



## The First 4 Weeks

### About Your Puppy

In the beginning, there is only so much you can do with an 8week old puppy. At 8 weeks they are just becoming aware of their surroundings and are literally eating and sleeping 95% of the day. Their learning capacity is very minimal and their attention span is marginal at best.

Puppies develop in stages:

- 0-3 months
- 3-5 months
- 5-7 months
- 7-9 months
- 9 months to 1 year
- 1 year-1.5 years
- 1.5 years-2 years

At 2 years old you have a mature dog. Up until your dog matures, she will be in the training stages. Within the training stages, there are different things the puppy can learn. In addition there will be specific behaviors associated with each stage. For example: it does not occur for puppies to really "Look up" prior to the age of 5months of age. When the "Look up" behavior arrives, the puppy will begin to jump on couches, climb on kitchen counters looking for food, jumping up on the edge of tables. Up until this starts to happen, the puppy has remained with all 4 feet on the ground. So, jumping begins at 5 months and you cannot start to train it away, until it starts. This is why there are only certain behaviors you can work on in each stage.

What new owners need to understand is they have approximately 24 months of training stages and will be molding their dog that entire time, until the puppy reaches adult maturity. How much time you spend training your puppy in each stage is going to predict what kind of dog you will own in the end. Most people have a pup they can live with by 12 months.

For the first stage of the dog's life, here's what needs to be worked on.

### Housebreaking

The first week's focus is on housebreaking. You want to get the puppy on a schedule for eating, drinking, sleeping, playing, training, and pottyng. In addition, you want to stay ahead of the puppy's need for potty breaks, to help prevent accidents in the crate or around the house while the puppy adjusts to the new schedule.

At this stage puppies have only been introduced to the potty training process and are beginning to understand manners and what is expected of them. They will require a great deal of attention to continue the potty training in your home, as well as reinforcement and correction. (See Housebreaking Document) Housebreaking is a 6-8month process if being done in conjunction with crate training.

By the end of this week, most puppies are on a schedule where they eat 2-3 times daily, they are holding potty in their crate for 4-6 hours at night and 2-4 hours during the day, and barking in the crate is minimal.

### **Socialization**

Socialization is helping your dog learn to be comfortable in society—a society that includes many different types of people, environments, buildings, sights, noises, smells, animals and other dogs.

Make sure all experiences are safe and positive for the puppy. Each encounter should include treats and lots of praise. If the puppy shows any fear during this time the training, exposures need to be slowed down to the appropriate level the puppy can handle.

The socialization window closes at 16 weeks, so we like to use the rules of 12 to expose them as much as possible. (Try to get the pup to see as many of these things as possible)

The puppy should experience:

- **12 different surfaces:** wood, woodchips, carpet, tile, cement, linoleum, grass, wet grass, dirt, mud, puddles, deep pea gravel, grates, uneven surfaces, on a table, on a chair, etc...
- **12 different objects:** fuzzy toys, big & small balls, hard toys, funny sounding toys, wooden items, paper or cardboard items, milk jugs, metal items, car keys, etc...
- **12 different locations:** front yard (daily), other people's homes, school yard, lake, pond, river, boat, basement, elevator, car, moving car, garage, laundry room, kennel, veterinarian hospital (just to say hi & visit, lots of cookies, no vaccinations), grooming salon (just to say hi), etc...
- **12 new people** (outside of family): include children, adults (mostly men), elderly adults, people in wheelchairs, walkers, people with canes, crutches, hats, sunglasses, etc...
- **12 different noises (ALWAYS keep positive and watch puppy's comfort level – we don't want the puppy scared):** garage door opening, doorbell, children playing, babies screaming, big trucks, motorcycles, skateboards, washing machine, shopping carts rolling, power boat, clapping, loud singing, pan dropping, horses neighing, vacuums, lawnmowers, birthday party, etc...
- **12 fast moving objects** (don't allow to chase): skateboards, roller-skates, bicycles, motorcycles, cars, people running, cats running, scooters, vacuums, children running, children playing soccer, squirrels, cats, horses running, cows running, etc...
- **12 different challenges:** climb on, in, off and around a box, go through a cardboard tunnel, climb up and down steps, climb over obstacles, play hide & seek, go in and out a doorway with a step up or down, exposed to an electric sliding door, umbrella, balloons, walk on a wobbly table (plank of wood with a small rock

underneath), jump over a broom, climb over a log, bathtub (and bath) etc...

- **Handled by owner (& family) 12 times a week:** hold under arm (like a football), hold to chest, hold on floor near owner, hold in-between owner's legs, hold head, look in ears, mouth, in-between toes, hold and take temperature (ask veterinarian), hold like a baby, trim toe nails, hold in lap, etc...
- **Eat from 12 different shaped containers:** wobbly bowl, metal, cardboard box, paper, coffee cup, china, pie plate, plastic, frying pan, Kong, Treatball, Bustercube, spoon fed, paper bag, etc...
- **Eaten in 12 different locations:** back yard, front yard, crate, kitchen, basement, laundry room, bathroom, friend's house, car, school yard, bathtub, up high (on work bench), under umbrella, etc....
- **A leash and collar 12 different times in 12 different locations.**

**Note: Some of the rules cannot be done until the puppy is fully vaccinated.**

### **Luring**

This is the first step in basic obedience training. Luring is teaching the puppy how to follow a treat and target. Here we'll begin to lure the dog into a FOCUS, SIT and DOWN.

### **Mouthing**

Mouthing and nipping should begin on or around week 3 or 4 and will continue in full force until the puppy milk teeth fall out and the new adult teeth start to come in. Allow me to show you how to introduce light, age appropriate corrections for mouthing on people. This is a very common behavior in Retrievers and a pain to deal with when you have kids... However you will survive this stage.