacks or relapses in housetraining and other manners. Go back to reinforcing the basics if necessary, and keep up the praise and positive attitude.

For some dogs, signs of separation anxiety can develop or intensify during this time. To help nip this problem in the bud, avoid making a big deal of your comings and goings. If your dog seems stressed when you're about to leave him, try helping him adjust with numerous "practice departures," where you pretend to go away but calmly return within a few minutes.

Health and Nutrition Reminders

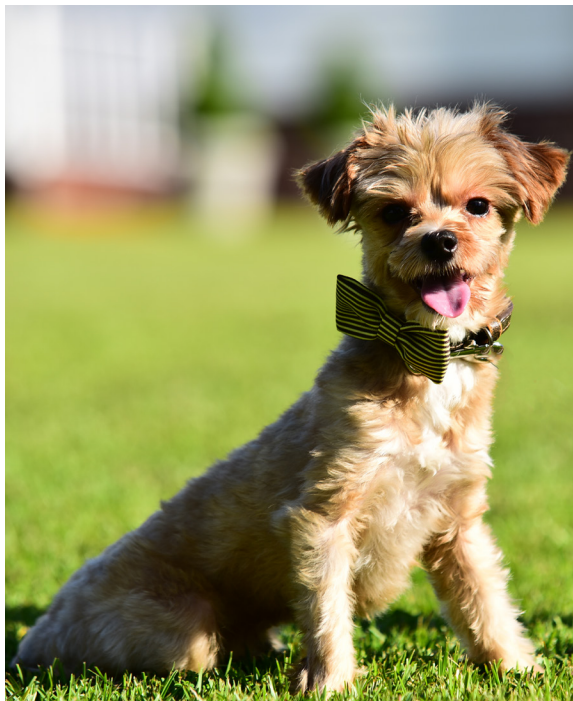
Keep feeding your pup twice a day, and keep feeding a puppy formula, until he's at least 1 year old.

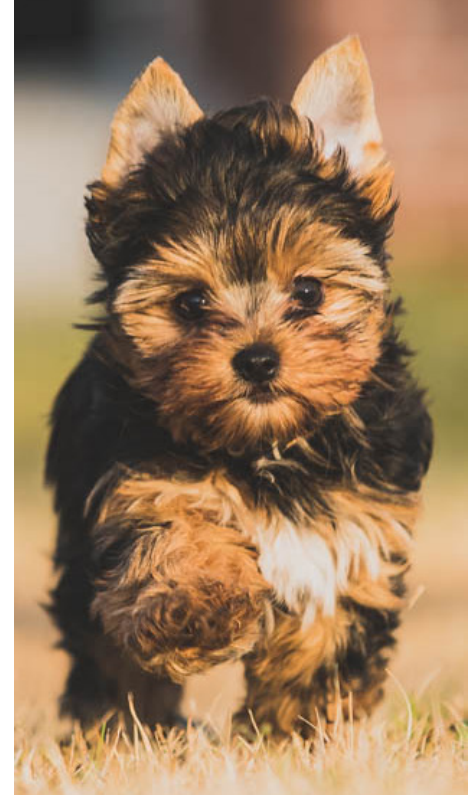
Remember your veterinarian's tips on how to tell that your canine charge isn't becoming overweight. If your pup's getting a little too portly, cut back on his portion size a little bit.

Check with your vet and make a note ahead in your calendar of when your pup will be due for his annual booster vaccines and parasite check.

Training Tips for this Stage

Keep using praise and periodic treats to reinforce commands and good manners. Consider preparing your dog for the Canine Good Citizen® test CGC certification is a great goal to aim for as you continue to train and socialize your puppy. This low-stress test is offered in many communities, and simply requires that your dog demonstrate a few specific aspects of basic good manners in public and around other people. It's a fun accomplishment you'll both be proud of.





Which Toys Are Safe?

Trying to figure out which chew toys are safest? Assume that your puppy is going to do all he can to rip the object apart and swallow whatever pieces of it that he can. Therefore, do not give him items with small pieces that might be harmful.

Some No-Nos:

- Items with small or sharp metal parts such as pins, springs, or batteries.
- Long strips or fibers, such as strings or thin ribbon. Nylon hose can be dangerous if swallowed.
- Cooked real bones of any kind. Cooked bones break into tiny; highly abrasive fragments that damage the digestive tract over time.
- Sheets of plastic film (e.g., garbage bags) can cause choking.
- Chewies made of large pieces or knots of rawhide. Swallowed pieces of these often cause intestinal obstructions.
- Thin, squeaky-type rubber toys. Dogs who are vigorous chewers can swallow these toys whole, swallow large pieces of them, or swallow the metal squeakers inside.
- Soft toys with foam stuffing.

Best “OK to chew“ items:

- Artificial bones made of hard nylon
- Balls and chew toys made of hard rubber. Many of these are designed to hide hits of kibble in and can entertain your pup for extended periods.
- Knots of thick rope
- Artificial bones made of rawhide particles pressed together, or of other material designed to be safely swallowed

Socialize Your Puppy--It's Essential

From 7 weeks to 4 months of age, your puppy goes through a socialization period that permanently shapes his future personality and how he will react to things in his environment as an adult. Gently exposing him to a wide variety of people, places, and situations now makes a huge, permanent difference. Proper socialization can prevent a dog from being always fearful of children, for example, or of riding in a car, and it will help him develop into a well-mannered, happy companion.

Steady As She Goes...

Rome wasn't built in a day, and every puppy moves at his own pace when learning proper bathroom habits. Some figure out housebreaking in one day, others take months. You can make the training go smoothly with consistency; allowing for frequent trips outside (with plenty of praise); providing every meal regularly (at the same time each day); and always using a confident, authoritative, calm voice with your puppy.



An Embarrassing Incident

Some dogs, no matter how well housebroken, suffer from what is called “submissive urination.” This embarrassing problem, for man and beast, usually occurs when the “pack leader” of the household comes home, and the dog, so happy to see him or her, pees a bit on the floor. When confronted with this bewildering behavior it's important for owners to realize that the dog hasn't forgotten his hard learned housebreaking lessons. Owners should not get angry or chastise their dog. This only ensures that the dog will try even harder to appease them, and as pee is the only gift the pup has to give, the problem continues.

So what do you do?

No admonishments, no yelling, no finger pointing. Instead, when you enter the house, ignore the dog for a few minutes, giving the pup some time to cool his jets and greet you in a more “appropriate” way.



Crate Training: What You Should Do

- Crating your dog several times a day is an excellent way to housebreak him. This is because dogs will try not to soil their “home.”
- Line the crate with blankets to make it cozy. You can also cover the top of it with a blanket or purchase specially made crate covers and mat sets to further mimic the “den” atmosphere.
- Use the crate for naps, nighttime slumber, and quiet-time breaks for the puppy to “unwind” from family chaos.
- Buy a well-ventilated crate, one large enough for him to stand up, lie down, and turn around. If the pup has a lot of growing ahead of him, use a larger crate, but section off half of it with a divider.
- Every time you take the puppy out of the crate, take him for a walk so he can eliminate.
- Never leave a puppy in his crate all day; he needs several bathroom breaks and play and feeding times. Even though he won’t want to soil his sleeping area, if he is in there for extremely long stretches, he just might. (He can’t help it.) And if he does, it is because his owner has neglected his responsibility, not because the dog has misbehaved.
- Never use the crate as punishment. It should always be a haven for your pup, not a jail cell.

What's Love Got to Do With It?

Before we get to the particulars of puppy nutrition, let's first consider the foremost pitfall of canine feeding. In theory, keeping your growing dog properly nourished is simple: Serve sensibly sized portions of high quality chow, avoid feeding „people food;“ and keep snacks to a minimum.

In practice, this is easier said than done. The doleful gaze of a begging dog can be downright irresistible. This is no accident. During his long partnership with man, the dog has perfected cunning methods of exploiting the human neurosis that associates food with affection. In prehistoric times semi-domesticated canines first cultivated human beings as a food provider. As the two species grew closer, dogs modified begging behaviors to maximize results: The more pathetic a dog seemed, the more scraps were tossed his way

Dogs have since refined this approach into a low risk, high-reward hunting technique.

It's a deceptive way to hunt, utilizing the appearance of helplessness rather than ferocity, but don't be fooled: Begging is not an emotional crisis or a test of your love. It's what scientists might call an evolutionary survival strategy, or what the rest of us might call a scam. Allowing your dog to „guilt“ you into overfeeding him, or serving him a steady diet of table scraps in a misguided show of affection, can have harmful or even fatal results. So don't take it personally when the little con artist under the table goes into the old whimper-wheedle-and-whine routine. Simply ignore it, and find healthier ways of bonding with your pet.

Big Puppy, Little Puppy

The range of sizes among dog breeds is greater than in any other animal. For example, a 150-pound Newfoundland is 50 times the size of a 3-pound Pomeranian.

To put it in perspective, picture a 150-pound human being and then imagine a fully-grown person who weighs only 3 pounds! Large-breed puppies will weigh more than 50 pounds when full-grown. It takes these big guys about 18 to 24 months to reach their adult size. If they grow too quickly, they can develop problems with their joints and bones. Reduced-calorie foods with less calcium help support the proper rate of growth in large-breed puppies. Adult dogs that weigh less than 20 pounds are considered small-breed dogs. Puppies of these breeds grow quickly and may reach adulthood at 9 months. Some companies make a mini-size kibble for small-breed puppies because their mouths are so little. And because their tiny stomachs don't hold much, small-breed puppies require high-calorie foods to provide them sufficient nutrition.

Also, small dogs need more calories to maintain body heat: They produce less heat and radiate more of it from their skin than do large dogs. But small-breed dogs tend to be more pampered and less active than larger breeds, so owners who feed a high-calorie food formulated for small breeds should be careful not to overfeed. A number of dog food companies have worked with canine-nutrition scientists to develop special formulas for both large and small breed puppies.



And Remember....

Train your puppy with mild oral correction and lots of praise and rewards. Keep training sessions short and fun. End each session on a positive note. The “Basic 5” commands will give your puppy a strong foundation for any future training.

What You Should Do: Teaching the Basic 5 Commands

COME

This command could save your dog’s life in an emergency. Start indoors in a quiet place without distractions. Squat down, open your arms, say, „Come,“ then praise your pup as soon as he starts moving toward you. Use an enthusiastic tone to indicate that coming to you is the most exciting thing he could possibly do.

Don’t grab for the pup when he gets near you. Instead, let him walk up very close, then reach out and gently rub his chest, praising him the whole time. You may also give him a treat. Eventually you will teach him to sit when he comes, but for now just make sure he comes up close and stops directly in front of you.

If your puppy doesn’t come to you, go slowly to him, attach his leash, then guide him back to the spot where you called him. Praise him the entire time you are leading him there. This shows him that he has to obey, but that you’re not angry with him. Never scold him for coming too slowly, and don’t ever call him to you in order to punish him—you’ll only teach him to avoid you.

There are two different methods for showing your puppy what „Sit“ means. Use whichever one works for your dog. Get down in front of your puppy, holding a treat as a lure. Put the treat right in front of the pup’s nose, and then say, „Sit“ as you slowly lift the food above his head. He will probably sit as he lifts his head to nibble at the treat. If he backs up instead, put your other hand on his chest and praise him—and give him the treat—as soon as he is sitting, whether or not he needed help.

Squat down next to the pup, place one hand on his chest and the other just behind his rear legs. Say „Sit“ as you apply gentle upward pressure to his chest and against his rear knees, guiding him into a sitting position. As soon as he is sitting, reward him!

SIT

HEEL

In traditional dog training, “Heel” means that the dog is walking on your left side, his head even with your knee, while you hold the leash loosely. Puppy training can be a little more relaxed, as long as you don’t pull your dog along or let him get ahead and pull you. Some trainers prefer to say “Let’s go” or “Forward” instead of “Heel” when they train this easy way of walking together. Whatever commands you choose, be consistent and always use the same word. Start with your dog standing next to you. Hold his leash in your left hand and a squeaky toy in your right. Place your right arm across the front of your body so the toy is above and slightly in front of your dog’s head. Encourage him to look up at the toy as you give the command and step forward with confidence. Your puppy should step forward with you as he follows the toy.

Keep the puppy’s attention on the toy as you walk forward together. If the puppy gets distracted, squeak the toy, get his attention, and praise him. Also praise the pup if he looks up at you. This is called “checking in,” and it’s a good thing to encourage.

After your puppy has given you 20 or 30 seconds of attention, give him the toy. Play with him a bit, then relax and try walking again. Gradually increase the time you walk together during your training sessions, and then gradually stop using the toy. Eventually your dog will walk happily at your side whenever he’s on his leash.



STAY

A puppy who knows the „Stay“ command will remain sitting until you let him get up by giving him another command, called the „release word.“ (This may be something like „OK!“ or „Go.“} Begin with your dog sitting by your left side. Keep the leash loose while you pivot around to face the pup. Say „Stay“ while holding the open palm of your hand in front of his face. Take a step or two away from your puppy, keeping the leash loose. After a few seconds step back to him, putting one foot on the leash-don't pull it too tight, just enough to keep him from jumping up on you. Give your release word, then reward and praise him.

If your puppy gets up before you release him, just walk back calmly without saying anything. Use your hands to put him back into the sit position, then give the open-palm hand signal for „Stay“ and walk away again. Don't repeat the oral command; it's important that your pup learns to respond immediately to a single command. As your puppy learns to stay, you can gradually

increase the distance between you. You can also increase the time he remains in the stay: Three minutes is a good goal to work toward. If your puppy repeatedly breaks the stay, you're going too fast. Slow down, and work on one thing at a time. Remember to keep the sessions fun, and always end with success for your pup.

DOWN

To teach your pup to lie down on command, begin with him sitting next to you on your left. Kneel down and place your left hand on his shoulders. Put your right hand just behind his front legs. Say „Down“ while pressing gently on the puppy's shoulders; at the same time, scoop his front legs out until he is lying down. Stroke his back for a few seconds to encourage him to relax and stay in that position. Then praise and reward him. Use your release word, let him get up, and praise him again. Put him back into a sit,





and then repeat the down command. Eventually your dog will lie down as soon as you give the command.

If your puppy is extremely shy or fearful, he may freeze in place during this exercise. If he is very playful, he may squirm around and not want to lie down. In either case, try a different method of teaching the “Down” command: Begin as before, kneeling beside your sitting puppy. Put your left hand on his shoulders while holding a treat in your right hand in front of his face. Say “Down” and slowly lower the treat straight down to the floor between the dog’s paws, then slowly pull it straight out and away from the pup. (Imagine making an “L” shape.) Once he’s down, praise him and give him the treat.





Eyes, Ears and Teeth

Eyes should be cleaned when there is noticeable discharge or when the dog is being bathed. Check for redness or other signs of irritation. Healthy eyes are bright and clear, and the white of the eye is pure white. You can help keep them that way by gently wiping away discharge in the corners with a cotton ball or soft washcloth moistened with warm water. Avoid rubbing the cotton ball directly over the eye.

Ears should be cleaned at least once a month, more often if your dog is prone to ear problems. Look inside to check for dirt, scratches, parasites, or discharge. Then give them a good sniff! There shouldn't be any unpleasant odor. Moisten a cotton ball with mineral oil and gently wipe out the ears, going no deeper than the first knuckle on your finger.

Keep ears dry and clean, or your dog may face recurrent ear infections that are difficult to treat. Avoid using drying agents on a regular basis-if there's no problem they can dry out the ear too much, and if the ear is oozing there's a reason for it. Drying it up without treating the underlying cause leads to more ear problems.





Teeth should be cleaned frequently. Your vet can advise you on your dog's oral hygiene needs. Dental care is an aspect of grooming that many people ignore, but it can pay off in fresh breath and better health. Food and saliva cause a buildup of soft plaque, which hardens into tartar.

The bacteria trapped in the plaque contributes to doggy breath and to the development of periodontal disease. By brushing your pup's teeth regularly, you can prevent or decrease the need for veterinary cleanings, which usually require anesthetizing the dog.

Begin by gently scrubbing the teeth with a finger brush or gauze pad. Later you can graduate to a toothbrush and canine toothpaste. Toothbrushes should be soft, and toothpaste must be formulated for a dog's system. Toothpaste made for people can cause an upset stomach if your pup swallows it. Teeth can also be cleaned with a paste made of baking soda and water.





What You Should Know

Fleas and ticks can be irritating to both you and your dog, but they can be downright dangerous, too. The risks involved vary depending on where you live and how often your dog is exposed to these pests. Common household fleas don't usually transmit diseases to pets and people. While there are more than 200 species of fleas in the U.S., the main troublemaker for pets is the cat flea. Happy to feed on anyone in the household--cat, dog, or human--these wingless insects will most likely choose a pet, whose fur provides warm camouflage for their breeding ground. To protect dogs from the discomfort and illness caused by fleas and ticks, it's important to not only rid pets of the pests, but to also treat a pet's environment to prevent or reduce the incidence of infestation.

Tick

Ticks pose greater risk, annually infecting pets and thousands of people with illnesses such as Lyme disease. A tick has a one-piece body. The harpoon like barbs of its mouth attach to a host for feeding. Crablike legs and a sticky secretion help hold the tick to the host. The United States has about 200 tick species. Habitats include woods, beach grass, lawns,

Forests, and even urban areas. Ticks may carry various infectious organisms that can transmit diseases to cats and dogs, including the following (listed with possible symptoms).

Babesiosis: lethargy, appetite loss, weakness, pale gums

Ehrlichiosis:

high fever, muscle aches
Lyme disease: lameness, itching pain, swollen joints, fever, poor appetite, fatigue, and vomiting (some infected animals show no symptoms)
Tick paralysis in dogs: gradual paralysis, seen first as an unsteady gait from uncoordinated back legs (some infected dogs don't develop paralysis).
If your dog is outside regularly, ask your vet about getting the Lyme disease vaccine.
If you suspect a tick-borne disease, see the veterinarian right away. With early diagnosis, antibiotics generally work.

Flea



Fleas are most often found in areas where pets rest or sleep, so be especially vigilant in those spots. Vacuuming frequently will eliminate most fleas from the home, especially in spring and summer, when the flea season is in high gear. Since fleas can thrive in vacuum bags and escape to the outside or back into your home, change bags frequently, disposing of them by first sealing them in plastic bags and then placing them into a covered trash bin.

Putting pillows into a warm dryer for 10 to 15 minutes on the air-fluff cycle will help keep them fresh and free of fleas. Be sure to wash your dog's bedding at least once a week in hot, soapy water. When bringing new or used items such as carpet or upholstered furniture into the home, first have them professionally cleaned. Steam cleaning or shampooing rugs and furniture kills and removes flea eggs and larvae.



