

The top 5 things to teach your new puppy

Bringing a new puppy home is undoubtedly a very exciting time for the whole family. However, it is extremely important to be prepared to ensure everyone gets off on the right foot [or paw].

This includes the obvious things, such as ensuring you have a suitable bed, dog food, toys and treats, but also an action plan on how you are going to successfully train your new bundle of joy to have good habits.

Puppy training not only improves their manners, but it also provides an enjoyable and rewarding way for you to spend quality time with your new pup, whilst strengthening your bond. Having successfully worked with dogs for many years, I believe the following top tips are most beneficial when training your new K9 companion.

Crate training

Some owners may feel a sense of guilt for crate training their new pup, but an enclosed space creates an environment for your dog to rest and relax.

It is important to start crate training when you first bring your puppy home. It can play an essential role in toilet training, especially at night, as they are unlikely to soil where they sleep. This means they learn to hold it in, strengthening both their bladder and bowel muscles.

Crate training is extremely useful in your new pup's everyday life as it offers a safe place to put them when you are unable to supervise them. If taught properly using positive reinforcement, your dog will love the crate and it will become his or her safe haven. It is like a child having their own bedroom, it's somewhere they can go not to be bothered or if they're tired or nervous.

You should gradually introduce your puppy to a crate, because if they're forced to stay in there for extended period of times, it may backfire and become a place they associate with distress. The key to successful crate training is making it a happy place for your little pup. This can be done by placing some of their favourite items in the crate to make them feel at ease and leaving the door open to allow freedom.

Impulse control

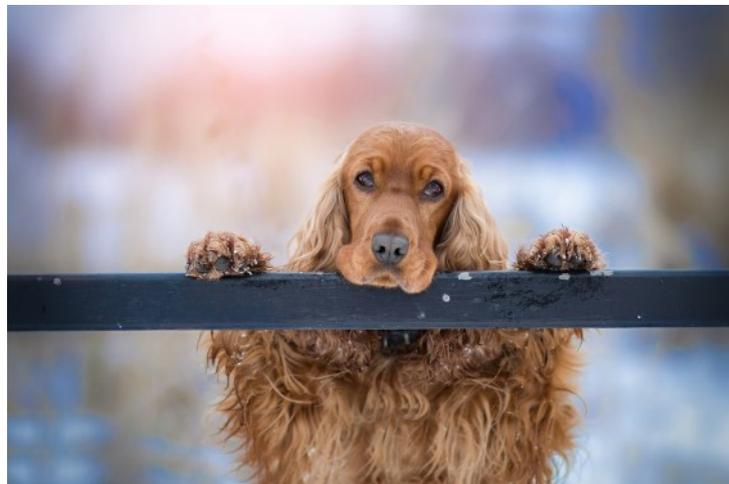
Impulse control is a vital skill to teach your pup from a young age and can be useful in a variety of different situations. For example, it teaches them to wait patiently for something they want or stay calm when something exciting is happening around them. It is a simple but extremely beneficial behaviour to teach your puppy.

You can teach your puppy impulse control in a variety of ways, such as making them wait for their food, treats and toys. Repetition and consistency is key when carrying out impulse training, so you must uphold the same standards otherwise it may confuse your K9.

Bite inhibition

Mouthing, biting and nipping is a common trait in puppies and is something you must control to ensure it doesn't translate into adult life. The ultimate goal should stop your puppy from mouthing and biting people, and training should continue to take place until you have achieved this.

Bite inhibition refers to a puppy's ability to control their mouthing. It's vital to teach your pup that human skin is sensitive and not something to bite. Puppies often learn bite inhibition through play. When you play with



your puppy, they will naturally try to bite and mouth. When they bite, make a high-pitched yelp and stop playing immediately. This will startle them and they should stop mouthing you in that moment. Continue to do this whenever you play with your puppy and they are mouthing. You should see that over time, they learn that biting is an unwanted behaviour and all fun stops when they do wrong.

Lead manners

Teaching your canine companion to walk on a lead is one of the first things you should consider. As your puppy may never have been on a lead before, you will need to acclimate them in a positive way, as this will help prevent bad lead behaviour further down the line.

Lead training needs to be built up over time, to allow your pup to get used to the feeling of a lead. It is important to introduce positive reinforcement when lead training, using praise and treats.

To get your new puppy used to wearing a lead, attach it whilst in the home and allow them to walk around on their own accord. This will help them get used to the feeling of something draped around their neck. You can then start to pick up the lead and apply a little bit of pressure, until you build up to walking them a short distance whilst holding the lead the whole time. Something to be aware of is not to let your puppy bite/hold or drag the lead around with its mouth, this can cause problems as the dog grows up with tugging and pulling on the lead thinking it's a game.

Social skills

Teaching your puppy social skills is one of the most important training activities you can do and should be started from a young age. Puppies are not born with the social skills they need to live with a family, whether that be a canine or human one so they must learn this from their surroundings.

Socialisation requires your puppy to have positive social interactions with adults, children, vets, adult dogs, puppies and other animals. You must also consider exposing them to specific situations such as crowds, traffic and car journeys. Taking your puppy to training classes can also be a great way for them to not only learn new behaviours, but also be around other dogs and humans.

Remember, the training process should be fun for both you and your new K9 companion, but patience is key! Don't give up if your puppy doesn't take to something straight away, they need time and continuous reinforcement to learn.

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