

HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAINING YOUR PUPPY

Training is fun and very rewarding for both you and your puppy. Puppies have an amazing capacity to learn complex demands quickly.

- Start training as soon as you obtain your puppy. Puppies learn very rapidly but their attention span may be short, so only spend 10 - 15 minutes twice daily.
- Training should be conducted when your puppy is not excited and when the home environment is quiet. Once your puppy has learned to respond in one environment, move the training location to progressively more complex and stimulating environments. Your puppy needs to learn to respond in each different environment.
- Learning occurs more rapidly if one person trains the puppy first and then the other family members get involved. Train your puppy using one-word commands like “come”, “sit”, “down” and “heel”. Try not to use your puppy’s name in association with the command, as too much talking is confusing and slows the learning process.
- Reward appropriate behaviour as soon as possible after giving the command (best within ½ second). Give valued rewards such as food, touch and praise every time the puppy responds to a command. You will quickly learn which reward is more valued by your puppy. Once the response is learned, give the rewards intermittently. This will result in rapid learning and make the response more permanent.
- If your puppy fails at any level of training, stop, don’t reward and start the training again at a simpler level. How consistently a puppy responds to a command is a function of the degree of training. If a puppy responds only when he/she feels like it or when the environment is quiet, start again and train more consistently.
- Be patient, never punish. The opposite to reward is no reward, not punishment. A punishment which causes pain or excitement does not work and generally causes problems. Punishment may also interfere with the human/animal bond. If your puppy is doing something that is inappropriate, distract him/her or give a command, such as “sit” or “down” and offer a reward for responding (which interrupts the unwanted behaviour).

A trained puppy is a happy puppy and a great companion!