

BASIC TRAINING AND EXERCISE

Basic training and exercise will make a big difference for you and your puppy. Your well-trained puppy will be more secure and confident when taught to understand and obey simple commands. Think of it as a good way of communicating with your pet.

Learning the meaning of “sit”, “down”, “stay”, “come”, and “heel or off” is not difficult for most puppies. Training may begin when a puppy is between 6 to 10 weeks of age. Dogs can continue to learn as adults, but it is harder to “teach an older dog new tricks” because they might have already developed poor behavior patterns.

Puppies tire easily, and like children have short attention spans, so training sessions should be short and frequent – several times a day for 3 or 10 minutes, longer as they get older. Repetition is necessary and so is lavish praise when your puppy obeys the command. Be calm, consistent and confident when training your puppy. They need to know who the pack leader is. Always correct them when they’re wrong and always correct them when they’re right. Use your voice to do this, never resort to physical punishment. While an occasional touch on the shoulders or body may be needed, it should never be done to inflict pain or physical punishment, but only to RE-DIRECT the puppy’s attention. Saying “no!” in a firm (not so much loud) authoritative voice is the proper means of correction. After your puppy has responded to your correction, praise them immediately. Never correct your puppy when you’ve called it to come to you: This could result in them not coming to you when called in the future.

Many trainers advocate the use of another command such as “okay” or “break” to release the dog from a “stay” or “sit” command. This lets your puppy know if or when they are released from the command. You can use any release word as long as you are consistent.

Introduce your puppy to their collar and leash slowly. For example, let them get used to the collar for a day and THEN introduce the leash by connecting leash to collar and just letting it drag along the ground. Supervise the puppy, of course to make sure the leash doesn’t catch on any objects. When your puppy is used to the leash, pick it up and hold it loosely. Gradually increase your control of the leash until you can persuade your puppy to walk with you with gentle tugs and releases of the leash. When you exercise your puppy on a leash for the first time, be prepared for some resistance. The more frequently they wear collar and leash, the sooner they will accept them as routine. Make the association pleasant through your patience and by sharing the fun of companionship.

Here is a basic guide to help you get started with training sessions:

SIT- Teach this command after your puppy has learned to heel. Walk with your pup for a bit and then stop and give the command. As you say the command “sit”, place your hand behind the rear legs at the knee (also called the “stifle”) and push forward with a light pressure. You’ll find there’s a reflex action there and your puppy will sit. Repeat

this until they respond to your command alone. Your puppy will gradually learn to sit when you stop walking.

DOWN- Often confused with “no”, down mean your puppy should lie down fully with their front legs extended. This action moves from a “sit” position and maybe enforced by placing the hand downward on the shoulder area. Or, kneel by yr pup, reach over its back with your left arm to hold the left front leg and take its right with your right hand. Say “down:” as you lift the front legs and ease your puppy down gently. As soon as your puppy is in the down position again repeat “goood down” and praise your puppy. Repeat “down”. Your puppy should stay down until released by the command “Okay” or “Break.”

STAY- The object is to have your puppy remain in a sitting or lying position even while you walk away. To begin, say the command and with a quick gesture, place a hand in front of the pup’s face. If your puppy moves as you start to walk away, try again, this time using the leash to remind them to stay as you stand in front of them. The first few times, do not make the pup stay for longer than 10 to 20 seconds before you release them. Gradually increase the time and make your puppy stay AND increase your distance you walk away from them before releasing them.

COME- This is the most important of all the commands, and may be the most difficult to teach. While your puppy is heeling, take a step back and say “come” as you give the command. Tug the lead to turn the puppy around to they’re right as they’re in motion to get your puppy moving towards you. When they face you, keep walking backward. Urge them by saying, “come” and gently tugging the leash. When they are in full stride coming toward you, say “good come!” As they get close to you, say “sit.” Tell the puppy to “stay” and walk around them to get them in position to heel. Repeat the process. This is easier than teaching from the “sit” or “down” position since the puppy is already in motion when they’re heeling. Praise the successful puppy generously and make the successful reunion a shared joy. Under no circumstances should annoyance or anger be expressed if your puppy ignores the commands.

HEEL- For puppy to “heel” they should walk or run at your LEFT side and then sit at the end of the walk with you. To give the pup the idea, have them accompany you as you hold their leash on your left side and walk in a circle counter-clockwise. Since your puppy is on the inside of your circle it’ll find the “heel” position is the most practical and natural one. Start heeling by calling puppy’s name and then saying “heel” as you take the step first with your left leg (the leg nearest your dog.) Tug the leash when you say the command. Follow each command with lavish praise.

EXERCISE- When you feel like going to the park to toss around a ball or a walk sounds good, don't forget your puppy!

Your puppy loves exercise and the added attention it gets when you spend time together. Take it on a walk, everyday for its own health and you will notice an even tighter bond between you and your pet. You will also notice daily walks will encourage your puppy to be more relaxed in the house and respond to training much better.,

What better way to stay in shape than to exercise with your new friend. Exercise helps improve muscle development and prevent obesity, heart disease, and the harmful effects of stress. It also maintains vitality. Make regular exercise a special time to play, bond, and reinforce basic training with your puppy.

You and Your dog will be happier and healthier for it.

This is truly a very basic beginning for training and exercising of your new puppy. We will be happy to recommend trainers, additional literature and answer any questions that arise on your new journey!

Best of Luck!

Your friends and family at Creekside!



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