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KENNEL CLUB ASSURED BREEDER SCHEME
NEW PUPPY OWNER ADVICE SHEET

KEEP YOUR DOG HEALTHY AND HAPPY PUPPY TRAINING

Bringing your puppy home for the first time is naturally a happy and exciting occasion, but it can be a little daunting too – there is so much for both you and your puppy to learn! The information contained in this leaflet should help you on your way to raising a happy and well trained dog right from the start.

Toilet training puppies the easy way

Toilet training is obviously a crucial part of your puppy's early learning. Getting it right is relatively simple, and will make those first weeks so much more enjoyable for you both. However, like all things, bad habits learnt early on can lead to problems that may take weeks or even months to resolve.

Initially, you will have to build your daily routine around your puppy's needs. Fortunately, these are quite predictable when they are very young, and with careful supervision you should quickly establish when it is the right time to go outside and minimise any accidents.

Like babies, puppies have poor bladder control, and need to go to the toilet several times an hour when they are awake. They will also usually need to be taken outside first thing in the morning, last thing at night, after each meal, waking from a nap, and after any exercise, play or excitement. You may find it useful to keep a record of when your puppy sleeps, eats and goes to the toilet so that you can identify any patterns that emerge. One tip is to use a food timer to remind you when it is time to take your puppy outside to relieve itself. If you find that your puppy needs to "go" every 20 minutes then set the alarm as soon as he has gone and take him outside the moment the alarm goes off

Always go with your puppy into the garden and establish a regular spot. Puppies are creatures of habit, so as long as you introduce the garden to the puppy as its toilet area early on, you should be able to avoid most accidents. Decide on a cue word or phrase to use when the puppy is actually going to the toilet, so that the puppy will start to associate the word with the action and should learn to go on command. By accompanying your puppy into the garden each time, you will be there to attach cue words and praise to any successful actions.

If toilet training is not going quite as well as planned, some common reasons for why your puppy is struggling are as follows:

Feeding

- You are feeding the puppy too much
- The puppy food you are giving is unsuitable or you are giving too much variety for a puppy of their age
- You are not feeding at regular times
- You are feeding at the wrong times (which could mean your puppy needs to go to the toilet during the night)
- You are giving foods which are too salty, causing your puppy to drink more

Training

- Punishing your puppy for accidents indoors may make it scared of going to the toilet in front of you – even outside
- Expecting your puppy to tell you when it needs to go to the toilet is unrealistic. It is far better to go outside at regular intervals
- Leaving the back door or outside access open for your puppy to come and go as it pleases can cause confusion – particularly when that access is closed
- Do not leave your puppy too long on its own so that it is forced to go indoors
- Leaving your puppy alone in the garden means that you are not there to praise and reward, or to reinforce the idea that the garden is the correct place to go
- Try to avoid using the words “good boy/girl” when your puppy is going to the toilet - you don’t want your puppy going to the toilet every time it is praised
- Puppies can exhibit submissive or excitable urination when greeting you on your return home. Toning down greetings can help prevent your puppy from becoming overexcited
- Young puppies will not be able to go through the night without needing to go to the toilet. If they do wake you up, it really is worth getting up to let them out

Environment

- Being surrounded by lots of absorbent or grass-like surfaces, such as rugs and carpets, may confuse your puppy
- Ammonia based cleaning products used around the house can smell like urine to your puppy, and lead to unwanted accidents
- If your puppy does have an accident inside, the scent will still be apparent to the puppy for a long time afterwards, even if you have thoroughly disinfected the area. Specialist cleaning products specifically designed to mask the odour are available

Beyond the garden, many owners can be disappointed that their young puppy does not initially toilet when first venturing out on walks. Often, your puppy will only relieve itself the second you get home. This is because the puppy has not yet associated going out for a walk as an opportunity to go to the toilet, so will wait until they return home to their garden, which they know is a good place to go. To break this habit, get up a little earlier in the morning (when you have plenty of time) and take your puppy out on a walk before it has had a chance to visit its usual spot. Stay out with your puppy for a reasonable length of time until it has been to the toilet, and then give plenty of praise. If you are not successful, make sure the puppy is whisked into the garden to relieve itself or you will run the risk of a large puddle indoors!

Remember, patience and consistency is key. All puppies take different amounts of time to learn, so don’t worry if your puppy seems to be taking longer to get the hang of things. Your patience will pay off and you will both get there in the end.

A trained dog is a happy dog

Housetraining aside, every puppy also needs to be taught good manners and have constructive lessons in basic control and social interaction. This includes:

- Responding to its name
- Learning how to greet and behave politely around other people and dogs
- To come back when called
- To walk nicely on the lead
- To sit down and stay on command
- To allow itself to be groomed and examined by you and your vet

Dog training classes

Most owners can benefit from attending good training classes, and training in the company of other dogs is very useful, because of the realistic distractions it involves. Ideally, you should start your classes as soon as your puppy's vaccinations are complete, but classes can be invaluable for older dogs too.

There are lots of schools of thought on dog training and it is naturally important that you find a class and training instructors with the right approach for you and your puppy. You can find training classes by using the Kennel Club's Find a Club service – visit www.findaclub.org.uk to find a club near you running training classes. You can also ask your vet and other dog owners for recommendations. Dog training can be lots of fun and very rewarding. After all, a trained dog is a happy dog, and a happy dog makes for a happy owner too.

Finding the best dog training club

Before enrolling with a dog training club it can be beneficial to go and visit several classes first (without your puppy) to make sure you have made the right choice.

Things you may wish to consider include:

- Do you like what you see – are the trainers friendly, are people happy and enjoying training their dogs?
- Are the dogs happily focused on their human family?
- Are the instructors giving lots of encouragement and information to all attendees?
- Are the instructors maintaining a controlled, safe environment for all?
- Are instructors treating everyone fairly and meeting the needs of the whole group?

Important training tips:

- Start as you mean to go on. If you are always consistent you will avoid confusing your puppy
- Puppies have a very short attention span so train for short spells on a regular basis
- Keep it short and keep it simple, but most of all keep it fun
- Puppies respond better to cheerful voice tones rather than to threatening orders
- Gentle play builds trust and a strong bond between you and your puppy as well as making training fun
- Patience is the KEY ingredient in dog training. If you try to rush things you will only get frustrated and confuse your puppy
- Keep it interesting: cultivate a range of different rewards incorporating play, fuss, praise, treats and toys. This will stop both of you from getting bored

The Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme

The Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme is the UK's largest dog training programme, and has been introduced to assist owners in training their dogs to be obedient in every day situations. Its simple but effective dog training techniques encompass all the skills necessary for a happy and rewarding partnership with your dog. There are four levels of the Scheme, namely Puppy Foundation, Silver, Bronze and Gold. Each level is designed to further develop an owner's understanding of training, while building a dog's confidence and levels of obedience. All dogs are eligible to take part, whether they are young or old, pedigree or crossbreed.

Over 2000 dog training schools throughout the UK offer Scheme training courses. You can search for your local training club by visiting the Kennel Club's Find a Club service at www.findaclub.org.uk or by telephoning the Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme on 0844 4633 980.

The Kennel Club Accreditation Scheme for Instructors in Dog Training and Canine Behaviour

The Kennel Club Accreditation Scheme for Instructors in Dog Training and Canine Behaviour (KCAI) is the UK's first and only national and verified qualification in dog training and canine behaviour, recognised by City & Guilds. Representing the 'gold standard' in teaching, advice and service, members of the Scheme abide by a strict Code of Practice designed to ensure that dog owners are provided with the best advice and service. Look for the badge of quality when you are choosing a trainer. You can see which clubs have KCAI Accredited instructors on the Kennel Club's Find a Club service.

The Kennel Club aims to promote the health, happiness and general wellbeing of all dogs, and to provide you with an invaluable resource for every aspect of life with your dog.

To find out more, visit us today at www.thekennelclub.org.uk