



PUPPY GUIDE

So, you've got a puppy congratulations! Although you're dealing with a cuteness overload right now, the time to start training is today and I have this quick 1 of a kind, super easy, puppy path to superstar and its completely free.

The most important piece of information you need to know right now is '[Critical socialization Period](#)' (if your puppy is older than this don't worry, this all still applies you've just missed this period)

This is between the ages of **8 - 16 weeks old** to cram in as much environmental information as possible. This basically means, take your puppy to every environment possible so they can see the world around them. But it's just as important to not overwhelm them. For example, taking them to pub and sitting in the corner on a quiet Monday afternoon is a great way to just let them observe, but taking them on a Saturday when the football is on, and everyone wants to come and say hello is not what we want to be doing straight away.

If you aren't trying to promote calmness like in the pub, then in every environment you go to engage in play with your puppy! Honestly if I could go back to my first puppy, this is what I would focus on. Get them to chase you around or chase a ball on a rope. This builds engagement with your puppy and just allows the world to happen around your puppy without them giving everything else too much focus (desensitisation).

Puppy Socialization: There are some training schools that will tell you that you must meet 100 dogs or to attend puppy parties and that is a terrible idea! Genetically some puppies will be nervous and one over enthusiastic strange dog could start the negative reactions towards dogs. Likewise, if your puppy is overconfident and wants to go and see every dog in sight and you allow it, you are more than likely going to create a frustrated puppy.

My best advice for you is, when you are out on walks try to look out for older dogs that look relatively calm and interact with these. Older calmer dogs generally will not be as excited (especially if your dog is nervous). Its beneficial for overconfident puppies as well as it will show

them there's not much excitement provided by other dogs. Do this to begin with and slowly build to different dogs over the next couple of months. Remember we don't want to overwhelm them.

What to teach my puppy?

Unfortunately, although very cute, I will not be saying 'paw' is what we are going to be training. Here's my 4 key skills to train for your puppy.

1. **Motivation:** Get your puppy motivated to work for food and toys. Motivation turns into drive that you can harness to build desirable behaviours in the coming months. Do this by playing with them with a toy showing them how much fun playing with you is. Stop play before they get bored! Don't leave toys around the house for them to freely play with. Amateur dramatics will help massively. Motivation for food will come by hand feeding which I've noted below.
2. **Crate training:** Crate training is very underutilized. Your puppy needs 16+hrs of sleep a day so forcing them to sleep is a must. Crate training provides a calm place for your puppy to switch off. Think of this like your puppy's bedroom and not a prison.
3. **Recall:** Start building your reliable recall, if we can crack this early on, we allow our dog maximum freedom and therefore a fulfilling life. (This becomes easier when hand feeding)
4. **Place training:** Being able to send your dog to a location on command. This is a helpful skill and gives your puppy a job in static positions. Example - sending your puppy to their bed when someone knocks on the door.

Unless the perfect heel is your number 1 goal, do not worry about teaching a heel walk/loose lead walk as a must have. That can be something we address at the 6 months + stage. (it's very easy). Until that time harness on and let them explore!

Aids to help you achieve this.

When possible, hand feed your Puppy their food (not treats). You can use this food to lure your puppy into behaviour like a sit or a down or a recall. The food reward becomes addictive and your puppy will be driven to do this more. This can also help with crate training. Their food becomes a positive reinforcer.

House lead on at all times for at least the first 6 months, this way you can stop unwanted behaviour and keep control when using commands. All 4 of the key skills should be trained with the lead on so you can guide and help.

Marker word: This is usually 'YES' or some people like to use a clicker. This marker word is to mark the completion of a task. You ask your puppy to sit, your puppy sits, you say 'YES' or use clicker and reward with food. This builds drive to want to sit when asked to. You can start charging this with the slightest engagement towards you. Example, puppy turns their head towards you, 'yes', reward & repeat. Your puppy will start to look at you more. You are now charging your marker.

TOP TIPS

Don't become a kitchen Master! A classic comment I hear time and time again is 'my dog knows everything in the kitchen'. Take everything learnt in the kitchen or indoors, outside asap to proof it around distractions.

Don't give your puppy freedom of the home. Just like the pub could be overwhelming so could all the space in your house. Confine them to 1 room for the first 3 days, then 2 rooms, follow this process until they have gone to every room.

Toilet training: Puppy pads create a scenario where going to the toilet inside is the thing to do, to then be expected to go outside and then told off for going inside. Set a timer for every 30mins (this isn't scientific, it could be 1 hour), take your puppy out and don't come back in until they have gone to the toilet and when they do positively reinforce this behaviour.

Secret tip: after the age of 16 weeks If your puppy is going to the toilet in their crate, downsize the crate. They will not go to the toilet if they have to lay down in it. Going to the toilet shows they have too much room.