



Cranston
ANIMAL HOSPITAL

Guide to Your New Puppy

Congratulations on your new puppy! We hope you are enjoying the recent addition to your family. This guide is a brief overview of puppy behavior basics. Behavior problems are the number one reason owners give their dogs to animal shelters. Fortunately, most behavior problems can be prevented through proper training and socialization as a puppy. For a more in-depth understanding of dog behavior, we recommend the readings at the end of this brochure.

Basic Potty Training

- ❖ It is important to implement a potty training protocol as soon as your new puppy arrives
 - ❖ House soiling is one of the top complaints of pet owners
- ❖ Puppies can “hold it” for no longer than one hour for each month of age, up to about 10 hours’ maximum
 - ❖ 3 months = 3 hours
- ❖ Here are three basic rules for your potty training regimen
 - ❖ **When you are home**
 - ❖ Never leave your puppy unsupervised during the training period, if you cannot give full attention
 - ❖ Place your puppy in their crate/confinement area with a delicious treat
 - ❖ Tether your puppy in the kitchen
 - ❖ Take your puppy with you
 - ❖ Stop your puppy’s attempt to eliminate in the house by immediately leading your puppy outside
 - ❖ If you aren’t right there, your puppy will have eliminated before you have had a chance to prevent it
 - ❖ Every mistake is a step back—help your puppy by always keeping an eye on her
 - ❖ Once an hour
 - ❖ Accompany your puppy outside to the toilet area
 - ❖ Consistently give your “potty” command and 2-3 minutes to eliminate
 - ❖ Reward your puppy after elimination enthusiastically with yummy treats and verbal praise
 - ❖ **When you are not at home**
 - ❖ Never leave a non-potty-trained dog loose in your house during the training period
 - ❖ This can cause inappropriate elimination while you are out
 - ❖ The crate should only be large enough for her to sit, stand, and turn around
 - ❖ Too much space can lead to elimination in one corner and sleeping in another
 - ❖ In situations where you are away from home for longer than your pup is capable of preventing elimination
 - ❖ It may be helpful to have a designated “toilet” mat: an absorbent pad or newspaper outside of the crate
 - ❖ The crate door can be left open if it is enclosed within a small room or penned off
 - ❖ Remember, mistakes happen, DO NOT punish your puppy after the fact
 - ❖ She does not associate your punishment with her inappropriate elimination.
 - ❖ The “guilty” look puppies may display after urinating in the house is really just a scared look as they can read your anger and anticipate that something bad is going to happen
 - ❖ Some dogs that are punished for eliminating in the house and in front of the owner, will learn to eliminate in an area out of the owner’s view (basement or behind the couch)
 - ❖ Strive for: “pee outside = good things happen = food!

Crate Training

- ❖ Crate training is beneficial to a puppy's life in that it provides a safe means to
 - ❖ Prevent inappropriate elimination in the house
 - ❖ Prevent destructive and potentially dangerous behaviors in the house when you are away
 - ❖ Provide an escape from stressors
 - ❖ Teach independence by preparing the puppy to be calm when left alone
 - ❖ This independence is essential in the prevention of separation anxiety

- ❖ Picking a crate
 - ❖ The dimensions should be large enough for your puppy to sit, stand, turn around, and lie down comfortably
 - ❖ There should not be enough room for your puppy to eliminate in one corner and rest in another
 - ❖ For larger breed puppies, there are crates with sections that can be added to provide a crate to "grow into"

- ❖ Make it a happy place
 - ❖ Put the crate in an area of the house where your family spends a lot of time
 - ❖ Allow the puppy to go into the crate on her own, leave treats and toys inside to make the crate more inviting
 - ❖ Let her walk in and out with the door open several times with treats, before you leave her inside with the door closed
 - ❖ You can also start feeding her inside her crate, eventually closing the door when she is eating comfortably

- ❖ Gradually increase the time periods
 - ❖ Have your dog start spending more time in the crate with food, or a chew toy that takes longer to eat
 - ❖ Be sure your dog is relaxed and calm and begin to leave the room for short periods of time while she is eating in her crate
 - ❖ As long as she remains calm, you may keep increasing the time she spends in the crate, until she is able to remain comfortably in her crate while you leave for longer periods of time

- ❖ Do not respond to cries or whines in the crate
 - ❖ If you experience, the training may be going too quickly for your pup
 - ❖ Slow down the training and start at a comfortable level for your pup
 - ❖ The most successful training is that which is stress free
 - ❖ Monitor for signs of anxiety during training, such as panting, yawning, and salivation
 - ❖ You may need to
 - ❖ Start from the beginning at another time at a comfortable level for your pup
 - ❖ Consult a behaviorist should these problems arise; This could be early signs of separation anxiety
 - ❖ At the time that your puppy does vocalize in the crate, you should not let her out or punish her for this behavior
 - ❖ If you let her out when she cries, she will learn that crying gets her what she wants, and she will cry every time
 - ❖ Walk away and wait until she is quiet before letting her out
 - ❖ This process may take a long time and the behavior may become worse before it gets better

- ❖ The key is consistency and making the crate a positive experience. NEVER use the crate as a punishment.

Socialization

- ❖ Proper handling of puppies during their critical socialization period is essential to the prevention of behavior problems
 - ❖ Depending on the breed, the critical socialization period is between the ages of 3 weeks continuing to 12-16 weeks
- ❖ Appropriate socialization involves exposing your puppy to a variety of people, animals, places, and situations
 - ❖ Early socialization allows for healthy social behavior development
 - ❖ Helps prevent acts of aggression based on fear of other dogs, people or new environments
- ❖ Veterinary behaviorist, Dr. Ian Dunbar, recommends that your puppy meets and have positive interactions with 100 people before she is 16 weeks old!
 - ❖ The effects of improper puppy socialization can be devastating, leading to fear-based aggression towards people and/or other dogs, plus extreme shyness and anxiety
- ❖ An easy and effective means to socialize your pup is to enroll her in a puppy socialization class
 - ❖ This provides puppies the ability to form social relationships with other animals and people in a safe, controlled environment
 - ❖ Recent studies show puppies that participated in socialization classes were more likely to be retained in their homes than puppies that did not

The Mouthy Pup

- ❖ Mouthiness in puppies is a normal, natural behavior
- ❖ Puppies use their mouths to gather information about their environment
 - ❖ Some use of the mouth for exploration is acceptable in puppies less than 4 months of age
 - ❖ Biting that is excessive or the least bit painful should not be rewarded

- ❖ Here are some tips for discouraging inappropriate mouthiness
 - ❖ Avoid aggressive play
 - ❖ Especially interactions which involve a puppy's mouth and your hands
 - ❖ Provide appropriate chew toys
 - ❖ Kongs, Nyla-bones or durable stuffed toys
 - ❖ These toys can be used to redirect your puppy's urge to chew away from your hands or feet
 - ❖ You can even smear peanut butter on your pet's toys to make them more appealing
 - ❖ Practice a high-pitched "ouch"
 - ❖ This yelp will startle a pup and cause her to stop biting
 - ❖ At this point, you can redirect the pup to a more appropriate chew toy
 - ❖ As some puppies develop, they may learn that biting gets them attention.
 - ❖ Be careful this "ouch" is not interpreted as attention if so, avoid this practice.
 - ❖ STOP giving attention to the puppy when she becomes mouthy
 - ❖ Attention can include petting, yelling, speaking, pushing, playing, and even eye contact
 - ❖ Look away from your puppy, GET UP, and walk away until the puppy moves on to another activity
 - ❖ A puppy that is desperate for attention will soon make the association that biting leads to being ignored
 - ❖ Teach your pup how to "sit" and reward with attention
 - ❖ Once your puppy learns that sitting—not mouthing or jumping—earns your praise, she will be sitting at your feet in no time!

Adolescence

- ❖ Depending on the breed adolescence period is between the ages of 6 months and 2 ½ years of age
- ❖ This period of time is notably the most frustrating for pet owners
- ❖ Adolescent dogs become less dependent on their owners for guidance as they begin to explore other dogs, scents, and environments
- ❖ Energy levels, especially for larger breed dogs, are at a peak during this time, making exercise requirements much higher than they were during puppyhood
- ❖ Some breeds, such as Border collie, Labrador retrievers and Cattle dogs, require more exercise than others
- ❖ The rule of thumb for any breed is that the more energy a dog spends on exercise, the less energy she will spend on unruly behaviors
- ❖ As dogs grow larger, many behaviors that may have been cute and loveable as a puppy, such as jumping up, sitting on laps, licking faces etc., are no longer acceptable, especially for small children or guests who visit your house
 - ❖ Start young and reward your pet for sitting
 - ❖ Do not allow people to give her attention when she jumps up on them
 - ❖ Yelling or punishing her for jumping up may give her a negative association with you, your family members, or guests, causing her to be anxious, fearful, and even aggressive
- ❖ All your hard work in socialization and teaching good manners can go to waste quite rapidly during this time period if you do not make an appropriate effort to maintain it
 - ❖ It is pertinent that you continue to expose your dog to other people and animals through her adolescence
 - ❖ Positive reinforcement obedience classes should begin just after age 12 weeks—before your dog has a chance to develop and strengthen undesirable behaviors
- ❖ Clicker training is a fun and effective method of teaching your dog both basic and advanced obedience skills
- ❖ The use of a head collar, such as the Gentle Leader, can be a helpful aid in managing your overactive adolescent during training and even on walks
- ❖ AVOID training classes that utilize choke chains, shock collars, pronged pinch collars, or any other painful punishment.
 - ❖ Scientific studies have shown that pain can create a negative association with you, induce fear, inhibit learning, and, at times, cause aggression
- ❖ Make sure the class you choose is a positive experience for both you and your dog!