

Puppy Survival Guide



Crucial **routines** to implement early and **mistakes** to avoid to give your puppy (and yourself!) a **great start** with training!



- ✓ Potty Training
- ✓ Socialization
- ✓ Alone Training
- ✓ Crate Training
- ✓ Chewing & Biting
- ✓ Energy Management

...And more!!



Puppy Survival Guide

Congratulations on bringing home your puppy! The good news is, puppies are highly trainable! Most serious behavior issues can be prevented or reversed during puppyhood at a minimal investment of time and effort. This guide contains best practices for preventing or reversing common problems that are especially hard to deal with if they persist into adulthood.

Successful puppy training requires time and attention, but will save you the much greater trouble of trying to reverse unwanted habits once they've developed, and can make a key difference in how happily and easily you and your dog live together for many years to come!

Disclaimer:

Please note that this resource is for educational purposes only, and that Pals Dog Training is not responsible for how it is utilized outside of their direct supervision, nor do we offer any specific guarantees about how your dog- a complex and living being- will behave in any given circumstance. If you have any reservations or concerns about applying the advice in this guide with your dog, please seek additional advice from your veterinarian or a qualified positive reinforcement trainer/behaviorist.

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Designated Mealtimes



Designating limited mealtimes has numerous benefits including chronic stress reduction and helping you to predict your dog's potty schedule. It also helps to maintain your dog's interest in their food (so they don't get 'bored' of it) and helps protect the value of other foods to your dog - which is helpful to the training process overall.

If your puppy doesn't finish their meals, pick up what they haven't eaten within twenty minutes of putting it down. Offer the next meal at the regular time with the regular amount of food (without adding the left over food from the previous meal).

Crate & Pen Training



Using a crate or pen to create a puppy-safe-zone gives you a place to put your puppy where:

- a) your puppy only has approved items to build chewing habits with and
- b) they are unlikely to eliminate (urinate or defecate).

It also sets your dog up to be comfortable with confinement, in case they need to be boarded or transported in some kind of enclosure in the future.

Make the crate or pen a GREAT place to be as early as possible. Feed meals in it. Deliver presents like treats, chews, and toys inside it. Pet your puppy in it or even hang out inside of it with your pup if the space permits. Once your dog is comfortable being closed in a crate or pen, put your dog in there (with something enjoyable to do) at least occasionally when you are home, so it isn't always associated with you leaving.

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Potty Training



Dogs don't know where they are "supposed" to go unless they are taught. They may see one area as a place to sleep or play, but an unused corner of the living room or the space underneath a table could make a fine potty area as far as your dog is concerned. Pick a quick, convenient place for your dog to potty and give them plenty of chances to "go" there. Likely times for your dog to potty are: right after waking up, after running around, after drinking a lot of water, 15-30 minutes after a meal, and after being in a crate or pen for a while. With your dog in the right place, say "go potty" just once, then stand boringly (don't distract your dog by repeating "go potty, go potty" or otherwise interacting with them).

Give your dog an extra yummy treat every time they go potty in the right place. Keep some of these treats handy by the door or in a jar outside so you can feed it to your puppy quickly and consistently after they potty in the right place. If possible, make other good things happen after they potty in the right place too, like playtime or a walk. Be careful not to end good things (like a walk) or start less desired things (like you leaving the house) right after your dog potties, or else they might try to hold their bladder and bowels to avoid these apparent results (and end up in the wrong place when they can't hold it any more).

If you catch your dog pottying in the wrong place, interrupt them without scaring them and get them to where they are supposed to go. Reward if they finish in the correct place.

Never punish your dog for going in the wrong place, whether you catch them in the act or after the fact - they will just avoid you and potty in the wrong place when you aren't around, which is a more difficult problem to solve!

If your puppy continually soils an unwanted area, be sure to clean it with an enzymatic, dog-stain specific odor eliminator, then once it is clean and dry spend time doing something else there with your puppy, e.g. play, train, practice handling (see Socialization section), etc.

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Alone Training



They'll be back. Until then, I'll be just fine!

Dogs, especially puppies, are predisposed to prefer having our presence and attention. Separation anxiety is not an easy behavior problem for dogs or owners to live with, so teach your puppy early on that being alone is not something to worry about.

Occasionally expose your dog to stress-free forms of separation, like being in another room or leaving briefly while your dog is busy with something else. If your dog can tolerate these short amounts of separation, begin to make them gradually longer.

Practice calm entrances and exits. **When you enter the house, wait for your dog to calm down (for most dogs, this takes anywhere between 15 seconds and 3 minutes) before greeting him or giving him attention whatsoever.** Try to allow your dog to settle before you leave the house and do so nonchalantly.

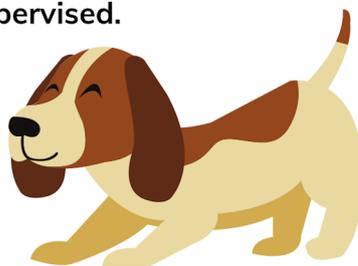
Continually give your dog positive experiences with you being inattentive or away. Chews or interactive treat toys, once determined to be safe for your dog, can help give them sustained positive experiences while you are gone. One of the easiest ways to start getting your dog comfortable with being alone is by regularly going into another room or taking a quick walk while your dog enjoys a meal from a puzzle toy.

Interactive Treat Toys

An interactive treat toy is a toy that you can fill with food, and makes your dog do some kind of work to get it out. They are a great tool to help with crate/pen training, alone training, chewing appropriate items training, and to add extra stimulation to your dog's day. **If your dog spends even a few minutes per day trying to chew, knock, roll, nudge, or paw treats out of an interactive treat toy, he is much less likely to practice undesirable, boredom-motivated behaviors.**

You can feed treats or your dog's normal food from interactive treat toys. Start with food that will be easy to get out. If your dog is successful getting the food, you can begin to make the food gradually harder to get (e.g. use larger pieces, seal with peanut butter, or pack more tightly) to make the fun last longer.

Different designs will teach your dog different skills and better satisfy your dog's curiosity. Like everything else your dog chews, ensure that they interact with any treat toy safely before leaving them with one unsupervised.



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Socialization



Socialization is typically regarded as the most important early training task for a new puppy owner, and for good reason - dogs have a developmental window early in puppyhood where they can more easily learn to be confident, comfortable, and calm around various categories of stimulation and in various environments. Once that window closes, a dog is much more likely to regard new types of things with suspicion and apprehension. **Socialization is all about giving your puppy neutral-to-positive experiences with all of the types of things that you'll want them to be comfortable with as an adult,** for example:

- **People** (including family and friends, strangers, people of different sizes, ages, and sexes, appearances, outfits, etc. Positive experiences with home visitors are important, especially for guarding breeds.)
- **Dogs and other animals** (including other family animals, other dogs of varying sizes, breeds, and ages, etc., and any other animals you anticipate your dog will encounter as an adult)
- **Body Handling** (including ears, paws, face, tail, legs, hindquarters, mouth, being picked up, etc.)
- **Environments** (including cars, confinement areas, veterinary offices, outdoor and indoor areas, different types of flooring, etc.)
- **Sounds** (including knocking, doorbell, fireworks, thunderstorms, mail trucks, vacuum cleaners, motorcycles, falling objects, etc.)
- **Long, large, and moving objects** (including umbrellas, brooms, bicycles, skateboards, cars, wheel chairs, canes, moving furniture ladders, shopping carts, holiday yard decorations, etc.)

One of the easiest ways to add positive experiences to new situations for your puppy is by feeding extra-yummy food (like real meat)! Consider taking your puppy to clean, busy environments and feeding a piece of food every time something new, strange, or highly noticeable (in your puppy's opinion) happens. Playing, and/or having something yummy to chew may also help your dog enjoy the new experience or environment. **If at any time your puppy seems stressed, shy, or uncomfortable (or if they won't take food that they normally love), decrease the intensity of the triggering stimulus** (e.g. by moving further away from it, or decreasing it's speed, volume, visibility, etc.). Always allow your puppy to move further away to a comfortable distance if they want to - forcing them into uncomfortable situations won't effectively socialize them, and may make them more sensitive to the trigger.

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Chewing and Trading!



Manage your dog's environment so that they don't have access to things you don't want them to develop a chewing habit with. For furniture or items that are hard to move back and forth each time you let your puppy into the room, you can use a taste deterrent like a bitter spray to make the object or area less inviting to chew. (Note that in rare cases, some dogs actually enjoy the taste of bitter sprays, so don't just spray it and assume it will work!)

If your puppy does get a hold of something they aren't supposed to chew, try not to chase them. Instead, **trade them for something more valuable that they are allowed to have,** like a treat or fun toy. **Show your puppy right from the beginning that when they trade with you, they get a great deal** – this not only makes it easy to get back stolen items, but also helps to prevent aggressive resource guarding.

Build a habit of chewing acceptable toys by making them fun and interesting to your puppy. To do this, introduce new toys with a play session, give your puppy chew toys that have scent or flavor built in, stuff interactive treat toys with yummy food, and offer your puppy toys with varying textures and hardness (e.g. plush toy, rope, harder chew, crinkle toy, etc.). "Catch" your dog playing with appropriate toys and add to the fun by joining in or tossing it for your puppy to chase.

Mouthing & Biting



You can teach your dog to keep their mouth off of humans altogether, but we recommend teaching your dog how to use their mouth gently first.

Set yourself up for success by handling your puppy at the right time. When your puppy is excited they will want to put their mouth on something – so if you want to play excitedly, focus that play on a toy that they can put their mouth on. Pet and practice other handling when your dog is calm.

At first, allow and encourage your puppy to nibble on your hand softly. Hold your puppy's food or a treat in your closed hand and only release it when they interact with you gently (e.g. licking, sniffing, or waiting). Withhold or remove the food if they try "pushy" behaviors to get it from you, including biting with pressure.

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Mouthing & Biting (Continued)

Say "ouch!" every time your puppy bites down on you with force or otherwise plays too roughly with you. **Every time you say "ouch!" stop any petting, playing, treating, or even looking at your puppy and stand boringly.** Only go back to play, petting, etc. if your puppy has stopped the inappropriate behavior and is waiting for you. If your puppy does not stop what they are doing, separate spaces immediately. Once your puppy only uses their mouth very softly, you can begin to say "ouch!" (and become boring) if they mouth you at all.

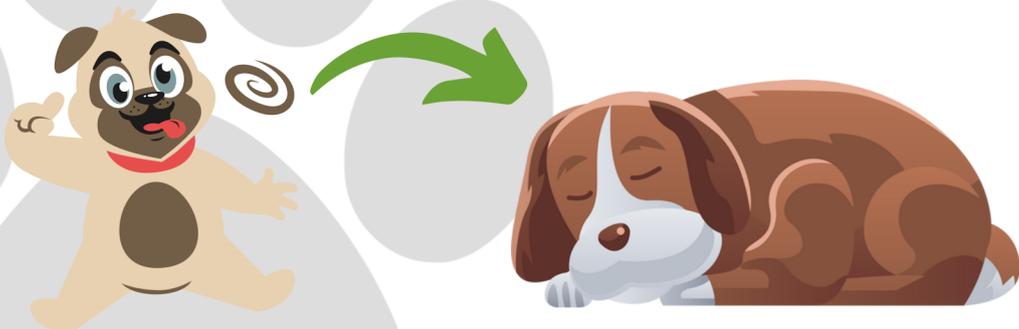
Energy Management

Managing your dog's physical and mental energy is one of the most important strategies for preventing bad habits from forming. There is a great amount of truth to the saying "**A tired dog is a good dog!**"

Allow your puppy to burn excess physical energy by running around off leash regularly, and before they encounter exciting triggers like seeing other dogs on walks, going on a socialization outing, or accepting visitors to the house. (Be sure to limit off-leash running to appropriate areas, and within your vet's safety recommendations).

Some puppies with high mental energy don't see the point in ever relaxing, so after your puppy has played with their toys a few times, they might decide that it could be fun to eat the drywall, chew the couch cushions, steal anything that can get you to chase them, etc.

Prevent problematic boredom behaviors by giving your dog regular opportunities for mental stimulation (like puzzle toys, chewing projects, or positive training) **and building value into calm behaviors**, like simply laying around. **You can increase calmness during down-times by simply dropping some treats below your dog's nose when you 'catch' them lying and relaxing all on their own.** If they get excited or stand up before you get the treat to them, simply withhold it.



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HAPPY TRAINING!

We hope you will put the above guidelines to good use with your puppy and get them off to a great start in life! Remember that your puppy's early routines and experiences play a crucial role in developing their behavior and personality for many years to come! Cherish this special time with your puppy and remember that your time, effort, care, and patience will pay off over an incredible, life-long friendship with your pup!

Want more fun, easy ways to keep developing your dog's potential?

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