



THE

# PEEING, POOPING, and CHEWING MACHINE.

*Secrets to turning your puppy into a good dog.*



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BY STEVE BETTCHER, IACP CDT

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# CHAPTER I

## *Housebreaking your Puppy*

*The keys to successfully house training a puppy are structure, schedule and vigilance with a dash of patience*

### **The Guiding Principle**

**“DO NOT LET YOUR DOG GO POOTY IN THE HOUSE!**

*That's it in a nutshell. If you prevent accidents from happening you are 90% on the road to success.*

### **STRUCTURE**

The quickest way to house train a puppy is to set the puppy up for success by preventing accidents from happening. By taking control of the puppy's structure and schedule we can shape the dog's preference to go potty where and when we want them to. There are four training aids that will help you establish the proper structure for a puppy. A crate, an exercise pen, a leash, and a 10 foot tether.

### **CRATE**

Dogs instinctually want to keep their dens clean and would prefer to eliminate away from where they sleep and eat. This is why a crate is such a valuable training tool for housebreaking your puppy.

Because of this strong motivating drive we can use the crate to prevent accidents from happening and use it to shape the puppy's elimination preferences.



### **EXERCISE PEN**

A Dog Exercise Pen is a great way to contain your puppy while allowing him some freedom outside the crate. Dog exercise pens for containing your pet indoors or out are available in a variety of heights and finishes. Exercise pens consist of interlocking panels allowing for easy adjustment of size and configuration and providing portability. It is possible to purchase two and put them together to make an even larger pen. If a puppy has to be left alone for more than 3 to 4 hours then the exercise pen is a better option than leaving the puppy in a closed crate. If the puppy is too young we do not want to leave the puppy in the crate for a longer period than they can control their bladder. In the exercise pen you can put the dog's crate or a bed, his toys and water if you need to leave for an extended period of time.

Expect that you might have accidents in the exercise pen area so do not put the pen on carpet or flooring that is hard to clean. Do not scold the puppy for eliminating in the pen area.

**LEASH**

Puppies should always be on a leash and always in sight of the owner(s). The biggest mistake owners make is letting their puppy run freely around the house inviting accidents to happen when out of their sight. Prevention is the most important factor in successful housebreaking. When the puppy can't be supervised then it should be in its crate or exercise pen. Also, puppies should not be left unattended outside in the yard. There are too many things the puppy can get into and you do not want to come home to dug up plants, a destroyed sprinkling system and chewed up lawn furniture.

**10 FOOT TETHER.**

If you have a designated area that you want your puppy to eliminate in you can use a 10' tether to keep your dog in that area while it is supposed to do its business. Take your puppy out to the designated potty area on a leash then attach him to the tether. Let the puppy sniff around and explore the area. It is helpful to scent the area with the puppy's urine or feces. You can bring out a soiled newspaper or one of his droppings to help him get the idea that

this is where he should go. You should give your puppy at least 15 minutes to do his or her business. If you form this habit early you will have trained your dog to go in a specific spot and she/he will more than likely continue to go in this area even without the tether.

While at the potty area start giving your puppy a command such as "Go Potty", "Do your Business", "Hurry Up", or whatever command you want to use. This will come in handy later when you need to get your puppy to go on command. When the puppy is eliminating repeat the command and then give the dog a treat and lots of praise. You should give your puppy at least 15 minutes to complete his or her business. If the puppy does not go then return the dog to the crate with the door closed and come back in about 10 to 15 minutes. Then try again. Repeat this process until the puppy eliminates.

**SCHEDULE**

A schedule includes times for feeding, potty, play and exercise, rest, and bed time. The schedule should start as soon as the puppy arrives home on his/her first day. When the puppy arrives home take him/her to the designated potty area immediately. Let the puppy sniff around for awhile. Usually the puppy will do its first elimination here. Praise the puppy when he/she does its business for the first time. From now on this will be the spot we always take the dog for potty. If we do this early on and consistently stick to this area then the puppy will most likely continue to choose this spot over your patio or rose bushes.



An eight week old puppy is going to have to urinate every 1 to 2 hours so you will need to be diligent. As the puppy gets older you can start stretching this schedule out every 2 to 3 hours, then 4 hours and so on even up to 8 hours or more. A puppy that is less than 12 weeks old may not be able to go through a full night without a potty break but by the age of 3 to 4 months most puppies can sleep for eight hours without needing to eliminate. Puppies will generally have 3 to 4 bowel movements per day depending on their feeding schedule. In order to control the puppy's elimination schedule it is best to feed the puppy 2 or 3 times a day at a fixed time. Free feeding does not allow you to control when the puppy eats therefore when the dog needs to potty. Some breeds require more frequent feedings so you should consult with your veterinarian and/or breeder on how much and when to feed your puppy.

Puppies also need a lot of water but having total free access to water can cause havoc in your housebreaking efforts. In general you should give the puppy free access to water outside, near its elimination area. Most of the time when a puppy drinks it will immediately urinate. Monitor how much the puppy drinks during the day and pick up the water a couple of hours before bedtime so you don't cause the puppy to have an accident during the night in its crate. It is important that puppies get enough water so do not limit water just to prevent accidents. You can prevent accidents by taking the puppy out, and watching for the signs that he needs to go.



## **A TYPICAL SCHEDULE FOR AN 8 WEEK OLD PUPPY IS AS FOLLOWS:**

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### **6:00 AM**

Potty, food, water, exercise/play for 30 minutes, crate or exercise pen.

### **10:00 AM**

Potty, water, exercise/play for 30 minutes, crate or exercise pen.

### **12:00 PM**

Potty, food, water, exercise/play for 30 minutes, crate or exercise pen.

### **2:00 PM**

Potty, water, exercise/play for 30 minutes, crate or exercise pen.

### **5:00 PM**

Potty, food, water, exercise/play for 30 minutes, crate or exercise pen.

### **7:00 PM**

Potty, last water, exercise/play for 30 minutes, crate or exercise pen.

### **11:00 PM**

Potty, Bedtime/crate.

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You might have to get up in the middle of the night with an eight week old puppy but this should not last for more than a couple of weeks at the most, so take heart. You will get through it. If the puppy is waking you up at 4 am then put the puppy to bed later and then each morning stretch the time that you get up by 10 to 15 minutes before letting her out to go potty. You will in a very short time stretch the time to a normal night's sleep. If the puppy needs to potty before it is your time to get up always put her back into the crate after she does her business and then go back to bed. Do not change your schedule and start paying attention to the puppy when she asks to be let out or when she just wants attention. If the puppy is just bored and is crying to get out of the crate then you will need to ignore her. Otherwise you will have a dog that wants to get up and go before you want to and before you know it you will have a dog that is dictating your schedule.

This schedule is only a guideline. You might have to adjust it based on your puppy and your real life schedule. Every dog is different and you have to adjust accordingly. As the puppy gets older you can start spreading out the times and cut down on the number of feedings and potty breaks when appropriate.

Try to stick to your schedule but there are times when you may have to vary it. Your puppy may not always follow it as planned for a variety of reasons. Puppies do get sick and when this happens you will have to throw the schedule out.

# 4

## PRECURSORS TO PUPPY ELIMINATION

### **1. AFTER EATING AND DRINKING:**

Puppies tend to eliminate after eating and drinking. This is why we should strictly schedule food and water intake.

**2. AFTER SLEEP:** Puppies eliminate after waking up. This we can schedule easily.

### **3. AFTER PLAY AND EXERCISE:**

Puppies tend to eliminate after play and exercise. If we remember this we can anticipate when the puppy will need to eliminate and avoid accidents.

**4. VISUAL SIGNS:** The puppy will also give us signs such as whimpering in the crate, moving in a circle and sniffing, moving purposely to a door leading outside or barking at us. Look for these signs and reward the puppy when it results in elimination outside.

### **THE NO FREE ROAMING RULE**

There are only three places the puppy can be during this period of house training.

**1. LEASH:** She can be with us while on a leash or on a tie-out.

**2. CRATE:** She can be in the crate sleeping. Puppies should have some crate time during the day. Puppies generally need several rest periods per day and they need a lot of sleep. You can safely confine your puppy to its crate 2 to 3 hours at a time a couple of times each day.



**3. EXERCISE PEN:** If you are going to have to leave the puppy for more than 2 or 3 hours then I would recommend leaving the puppy in the exercise pen with the crate door open. Remember do not punish the puppy if she has accidents in the exercise pen.

### **PUNISHMENT FOR ACCIDENTS**

What do we do if the puppy has accidents outside the exercise pen in our house? Most trainers today agree that punishing the dog after the fact is not effective. Excessive punishment should be avoided. Punishment causing the puppy significant discomfort or fear could cause it to overly generalize the event thereby not only inhibiting elimination in the house but reducing the puppy's willingness to eliminate outdoors in the owner's presence.

Dog trainers have varying views on how to correct the puppy when it has accidents and it can be confusing to the dog owner. We don't think that there is a black and white answer to this. You need to use what works for your puppy. It is imperative to understand that dogs live in the here-and-now and can only connect punishment to what they are currently doing and not to the past.

The only time we can effectively punish our puppy is when he/she is in the act of eliminating because then the dog immediately associates the correction

with his/her misdeed. However, taking a puppy to his/her mess and rubbing its nose in it is not a humane or effective approach. Disrupter type of stimulation is more effective and appropriate, such as a loud noise or shout. If the puppy starts to eliminate in front of you say "No" loudly and then scoop him up and immediately take the puppy to his elimination area. At this point be neutral and calm and do not scold the puppy or show any anger. If he finishes his business then lavish him with praise by saying, "GOOD DOG! GOOD POTTY!" or whatever positive word you choose to use.

What if you live in an apartment and your dog does not have access to a doggie door or a yard? In these cases you might have to use Puppy Pads, newspapers or a litter box. Each one of these options has their draw backs because a puppy that uses these for potty may never be fully housebroken. Dogs that have been trained on newspaper or pads never seem to grasp the idea that it is not okay to eliminate in the house.

Here is a web article on how to litter box train your dog:

<http://kturby.com/litter/litter.htm>

### **CLEANING UP AFTER YOUR DOG.**

It is important to clean up immediately when your puppy has an accident especially if the puppy has an accident in its crate. The puppy will be attracted to the smell and may continue to revisit the same spot(s) if the smell remains. Use an enzyme cleaner such as Nature's Miracle to clean up accidents.

# 4

***biggest mistakes owners make when house training their puppy.***

- 1. Not using a crate**
- 2. Allowing free roaming**
- 3. Inconsistent elimination and feeding schedule**
- 4. Punishing the puppy after the fact and too harshly.**

## **WHEN WILL MY PUPPY OR DOG BE TRUSTWORTHY?**

As a general rule you can give your puppy more freedom in the house when your puppy is a least 6 to 8 months of age and has had no accidents in the house for at least a month or two. However, you should still go slow and give freedom when it is earned and always back up a step or two if you have an accident.

***Don't Rush the Process***

## CHAPTER II

### ***Using a Crate for House Training your Puppy Cruel or Humane?***

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When potty training a puppy a crate is an essential tool. Today most professional dog trainers and veterinarians recommend a crate for housebreaking a puppy. The crate is the most effective and humane training tool available for potty training a puppy. We as humans value our freedom and tend to project our human feelings onto our pets which results in the unfortunate conclusion by some that crate training is cruel. However, most puppies and dogs look favorably upon a crate, especially when it is properly introduced and judiciously used.

The puppy sees the kennel in a totally different way and will instinctually seek out a den for comfort and safety. The dog crate may be a cage to us but to the puppy it is his cozy den. If you observe puppies in the home they will try to find small spaces to curl up in, like going under tables, desks or even under beds to seek comfort and safety. Their ancestors, the wolf, live in under

ground dens that protect them from the elements and predators. Dogs have this same natural denning instinct.

Today more people are aware of the benefits of using a crate when house training a puppy or even an older dog. The premise is that a dog or puppy will not eliminate where they sleep. If we use of the crate, follow a consistent feeding routine and potty schedule we can teach the puppy where and when it should eliminate making the process of housebreaking happen quickly and painlessly.

There are other benefits to crate training your puppy at an early age. The crate can also be used to teach a puppy to be calm in the owner's absence. For example: If your dog or puppy starts barking or crying when you leave, you can use the crate to teach him to be calm while you are at home. Once there's a pattern of calm behavior when you are at home you can start leaving for short periods of time. Then extend the time as your puppy learns how to handle your absence. Eventually the goal would be to wean your puppy away from the kennel when the dog has demonstrated that he or she can be trusted. This might take up to a year depending on your dog. Remember that the crate is not a puppy



prison and should not be used as punishment. If you work during the day it is not advisable to leave your puppy in the crate all day.

A good dog trainer can coach you through this process and also help you recognize any early signs of anxiety or serious canine behavior problems that might be developing. Setting up a puppy training program and puppy safe environment in the right way can go a long way to preventing future dog behavior problems.

Kennels can also be used as a management tool for training dogs suffering from separation anxiety or other behavior problems. (This is the term for dogs that engage in destructive behavior when their owners are away.) Rather than letting the dog destroy his home or yard we can teach the dog to be calm in a confined space while we

are away. The crate, if proper training is used with it, can have a calming effect on the dog, keeping him from acting out because of the anxiety associated with the owner's absence.

A crate is an excellent dog and puppy training tool, but it should not be over used or become a substitute for good dog training. Over use can damage your dog or puppy psychologically. Putting the dog into the kennel when you are frustrated or angry may solve the immediate problem, but in the long run you need to also teach your puppy some self control and manners. Along with exercise, training, play and affection the crate should be part of your puppy's daily routine. If you find yourself using the crate too much you may need help from a professional dog trainer to help you better manage your puppy's bad behavior.

# CHAPTER 11

## ***Puppy Socialization and Desensitization Training***

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There are many dog trainers and dog books that stress the importance of Puppy Socialization. Puppy Socialization is a broad term that applies to a range of puppy training methods and obedience techniques that have little to do with Puppy Socialization. By the time you bring your puppy home he/she has most likely been properly socialized through the interactions with his/her littermates, the next step is not more socialization, but rather exposure to a variety of real world situations such as introducing your puppy to adults, kids, the car, the vet, appliances such as a vacuum, shapes, sounds, and different environments. This process is commonly referred to as Puppy Desensitization.

The AVSAB (American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior) believes puppies should start puppy socialization

classes as early as 7 to 8 weeks, even before they are fully vaccinated. Their position paper can be downloaded at

[http://www.avsabonline.org/avsabonline/images/stories/Position\\_Statements/puppy%20socialization.pdf](http://www.avsabonline.org/avsabonline/images/stories/Position_Statements/puppy%20socialization.pdf)

Socialization is the developmental phase between 3 weeks and 12 weeks that a puppy goes through when they play with their litter mates. During this phase the puppy learns proper body language and social hierarchies that are an important part of being a dog. Socialization really only involves the dog's interactions with its own litter mates and does not accustom the puppy to the real world such as people, loud noises and how to behave politely around strange dogs. Pack behavior is one of most basic things the puppy learns during this crucial socialization period. However, a puppy who learns early to dominate his or her litter mates may continue exhibit dominant behavior around strange dogs, this behavior may seem inappropriate, but is completely in line with what the puppy learned early on.

The importance of Socialization cannot be downplayed. When getting your puppy from a breeder find out how the puppy has interacted with other dogs and people. It is extremely important not to get your puppy too early. Pup-



pies that are homed before 8 weeks do not get proper socialization with their litter mates and may develop behavior problems later in life as a result of this. The distinction between Socialization and Desensitization is an important one because Desensitization demands that you as an owner take an active role in controlling your puppy's experience in new situations and environments.

Exposing your puppy to the world teaches him/her what to expect in certain situations and what you expect them to do. Desensitization takes place when we introduce the puppy to a variety of people, places, and animals and teach them how they should behave.

During this period of desensitization take your puppy to a variety of places to meet as many people as possible and to meet other animals such as dogs, cats, horses and cows; and continue to do this over the lifetime of your dog. Repetition and continuing exposure are important. When first introducing your puppy to these new things and places it is very important to avoid frightening experiences. When introducing your dog to a strange dog, make sure that the dog is friendly before exposing your dog to a potential attack which could traumatize your puppy and develop into dog aggression later in the dog's life. When introducing your dog to children you should carefully instruct the children on how to behave and how to meet the dog. Do not simply throw your puppy into a group of screaming, jumping, or fast playing children. This might terrify your



puppy. If your puppy is frightened then the experience may form negative associations and reactions in your puppy's mind.

You should desensitize your puppy slowly in gradual steps. Having some basic obedience before you begin is helpful so that you have some ability to control your puppy's focus and reactions to stress and distractions. Begin in a safe and controlled environment so that if something goes wrong or if the puppy displays fear or other inappropriate responses you can take charge and calm the puppy. Basic obedience will help your puppy feel more confident because he or she can focus on you and a command and not the environmental stressor. The puppy will feel less anxious and will defer to you as its leader.



Your puppy is very sensitive to how you respond to situations and will pick up on your anxiety, fear and emotional responses. Staying calm and cool in new situations is very important. For example, if you become tense and nervous when introducing your puppy to a strange dog your puppy might think that you are afraid of the new dog. Sensing your fear your puppy might become aggressive or fearful thinking it should protect you. On the other hand, if you praise and cuddle your puppy every time it runs and hides in fear of something, you may unintentionally encourage its fearful behavior. Coddling your puppy with praise and reassurance may inadvertently reinforce the unwanted behavior, setting up a pattern that may continue in the future with every similar situation.

The key to successful puppy training and desensitization is to be aware of your own feelings and behavior and know exactly what actions you desire of your puppy and how to reinforce his/her best behavior. In order to encourage your puppy to be calm around other non-aggressive dogs teach your dog a sit command while another dog is passing. If your puppy acts aggressive or inappropriately let your dog know that this is unacceptable behavior with a light leash correction and a sharp “No” or “Leave-it”. Teach your puppy to focus on you when distracted by other dogs or animals.



## ***Here are some suggestions on what to expose your puppy to:***

**KIDS:** Make sure that the children are instructed to be gentle and friendly in order to make the experience a pleasant one for your puppy and the children. Remember that puppies between 6 to 10 weeks of age “fear imprint” so we do not want to make this a frightening or bad experience for either your dog or the children.

**CAR RIDES:** in order to make sure that the puppy does not associate bad endings to car trips such as going to the vet or the groomer, drive him to the pet store, to a fun place, to visit his favorite playmate, etc.

**MEET OTHER PUPPIES AND HEALTHY FRIENDLY DOGS:** and healthy friendly dogs: You want your puppy to associate with a variety of dogs. Choose friends who may have varied dogs such as big ones, small ones, older ones etc. Join a puppy social class.

**THE VET: GO TO YOUR VET JUST TO VISIT.** The staff will give him/her treats and love. Do this several times without having any procedures done. If done properly your dog will never hate going to the Vet.

**PET STORES:** Go to all your local pet stores and take advantage of meeting people and other dogs and even other animals. Pet stores welcome your puppy and even encourage it.

**OPEN SHOPPING MALLS:**

There are a lot of shopping areas that allow dogs that are well behaved and mannered. This is a fun and great way to get your puppy desensitized to people, noises and distractions.

**OUTDOOR RESTAURANTS:**

There is nothing more enjoyable than having your dog at your feet relaxing while you have your café latte or glass of wine while watching the world go by. That is if your dog is relaxed and friendly with strangers and other dogs.

**BEACHES/LAKES/POOLS:**

Introduce your puppy to water at their own pace. Do not force them into the water before they are ready. You can

encourage your puppy to follow you into the water by playing games and using treats but be sure that you go in small steps and make it positive. Some puppies will just jump right in and others may take their time but most dogs enjoy romping through the water and may even take to swimming a few laps

On a final note make sure to keep an eye out for stress on the puppy's part during any of these experiences. Make them feel safe and don't overwhelm them with new experiences. If you keep the experiences positive your puppy should grow up to be a healthy and happy companion for life, a dog you can take anywhere and be proud of.



## CHAPTER IV

### *Puppy Biting and Mouthing*

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Puppy mouthing is the most common puppy problem and concern that we hear about at The Dog Squad. Most new puppy owners have a difficult time understanding and dealing with this very normal puppy behavior. Puppy Play-fighting and Play-biting are natural and a necessary part of a puppy's developmental process.

Teaching a puppy to inhibit the force of his biting is something we need to do before the puppy develops strong jaws and the ability to bite with damaging force. A puppy's bite though painful seldom causes major damage. Because we want the puppy to learn how to inhibit his biting we do not want to forbid all play-biting. The puppy needs to learn that if the biting inflicts pain then the interaction with us will stop. The puppy can learn to restrain its bite in order to keep our attention and companionship.

Why does a puppy want to use our hands as pin cushions? Puppy mouthing and biting are natural self-rewarding behaviors, in that they relieve some discomfort associated with the puppy's teething. And because your puppy doesn't have hands he explores his world with his mouth. This is why puppies put everything they can into their mouths. They are exploring and discovering what their world is made of, what's good to eat, what's fun to chew, etc. Biting or mouthing can be stimulating and fun for your puppy. Owners

often have a tendency to make it even more fun through ineffective efforts to stop the puppy from biting. Such as pushing the puppy away, yelling, spanking or swatting him. These actions by the owner may not be viewed as punishment by the puppy and can actually be more rewarding making the dog's behavior even worse.

Let's explore the game of reinforcing unwanted dog and puppy behaviors like play biting and mouthing. If my puppy comes to me and starts to chew on my hands or feet my natural response would be to take my hands away from the dog. The quick movement causes the puppy to lunge at them making it even more fun than when he was just chewing on them. This is where the problem usually starts. If you can't take your hands away and you don't want to get chewed on, what do you do?

There are many things that puppy owners do that inadvertently reinforce bad dog behavior. The owners of course do not do this intentionally, but find themselves reacting out of frustration to the



puppy in ways that are ineffectual and counter productive to the puppy's natural development.

As an example when the puppy starts to bite us we may try to pacify him by petting. The puppy quickly realizes that by biting us he or she can get us to pet him. Petting unintentionally becomes positive reinforcement for more biting.

One solution here is to teach the puppy "bite inhibition" by using a command word to get him to stop biting us. The command word can be, "No", "Off" or "Leave it", but they all mean the same thing. How we teach the puppy to understand these commands depends on the dog's temperament and how much the puppy wants or needs to chew.

Some common dog and puppy training methods for teaching bite inhibition are: using a squirt bottle or something to spray in the puppy's mouth like "Bitter Apple" (which is sold in pet stores), a can filled with pennies that makes a loud noise for the purpose of startling the puppy, holding the puppy's muzzle while saying "No Bite". While these techniques may stop the biting for a

short while they are often times only quick fixes and may stop working over time.

There is a downside to using some of these methods, for example loud noises can make a dog afraid of any sudden and unexpected noise which can be more harmful to the puppy's normal development. Using a squirt bottle may make a puppy afraid of water or jumpy when she sees someone pick up something similar to a squirt bottle. In general, if the methods are too negative they can make the puppy fearful of its owners and other people. We would rather see a puppy coming to its owner without hesitation and not worrying about punishment. If every time a puppy came to its owner he or she was sprayed with water or had bitter apple sprayed into his/her mouth the dog may want to avoid the owner altogether.

There is a more gentle physical restraining technique that calmly gets the puppy to stop biting, while still looking to its owner as the leader he or she wants to follow. The following training technique is best used with puppies from 8 to 16 weeks of age. When using this training method it is a good idea to have a leash on your puppy. The leash will give you better control of your puppy so that if he tries to run away or play you can immediately get control. The leash should not be used to correct the puppy's behavior it is only used as a gentle restraint.

When the puppy starts biting you should gently but firmly get a hold of the puppy and kneel down on the floor. Turn the puppy away from you and position him between your knees so he cannot squeeze out from the rear or



sides. Then with one hand gently but firmly hold the puppy's muzzle closed while the other hand acts as a head rest so he can't pull his head back from your grip. While holding the puppy repeat in a low calm voice the command word you have chosen such as "No" or "Off". Repeat the command or "talk the dog down" as you keep him from biting you. Because you are physically showing the dog what you want him/her to do, i.e. "No Bite," while you repeat the command the dog will learn to associate that word with being calm and not biting. Note that we want to see the puppy give some type of signal that he/she has resigned to not continue biting. This signal may be a sigh or a

relaxed look in the eyes as opposed to fighting and wiggling to get free to start the game again.

Puppies and dogs learn best through the use of calm assertiveness. We don't have to yell at them, hit them or be harsh. We can teach a puppy to not bite us and to be well mannered without overly harsh and punitive methods. Using proper discipline that is fair and consistent along with positive reinforcement establishes a bond of trust with the dog and the owner. Dogs and puppies crave structure and boundaries and prefer to follow strong, fair and consistent owners.



# CHAPTER V

## *Puppy Obedience Training*

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### **SETTING THE GROUND WORK**

Training your puppy takes focus, patience and a positive attitude. If you are distracted the puppy will also be distracted and unmotivated to work with you. If you are going to use physical praise be sure you are able to give your dog honest and sincere praise. On days that you've had a tough time at work or you're distracted by other things it may be better to wait until you are in a better frame of mind to train your dog.

When teaching a puppy an obedience command we want to introduce that command in a positive context. During puppy training it is a good idea to try a variety of lures such as treats, toys, praise and petting. Every dog is different in how it might respond to a lure or positive reinforcement. Find your puppy's favorite thing to work for but remember that if you use the same thing over and over again your puppy may become uninterested in it.



You need to have good equipment on your dog. That means a good leash and a snug fitting collar, so your dog won't be able to wiggle out of its lesson. Also, if you are using treats as rewards purchase a "hip bag" (also know as a "bait bag"). It will make it easier to dispense the treats without losing momentum.

Puppies are naturally inquisitive and want to explore all the scents, sounds and objects around them. Puppies want to pick up things, chew on your shoes and furniture and don't know that it's not all right to go potty on your favorite rug. Preventing your dog from roaming and doing as it pleases will help establish you as the leader and help your puppy understand its boundaries at the same time building a stronger bond with you.

The easiest way to achieve this is to put your puppy on a leash and simply attach the leash to your belt. The puppy will have no other choice but to follow you. This exercise will do two things: get your dog used to a leash and walking with you and keeping him/her out of trouble.

### **PUPPY LEASH TRAINING**

Introduce your puppy to its leash slowly. Some puppies will balk at having a collar or leash on, and their initial reactions might be fearful and resistant to walking with you. It is best not to force the issue in the beginning. Make

the process gradual over a period of a few days to a week. Done in a slow and positive way the leash will become a way to bond and communicate with your puppy and not an instrument of compulsion. Begin with a collar. Have your puppy wear its new collar for a couple of days before attaching a leash to it. Don't be concerned if your puppy scratches at it or tries to remove the collar. Your puppy will adjust to it very quickly and forget that he/she is even wearing it. Once the puppy is used to the collar introducing the leash is easy.



At first attach the leash to your puppy's collar and let her/him drag it around while getting used to some minor pressure on her neck. Follow your pup as she walks around and gently pick up the leash while talking to your puppy in an encouraging and positive way. After your puppy seems comfortable with the leash while you are following her/him reverse the role and get your puppy to follow you. As your puppy moves away from you get your puppy's attention by clapping your hands and praising her/him enthusiastically. If the puppy balks at coming and starts to play tug-of-war crouch down with your arms extended open and call in a pleasant enthusiastic voice using the puppy's name and the word "Come". At this point, do not force the puppy to come because this could cause the puppy to resist even more.

In addition to introducing your puppy to a leash and "Come" you should start teaching the dog a "Sit" and "Down" command.

## PUPPY TRAINING - "SIT" COMMAND

The "Sit" Command is the most basic command you can teach your puppy and the building block to teaching your dog how to behave well. The "Sit" position is so widely used that it is almost always in a dog's repertoire of commands; even dogs with very limited obedience work will usually have learned this command. Some owners teach their dogs to sit before meals, before going out of the house or coming in and at every street corner. This simple command teaches the dog to work with his or her owner in a positive and constructive manner.

To start you need a leash and collar. You will use a food reward and physical praise interchangeably during the teaching process. Give your dog a command to "Sit", then gently but firmly press her/his rear end down into a sit position. Try not to push too hard or too fast because that may cause your dog to resist more. You want to be as gentle as you can while still using enough pressure to get the job done. Now that you have your dog in position you can reward your puppy with praise and a small treat. Do not "over do" the praise. If you show too much enthusiasm you can overly excite your dog to the point that the dog wants to get up and wiggle around. If the puppy does get up due to too much excitement, you will simply re-issue the command and repeat the process.

When using a treat to lure a dog into a command be aware that you should fade its use as quickly as possible.

You will find that many dogs suffer from poor performance because they are looking for the treat before doing the command.



When this process is done a few times each day your dog will soon learn to sit without you needing to push his/her rear end down. After a few days your dog will have a more solid understanding of the command and will comply more readily. When your dog has mastered this command in the house and in the yard you can then start practicing in more distracting areas like in your neighborhood and at the local park. With the right amount of practice your dog will soon be sitting on command regardless of location or distraction.

## **PUPPY TRAINING - “DOWN” COMMAND**

When training your dog to do a “Down” command, be aware that not all dogs are eager to comply and some can be willfully resistant. For a dog, being placed into a down can be a very vulnerable and submissive position. So be patient, stay positive and upbeat during the training process.

Since your dog won’t know what to do when you give it a “Down” command you will start the process by showing him what you want by physically placing him into a down position. Kneel down beside your puppy and put firm steady pressure downward on the dog’s leash and collar. While doing this give the command “Down” repeatedly in a calm voice. If your dog lies down

at this time then praise him/her appropriately, “Good Down” or “Good Dog”. It is not always that easy, so you may need to work some more on getting your pooch down. While still keeping pressure on the collar place your other hand on the top of your dog’s shoulder blades. While pulling the leash downward put steady and slow pressure on the dog’s shoulders until your dog goes down. Praise and pet your puppy appropriately when he/she is in the down position. If you are using treats you want to present it at floor level so our dog is encouraged to remain on the floor. If we are using praise then be sincere and calm at the same time. You don’t want to get your dog too excited with over the top enthusiastic praise. With repeated practice sessions your dog will soon be able to do the “Down” without your physical assistance.

## **PUPPY TRAINING - “STAY” COMMAND**

For many people teaching their puppy and dog to stay is a real challenge. When teaching any command or trick to your dog break it down into small steps and build it slowly.

The “Stay” is really an unnecessary command since it can be implied with the “Sit”, “Down” or “Place” commands. If you ask your dog to “Sit” you are asking the dog to “Sit” and to continue to “Sit” until released, making a “Stay” redundant. If you want to add the “Stay”, do so but we feel it is clearer and easier for the dog to understand one command. For example if you command

your dog to “Sit” and she stands just repeat the command, “Sit”. You don’t have to say “Stay” or “No”, just command “Sit”. This is a much clearer way of communicating what you want your dog to do.

When breaking down a “Stay”, there are four essential building blocks that are necessary to accomplish the desired result.

### **1. TEACH THE DESIRED COMMAND POSITION**

(examples -. Sit, Down or Place)

**2. TIME:** This is the time your dog can stay in the desired Command Position.

**3. DISTANCE:** This is the distance you can move away from your dog while the dog stays in a Command Position.

**4. DISTRACTIONS:** This is the addition of distractions such as other dogs, squirrels, cats, balls, toys, noises, etc.

With that being said, the overall learning process is to put your dog on a leash at your heel side; give the desired Command Position - e.g. “Sit”, then pivot in front, facing your dog just a few feet away. Stand still and count silently to 5, then move back to heel position and praise your dog. Move your dog into a heel then stop and sit your dog and repeat the exercise. Add a few seconds each time. Repeat this until you can reach 2 or more minutes without your dog moving from

the desired Command Position . When you have achieved 2 minutes then start adding Distance a foot at a time. As you add Distance you may have to cut back on the Time. The first time you get to the end of your leash you may have to cut your Time to 30 seconds or less. Cut the Time as you add Distance and once you can get to the end of your leash then start adding Time again. When you can get 2 or more minutes at the end of a 6 foot leash then you can start adding Distractions. However, when you add Distractions you might have to cut both Time and Distance and then start the process of rebuilding. At any point during this process if your dog has problems with staying in the Command Position, then back up one step or two and start rebuilding. Sometimes you might have to go all the way back to the beginning but the rebuilding process usually takes only a few repeats to get back to where you were.

The process in a nutshell is as follows: Teach the desired Command Position. Then Increase Time, then Distance, and finally add Distractions as appropriate. As you add one variable decrease the other until you can do all



three while retaining the original desired Command Position.

Sessions should be short, about 10 to 15 minutes and repeated multiple times throughout the day. If you stick with this process you should have the foundation for maintaining a desired Command Position (e.g. "Stay") within a few weeks.



Flexi or any other retractable leashes.

A Flexi is a great tool for teaching puppies the come command because it allows the puppy to move freely away from you without it feeling the pressure of the leash.

To begin the training session, have the following items: a treat bag, treats (we recommend soft treats like Zukes which are pre cut

into very small pieces and are not junk food), and a flat collar. Clip the treat bag on your belt. Start your sessions in a distraction free area such as your back yard.

## PUPPY TRAINING - "COME" COMMAND

A Flexi Lead (Retractable leash) is a great tool for teaching puppies to come when called. We only recommend the Flexi Brand. For small puppies 10 lbs and under (toys and small breeds) we recommend The Flexi Classic Long 1 (Up to 26lbs - cord/23 Ft.) and for medium to large breeds we recommend the Flexi Classic Long 2 (Up to 44 lbs.-cord/23 Ft.)

A Flexi-lead should not be used for walking puppies or dogs. It gives dogs too much freedom and does not teach proper leash behavior. It also can be a safety hazard if you do not use it properly.

Be sure to read the Flexi instructions carefully before using and be aware of the safety hazards and precautions that need to be followed when using the

Start the lesson by letting your puppy wander away from you. When the dog is about six feet away call the dog using his/her name and the "Come" command, e.g.- . "Dolly Come". Have the treat in your dominant hand and hold it at the puppy's eye level as a target. As the puppy comes to your hand release it into her/his mouth and praise, "Good Dog". If the puppy does not respond and continues to move away from you, press the brake button on the Flexi, repeat the come command and pull the locked Flexi towards you then instantly release the brake button as the puppy moves towards you, letting the line reel itself in. The puppy should stop and show commitment to coming to you. While holding the treat in your right hand at the puppy's eye level lure the puppy to you. When the puppy reaches you, then treat and praise your puppy. Next, give the puppy a release command such as "OK", "Be Free", "Go



## ***Puppies Need Encouragement and Praise***



On” or whatever you want to use. Let the puppy move further out each time and repeat the exercise. If the puppy turns and comes to you without hesitation then you do not need to lock and pull the Flexi. If the puppy does not come then “Lock, Pull and Release” the Flexi as the puppy starts moving to you.

You do not want to create slack in the line. This can cause injury to you and your dog. If by chance you do create slack in the line then lock the Flexi and remove the line from the dog’s collar. Then, while holding the clip that attaches to the collar, let the line reel in slowly.

During the first week of exercises treat the puppy every time the dog Comes to you, even when you have to force and pull the puppy to you. Starting the second week treat every 2nd or 3rd time. During the third week start treating intermittently. As the puppy starts to respond to the Come command more reliably start doing these exercises with higher distractions and in environments that compete for the dog’s attention.

Another refinement to add to this exercise is to randomly put your hand into the puppy’s collar when the puppy comes to you. While giving the treat

hold the puppy’s collar so that you condition the puppy to let you control him/her without protest. Too often dogs learn to come to their owners, take the treat and run. By conditioning the dog to letting you control him/her by putting your hand into his collar you can prevent this from becoming an issue or game later on

Puppy training is different in tone than formal obedience training. A young puppy may not be mature enough to handle the stress brought on by over bearing or compulsory obedience training. Don’t make the mistake of being overly dominate or heavy-handed with a puppy otherwise you might create a pup that is passively submissive, lacking in self-confidence and fearful. Most puppies need a more patient approach, one stressing encouragement and praise.

In puppy training we are less concerned about precise responses to commands but in building and nurturing character traits such as: attentiveness, playfulness, curiosity, confidence, and of course respect for its pack leaders. By keeping your focus on making the training sessions pleasant and fun for you and your puppy you will be laying a solid foundation that will prepare your puppy for formal and advanced obedience.



*Steve and his 1st dog, Penny*

Author, **Steve Bettcher** had his first dog at the age of four and his dream, as a five year old, was to become an animal trainer. As a college student he trained Seals for Stanford Research.

Steve now has more than 15 years of dog training experience in both obedience and agility. Two of his own dogs won three National Agility Championships and earned NADAC Agility Trial Championships. He has volunteered at the Oakland Animal Shelter helping with adoptions and training of dogs. He is a Certified Dog Trainer, International Association of Canine Professional, a Certified Remote Collar Specialist and an AKC Canine Good Citizen Evaluator.



*Steve with dogs from his Walnut Creek class*

Steve has both a BA degree in Psychology and a MS in Counseling.







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