

Summit Dog Rescue Puppy Guide

First and foremost, we recommend learning about how puppies develop. Your puppy is very similar to a human baby. Her behavior will be age appropriate. She is not a small dog — she is a baby with little to no understanding of what is expected of her until you teach her. We tend to expect our puppies to understand house training, that hands and shoes are not for biting or chewing, and that barking is annoying, but really, they have no way of knowing that.

The more you do now, the less you'll do later. When it comes to raising a puppy, you have the most influence and opportunity in the first 8 months. Always remember, whatever your puppy practices, it will get better at...good, or not so good. You may as well make it what you want!

Please read “Perfect Puppy in 7 Days” if you haven’t already. Refer back to it and this short guide when you have questions. Every few weeks your puppy will change into a new developmental phase and you may wonder, “Why is my puppy doing that now, I didn’t think he was a (fill in the blank) _____?” – i.e. chewer, digger, barker, nipper, shy dog, etc.

Bringing Puppy Home

Crates

Crates are essential. A puppy in a crate will have fewer opportunities to do things that we don’t like, or that are dangerous. Always remove your puppy’s harness or collar before she enters her crate – always – and make the crate a super safe, fun place, where good things happen. It's best in the beginning to leave the door open, so she has a choice of being in or out. When she is in, supply treats — when she walks out, all yummy things stop. It is her choice. Pretty soon, you’ll see her going into the crate to see if anything good is happening in there. Slowly close the door, just half way, then treat – then open door. This can take a while, but will rapidly help with her crate experience.

Feed your puppy in her crate! The best thing is to buy a Toppl (made by West Paw) – fill it with some kibble and canned food and freeze it. When you leave, put her in the crate with the Toppl and some treats. She still might cry, but she’ll be okay. Never leave your young puppy for very long. We say no more than one hour per month of age, so, for example, a 4 month old puppy shouldn’t be left alone for more than four hours at a time — and only once a day for that long of a period.

Always remove your puppy's collar when she is unattended. Collars can get caught on crates and furniture or in other dogs' jaws while playing and strangle your puppy. Sadly, many dogs die from being left unattended with collars on.

Chewing and Biting

Puppies explore their world with their mouths. They will pick up anything. Your job is to give them appropriate things to put in their mouths, and to keep inappropriate things out of their reach. When they do grab something you don't want them to have, always trade them something else — something that it's okay for them to chew on, like a toy or a bully stick. Make sure not to chase or yell at them. Grabbing things from their mouths could set your puppy up to start guarding their resources, which is a very natural dog behavior, but not a behavior we want to continue. Trading teaches them that good things happen when you reach for them to take something away. If you have practiced trading as a game, when you see your puppy with your iPhone in its mouth, they are more likely to let go quickly because they have experienced that trading is fun and rewarding.

You can't have enough things for your puppy to chew on – bully sticks, frozen Toppls, and raw bones (when supervised) are all good choices. Rawhides are a choking hazard, but there are many other safe options. Best to never leave your dog alone while chewing. If you want to give your puppy something as you leave, the Toppl or a Kong stuffed with frozen canned food is the safest.

Puppy biting is also normal. It is how they play with their siblings, and how they learn bite inhibition (how hard to bite). Have toys nearby, and when your puppy gets bity, play tug of war or put a toy by their mouth to chew on. Not you or your hands.

Socializing Your Puppy (please refer to your Sophia Yin book, "Perfect Puppy in 7 Days," for more details)

The world can be scary for your puppy. Remember, they've only been on the planet a few weeks and they don't speak English :-). Everything is new. You want all of their experiences to be positive ones as much as possible. Avoid grabbing and pulling them, or having people pet them (I know this sounds crazy but stay with us). Petting is a weird experience for dogs. You don't see two dogs petting each other. Dogs do not walk straight up to each other and start petting each other on the head. Have people approach slowly, preferably sideways without staring (a hard stare is confrontational in dog land) and have the person offer a treat. If your puppy seems relaxed (not panting,

will take treat, tail wags and they seem eager to greet) ask the person if they'll you're your puppy under the chin (less frightening than head petting).

If you force your puppy into situations she is hesitant about, it's called "flooding." Flooding can be very detrimental. If your puppy is frightened, the last thing you should be thinking is that "they just need to get used to it." If your puppy is exhibiting stress (yawning, not taking treats, panting, looking away, turning their head, sniffing the ground), you are going too fast. That said, your puppy does need to see the world and all different types of people (people in wheelchairs, tall people, short people, young and old people, people with beards, people who limp, etc.). In a perfect world, your puppy will be introduced to all sorts of different people and experiences in an unstressed, relaxed way with treats being offered consistently. See if you can figure out their "threshold", i.e., eight feet away from stimulus, your puppy is relaxed — but six feet away, she begins to show signs of stress. If that's the case, try to stay at the eight foot distance, speak in a soft, calming voice, and offer treats. If she wants to go in the opposite direction, let her do that. Forcing your puppy to engage stimuli that stresses her out would be like tossing you in a closet full of spiders that you're terrified of and closing the door. That's NOT going to help you with your fear; instead, it will increase your cortisol levels (your stress hormone) and I'll bet, in the future, you'll stay as far away as possible from that person that pushed you.

Also important is for your puppy to walk on different surfaces (grass, pavement, stones, tiles, linoleum, dirt, bricks) during their puppyhood so they aren't freaked out by surfaces later on. They should ideally see as many real world things as possible, like garbage trucks, scooters, skateboards, bikes, crutches, and shopping carts etc. (using the methods above). Make sure to pair every experience with good things (treats, upbeat voice, and lots of encouragement). *Never force your puppy to do anything and never pull or drag your puppy along, especially if they are balking because they are frightened.* Research now shows that one single fearful event can create a lifelong fear. So please take precautions to set your little friend up for success.

Leash Walking

Puppies are not great about walking on leashes (or walking in one direction for that matter). They dawdle, sniff around, and put things in their mouth. What you want to teach your puppy is where you WANT them to walk. Most of the time that would be next to you. Don't pull, jerk, or yank on your puppy. Puppies and dogs get a lot of information through the leash. If it's always tight, or you're pulling and jerking, you've missed an opportunity. Bring treats (or their kibble if they'll work for kibble) and reward them when they are next to you. Behaviors that are positively reinforced are behaviors that are more likely to be repeated. This is the basis of behavior science. So walk with a loose

leash and, if they pull, stop walking. (moving forward when they pull reinforces pulling) Wait, and when they come back toward you, or walk next to you, treat them. You can do this in your house, your backyard, or out on a walk around the neighborhood. Avoid walking with a tight leash, because then they start to think a tight leash is normal.

Your puppy came with a harness. Always use it. That way, if they do pull away from you, you are not putting pressure on their delicate neck. Studies show that pressure on the neck from collars can lead to thyroid and vision damage. We like the Freedom Harness and the Walk N Sync (not the Easy Walk — they are bad for dogs' shoulders and lack control). It's never safe to tie your puppy anywhere from their collar. In a multiple dog household, it's safest not to use a collar at all when the puppy is not being supervised.

When your puppy outgrows their current harness, please upgrade to the next size of Freedom Harness.

Jumping

Jumping up, though annoying, is a very social, friendly behavior. It's better to have a puppy that jumps up to greet you and new people rather than one who growls and runs away barking. People in our society don't like jumping dogs. Even though it may be cute when your dog is a puppy, it's probably best not to encourage it. A 60 lb adult dog jumping up on people is not a great situation. Many people are taught to either push them down, yell "DOWN," or knee them in the chest (ack, we've come a long way). Unfortunately, these antiquated options don't work because we are still giving them attention and worse, we are creating a **negative association** for the puppy that could later turn into fear of humans i.e. "I think I like humans, but when my person comes home and I am so happy to see them, they hurt me and make scary noises. Now, I am totally confused as to what I am supposed to do. Maybe humans don't even like me. Am I safe?"

If your puppy jumps up on you, the best thing you can do is to stay quiet and stand up, or turn your back. Puppy jumps = no attention. Four feet on the floor = attention and treats.

If the jumping persists, walk away and, if you have to, go in a different room for a minute and close the door. Believe us — training like this for a few weeks will have lifelong success and create a stronger bond with your pup. Punishment will have negative repercussions, potentially far worse than just having a dog that jumps.

Meals

One of the doper things we humans do is feed our dogs from a bowl. Think about — these creatures evolved to spend their waking hours looking for food, and then we just plop down their meal to be consumed in 60 seconds or less. It is unsatisfying for dogs and a missed training opportunity for us. Make them work for it!

Luckily, we now have tons of cool ways to feed our dogs that encourage thinking and are mentally satisfying. Slow bowls are cool, but even better are some of the toys where they have to roll the toy for kibble to come out. Better yet you can use the Toppl — freeze kibble and canned food and they can lick it out over 30 minutes. Licking releases serotonin in the brain and is very calming to dogs. If you want a calmer dog, freeze their meals.

We can also dole out meals by asking our dogs to do little training exercises. If your puppy likes kibble enough to work for it, you can use kibble. However, the higher the value of the reinforcement used (i.e. food yumminess) the better the behavior or focus you will get in return. (Think about it — would you work harder and care as much at a minimum wage job or a job as an employee making four million dollars a year, with bonuses?)

For training, if kibble doesn't work, we like using a very high quality food like Ziwi Peaks. (It's a freeze dried complete meal, not a treat, but it tastes so good that your puppy will think it's a treat). Kibble may work at home when you're doing training, but keep in mind you may need higher reinforcement treats (organic hot dogs, cheese, Ziwi Peaks, lamb lung etc.) if you go outside or to class. When you are competing against distractions, your reinforcement needs to be yummier in order for your puppy to pay attention.

Housetraining

Living indoors is totally a foreign concept to dogs. They don't build houses and furnish them with carpet and couches. So we need to teach them that outdoors is where we prefer they do their business, and indoors is clean area. This is a hard concept for puppies especially because their bladders are so small - and when they do pee, they often just pee enough to relieve the pressure (not totally empty it).

The more time you can spend outside with your puppy the better. When they are done doing their business, (this is a great time for using a clicker, but more about that later). Inside you want to monitor their whereabouts. If you let your puppy out of your sight, they very well may pee or poop inside if they have to go. Why wouldn't they? If you punish them, they will hide from you when they need to go, or they may refuse to go on

leash or when you are outside with them. Plus, it doesn't teach them why they got in trouble. Your best bet, if you see them in the act indoors, is to be upbeat — say something like “whoops!” and scoop them up and put them outside. Then, when they finish their business outside, praise and give them a treat when they're done. Clean the inside area incredibly well with a product such as Fizion or Eco88 (available at PCs Pantry or Whole Pets).

Other ways to help with house-training and prevent indoor accidents:

Use a crate or an exercise pen to keep your puppy in small area when you can't have your eyes directly on the puppy.

Use baby gates to cordon off areas - keeping their space small, and your eyes on puppy!

Take them out every half hour, especially after eating and drinking.

Never punish for accidents.

Note: Dogs, and especially puppies, do not generalize well. This is a survival trait - so if a dog saw two moose that didn't chase them, it would be dangerous to generalize that concept and think “hmmm, moose are friendly.” So it takes a while for a puppy to generalize concepts like “ahhh...whenever I am not outside I should hold my pottying until I am outside again.” For humans, once we know the concept of a toilet, we generalize it wherever we are in the world. For dogs, it takes a long time to understand that we don't potty in our house, and not in the Petco, nor in the tire store (even though they sell tires, and we pee on those all the time outside!!!). So be patient and watch for signals that your pup has to go.

Training and Obedience

At SDR we don't love the idea of “obedience” training. Our dogs are family members, not little soldiers that we keep in line with fear of punishment and who respect “commands.” Training should be fun and create a bond of trust and joy between you and your puppy. We teach our puppies “cues” with clickers and rewards. Dogs are natural scavengers, and evolved around human settlements scavenging for scraps of food, and that is how they became our best friends. (Not because they were secretly trying to conquer the human race through dominance — notions of dominance or submission when it comes to dogs are based on faulty research from the 1970s, don't believe them!)

Since dogs are scavengers, using food rewards in training just makes sense — and it works. They are just doing their best to figure out what we as humans want from them. They aren't pack animals (and wolves don't have alphas and omegas and vie for dominance, but that is another chapter.) if you think about it, it is pretty cool that you can bring this little animal into your home that doesn't understand english and teach it to cohabitate with us humans. Not too many animals can do that. But it does take time, patience, and some tools in your tool box to do it right. By now you should be signed up for puppy socialization classes with one of our approved trainers, and have read the book - but it doesn't hurt to have more information.

Why Not Punish?

We live in a society of punishment. Let's face it, most of us grew up with parents who slapped our hands for touching things we weren't supposed to, we were punished in school for whatever goofy things we did as kids, and our prison system in this country houses more inmates than any other society in the world. (While the United States represents about 4.4 percent of the world's population, it houses around 22 percent of the world's prisoners.)

So why not just whack your puppy when she playfully nips, or say "AH AH" or jerk her collar when she barks at another dog on the street? Aren't we just rewarding bad behavior when we stuff a treat in her mouth?

Please read [a short article from *Psychology Today*](#) about punishment training. Behavioral science has evolved light years in the past five to ten years, so pretty much anything we knew about dogs growing up was wrong. Many so called "trainers" are wrong and are teaching old school, uneducated methods not based in the latest research. Fifteen years ago, behavioral scientists focused on primates and dolphins - and studying dogs was not considered interesting or cool. The last decade things have changed radically and our understanding of dogs has surpassed our wildest dreams. Scientists even use MRIs to track the brainwaves of dogs and to understand their emotional responses to stimuli in the environment! So please, try not to take advice from your neighbors, coworkers, or family members - they certainly mean well, but are most likely coming from an outdated perspective. And unfortunately, Cesar Milan has dispersed an unbelievable amount of misinformation and untruth on our society with his reality show.

Four million dogs a year are euthanized in shelters in this country, far too many of them because people didn't take the time to train them properly or used punishment training that worked against the dog.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/canine-corner/201205/is-punishment-effective-way-change-the-behavior-dogs>

Reinforcement

Reinforce the behavior you want repeated. You can use food or, if food isn't handy, praise and a toy works, too. Look for behaviors that you like and treat those. For example, if your puppy settles down on his dog bed, throw him a treat. If your puppy is walking next to you, treat that. If your puppy comes to greet you, treat that! If you call your puppy's name and they come over, treat that!

Ignore what you don't want repeated. If your puppy jumps up, walk away. If your puppy barks repeatedly at you for food, walk out of the room OR redirect them (show them what you want them to do - throw a toy, teach them the "touch" cue, or have them play a quick game with you). If your puppy chews up your shoe, trade the shoe for a bully stick and keep your shoes higher. If your puppy pees on the rug, clean it up and don't give them the opportunity to repeat that (as best you can).

Would you go to work if you weren't reinforced for being there? You are reinforced by money at your job, and the occasional "good job" from your boss or co-workers. High value food reinforcement is the equivalent of "paying" your dog for working. Most dogs love to work for good treats, so please be generous. The rate of reinforcement recommended for learning a new behavior is a minimum of 10 treats per minute when dogs are being trained to be service dogs or search and rescue dogs. So be generous!

We suggest taking the 100 treat challenge - count out 100 small treats and make sure you give them all out during your day with your pup.

Fear Periods - Normal Development Stages

Puppies go through developmental stages that include "fear periods." These are periods where your once social, stoic puppy may now bark at people they knew before, bark at strangers, or bark at odd objects like drainpipes and garbage cans. Anything that your puppy hasn't been well habituated to as a youngster now can create a fear response.

Normal fear impact periods are 8-11 weeks of age and 6-14 months. It's critically important to avoid frightening your puppy during these periods, since scary or traumatic experiences can have long-term impacts. You must be patient during these periods, and for sure do not make the situation worse by punishing or verbally correcting your puppy or adolescent dog. Carefully control situations so as to not have a fear response in your

dog, and pair all new or uncertain situations with high value food treats (or if your dog loves a tug toy, bring that, too). Have new people be armed with high value treats and toss them nearby, but make sure that new people don't pet, stare at, or approach your dog.

Fear periods are one reason why we require puppies to do puppy socialization puppy classes AND that adopters work with an approved SDR trainer through puppyhood.

Your puppy is not behaviorally mature until at least two years of age. So be prepared for years of work and diligence. It will pay off! Service dogs don't even begin their formal training until 18 months old because they are not mature enough to have the focus needed to learn service tasks. So be patient, consistent and loving. You have a BABY dog until at least 18 months of age.

Food - what is best to feed your puppy and dog?

Ideally, it is best to feed your dog real food. Meat and vegetables, raw or cooked. There are lots of store brands you can buy (Stella and Chewey's, Marty's Meals (we love them), and others). You can also make your own with recipe books.

If that's too much work, please buy a high quality kibble sourced only in the United States (or Canada). We like small batch, independently-owned companies like Nutrisource, Orijen, Acana, Earthborn and Zignature.

Unfortunately, veterinarians usually do not recommend good food - Hills (Science Diet) and Royal Canin are not foods we would ever recommend feeding to our dogs, but veterinarians sell them due to indoctrination during vet school and lots of incentives. **Do not ask your veterinarian what food to feed.**

Why did my puppy come with a harness?

Studies now show that one of the leading causes of neck injury, thyroid disorder, seizure disorders, and eye problems are caused by pressure on the neck. You can keep a collar on for identification purposes, but harnesses put pressure on the torso. Also, a dog walking on a collar is going to be gasping for air as it sees new stimuli. How relaxing is that? For example, when a puppy pulls to meet a new dog and suddenly can't breathe, suddenly your puppy is having a negative experience with another dog.

Heartworm

Because your puppy came from a high heartworm area, we started your puppy on heartworm prevention the moment they arrived in SDR. You **HAVE** to continue to give prevention until your puppy is one year old —then take your puppy in to your vet and get a heartworm test. This is **SO** important. Once your puppy tests negative than it is up to you and your vet to decide upon a future heartworm pill schedule for your dog.

Exercise

A tired puppy is a good puppy! However, puppies are growing and their bodies cannot take a lot of impact. Daily age-appropriate exercise is very important to your new puppy's health and well-being. We recommend at least an hour a day of structured activity such as leash walking, playing fetch, agility work, etc. Please keep in mind that every puppy will have different needs. Recent studies have shown that it is highly recommended that puppies are not asked to do any long strenuous runs or hikes until they are 18 - 24 months old and their joints have matured. Waiting may help prevent joint issues and hip dysplasia. Please consult your veterinarian for guidance as to your puppy's unique needs and what amount or type of age-appropriate exercise is right for each stage of your puppy's life. Taking this proactive approach will help keep your dog healthy, active, and happy for a very long life.

Links

Excellent website devoted to socialization information for your puppy:

<http://www.operationsocialization.com/>

Kikopup videos are the best! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2c5EkytNU0>

Chirag Patel has wonderful, in-depth training videos:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEx7qRAzUH_nmQn_hiLo2lq