



## For the New Puppy

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This social animal needs to feel confident in your ability to provide and protect. He will become more relaxed and confident through his relationship and bonding with you and other people. When the puppy is confident in your abilities and trusts your intentions, he will become more responsive to you and your commands – seeking your attention through behaviours that please you, and less likely to be distracted by other influences.



**The tie-up or restraint exercise** stops the puppy from being able to be at your feet the whole time you are at home. If commenced in puppy-hood, it will eventually produce a dog that is confident to be tied-up and left alone, even in an unfamiliar scenario.

Start at the easiest possible level: tie the puppy on a short lead (approx 40 - 60 cm) to the leg of the chair you are sitting in. Experience will show the pup that any fighting or struggling against the lead (or you, at the end of the lead), is futile.

The puppy is not being punished. You can pat him and even play with him during the exercise. It is a good time for young children to interact with the puppy because they are able to back away if the puppy becomes over-zealous with his teeth. You can leave him a comfy bed and a chew toy. If he wants to chew the lead, soak it in vinegar regularly. This is enough to deter most puppies from wanting it in their mouth at all. Failing that, you may need to resort to a chain lead for the exercise.

When the puppy has become accepting of this situation of restraint, you can move onto the next level. If your puppy is strong enough to pull the chair over without you sitting in it, you will now need to tie the lead to the leg of a table or something else strong enough to hold him. Sit just out of reach of the puppy – when he is accepting and calm in this scenario, step up to moving around the room, then leaving the room, etc, etc.

Always build on success – our aim is to avoid the puppy ever becoming panicked – we want to build confidence. Tie up exercises can last anywhere from two minutes to two hours at this age – just remember to take toileting requirements into consideration. Also, vary the location of the exercise.

**Freedom from the restraint exercise must only be granted when the pup is completely relaxed and accepting of the situation. If the pup has been performing an undesired behaviour such as barking for**

**attention; be sure to delay his release or any other form of reward for at least ten seconds after the undesired behaviour has ceased.** Aim to practice at least once a day.

### **Greeting and Re-Uniting**

Greetings on your return home or on getting up in the morning should be calm. In fact, on at least six occasions each week, ignore the pup for the first ten to thirty minutes, acknowledging him only once he has calmed down and given up demanding your attention.

### **He Doesn't Need to be With You to Feel Safe**

Puppies will benefit from learning to accept that there will be times when they will be excluded from the pack, by being placed in the laundry, bathroom or backyard, not only when you go out, but also for periods of time when you are at home. Always start at a level that is only mildly stressful for the pup. You may not be able to simply put him in the backyard; you may need to start with tie-up exercises in the back yard with you present, then out of reach, then further away, then just inside the open back door, etc, etc. Aim to practice at least once a day.

After four to seven days of settling-in time, the puppy sleeps away from the other family members most nights. Best options include: closed in the laundry/bathroom or other small room; another enclosed area; or a crate. If you plan to have him sleep in your bedroom as an adult dog, that's fine. But as a puppy, I recommend building his independence so that he is comfortable to sleep away from you. As a puppy I would prefer that he sleeps away from you four to five nights a week. Once he is a confident adult dog, I recommend that he continues to sleep elsewhere one night a week.



### **Variety is the Spice of Life**

Avoid establishing routines. Or if you must, make a habit of breaking them on at least a weekly basis. Dogs can become dependent on routines and problems may arise when any deviation from set routines is made; the dog becomes distressed because the routine he depends upon has let him down.

Vary the time of day that the puppy is fed, walked, trained, groomed, etc. Vary the route of his walk, the length of his training sessions, the location of his tie-up exercise, where he sleeps, when he is allowed inside and when he is excluded. The more variety incorporated into his life the greater his "immunisation" against developing anxieties.

### **Play, Play and Then More Play**

Play is so important for the puppy's development and for relationship building and bonding with his new family. Play is a means of helping puppies to develop impulse control and tolerance of frustration – similar to a two-year-old child.

Providing numerous different toys will stimulate the puppy's interaction and development. Put some toys away so that you can swap them around to provide variety.

Despite previous "bad press", **tug-o-war** is one of the most beneficial games you can play with your puppy. It will aid in developing responsiveness to you and your commands. Tug-o-war does *not* encourage aggressive behaviour! IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO WINS OR LOSES!

Developing the retrieve of a ball or toy can be assisted by sitting in the doorway of a room with the puppy chasing the item into the room. Once he has picked up the toy, he will have nowhere to go but back to you. Training can be further assisted by the use of a long line attached to the puppy's collar to enable you to block incorrect responses. A puppy that has not learnt to retrieve by 16 weeks of age is not likely to enjoy the game throughout his lifetime. What a shame that would be!

Attaching a cord or string to a toy can enable you to make the toy more stimulating to the puppy and also establish a habit of returning to you with the toy.

To train the puppy to release the tug or retrieve toy on command simply say the command, "leave", and then offer a food treat to the puppy. Hopefully he will release the toy in order to eat the treat. Further reward him by re-initiating the game after he has finished eating.

Alternatively, if the puppy is not keen to give up the toy for a food treat; gently hold your hand on the toy without pulling and lift the puppy by his collar just off his front feet with your other hand. You may have to quietly hold this position for a few moments until the puppy gets bored and releases the toy. At which point, you praise and re-initiate the game. You must remain calm, non-competitive and non-threatening throughout the process.

Show your puppy that fighting and struggling with you will not achieve success for him; but working with you achieves huge success!

Rough-house play is also wonderful for developing puppies. Children may also engage in rough-house play if they are confident to do so. A responsible adult must supervise all interactions between children and puppies. Neither has fully developed emotional self-regulation.

### **Learn to Wait – Patience is a Virtue**

Each and every puppy has an individual tolerance of frustration. Some puppies seem to be eternally patient and others have a hissy-fit the instant something does not go their way! There are numerous ways we can raise your puppy's tolerance of frustration and generally improve his competence in coping with his emotions including: crate training; restraint or tie-up exercise; the control exercise; sitting and focusing on your face until released for his dinner; releasing the toy on cue during retrieve and tug-o-war games; simple obedience skills where the puppy must hold position until the release cue is given.



Additionally, your puppy must learn to wait for your invitation at doorways and gateways. With the puppy on lead at a closed door that he is keen to get through; open the door a crack and when the puppy pushes to get through; say “ah-ah” and close the door abruptly. The aim is *not* to catch the puppy’s toes or nose or cause any pain – you are simply assertively stopping the puppy from proceeding in such a pushy manner. The puppy will now pull back from the closed door and you can attempt to open the door a crack again. Repeat the process until the puppy voluntarily holds back and awaits your directions!



### **Manners at Dinnertime**

When feeding the puppy have him hold a sitting position (on lead if necessary) while the meal is placed on the ground. He must await the release command, FREE, before eating the food. Select a morsel of food from the bowl and hold it between your eyes and the puppy’s eyes in order to have him hold focus on your face. On the release cue, FREE, drop the morsel back into the bowl and if necessary, encourage him to commence eating.

Tidy up your puppy’s eating habits and **improve food motivation** in readiness for training him with food rewards. Meals are left down for ten minutes only. If there is any food left after ten minutes or the food is completely untouched, it should be removed and nothing further offered to the puppy until the next regular meal-time. If the puppy is a “finicky eater” and is ten weeks of age or older and still receiving three meals per day, consider cutting to two meals per day. Once over six months of age, consider cutting to one meal a day.

### **Preventing Food Guarding**

We would like to be able to feel confident that if we or our children happened to approach the dog while he was eating, the dog would comfortably tolerate the situation without displaying any form of aggression.

We need to understand the dog's natural instincts and behaviour in regard to food. In canine law, possession is nine tenths of the law. Any dog is entitled to guard food in his possession against any other, despite the rank of each individual involved. This is why a dog is highly unlikely to growl at you while you are standing up with the food bowl, but the moment you place it on the ground, he will consider it in his possession and feel entitled to guard it from you. Should you reach out to take the food bowl whilst the dog is guarding it, you will risk being bitten. However, once you have possession of the bowl again, the dog will behave in what seems an apologetic manner.

Having ignored the dog's attempts to warn you off, next time you attempt to steal the food, he may feel a need to escalate that warning! Conversely, you may be able to successfully intimidate the dog into not growling at you when you approach the food. But think ahead: the dog will not feel intimidated by a crawling baby or young child and as you have already taught the dog that humans are indeed a threat to food in his possession, the baby or child is likely to be at risk.

Let's use our understanding of the dog, to alter the idea in his mind as to what our approach to the food signifies. Do not teach your puppy that you are a threat to his food by attempting to take it when he tries to warn you off. Heed the warning and do not approach any closer. This way, your puppy can feel comfortable that he does not have to escalate the warning. You now "speak dog". You are not a threat.



Place only half of the puppy's meal in the bowl, reserving the yummiest bits: steak fat, leftovers, etc. Place the puppy's bowl on the ground in the usual manner and allow him to commence eating and then move away. Return to the puppy with more food in your hand before he has finished the food in the bowl. Stop, the moment you detect any discomfort or warning such as tensing up or growling. Toss the food into the bowl. Repeat the sequence.

Soon the puppy will look forward to your approach to his food bowl because now he is expecting you to be bringing him something good. He no longer feels the need to keep you away from his food.

We want to achieve the ultimate result of being able to pet the puppy and even move his food bowl, without him becoming concerned. (Start by always giving him further yummys after each occasion he has tolerated your petting or touching the bowl). Please do not allow children to stroke the puppy while he eats. Some puppies find the children's interference irritating at such a serious event as eating. Aggression can develop.

Of course, this type of training needs to be carried out by an adult. Only when the puppy is absolutely reliable, would you consider introducing a child to the scenario. And then, tie the dog on lead so that he can reach the food bowl and no further – your child is then provided with a safety gap.

Repeat this exercise with an especially favourite food of the dog's, such as raw meaty bones. Raw chicken necks are great puppy food. Cut the necks into a couple of small pieces so that you can start the puppy on a few in his bowl and then add more after he has started eating.

Many puppies will show no sign of food guarding and it may never be an issue. But some puppies can develop the problem later. I recommend conducting food guarding prevention training anyway. It can't hurt!



### **Impulse Control**

Practice **the control exercise** several times every day. The control exercise is the puppy holding the sit position parallel to you on your left and facing the same direction. Take the lead, close to the clip or the actual collar in your right hand, leaving the left hand free to place the puppy's rear end in position.

Immediately his bottom is in the sitting position, any tension in the lead must be relaxed, even if it means the puppy immediately leaves position again. Aim to stop the pup as soon as possible from leaving the control position, rather than allowing him to move half a lead length or more before being corrected.

If the puppy is attempting to use teeth on your hand, you can protect yourself by utilising your thumb at the top of his head and your pinkie finger under his chin.

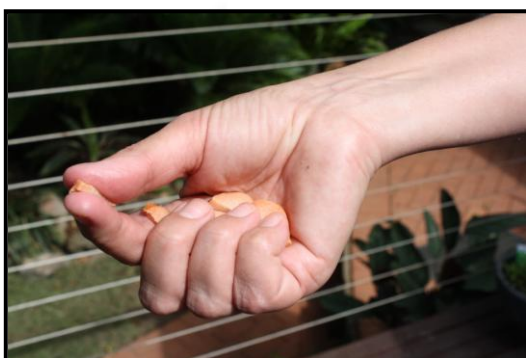
The control exercise is a good, practical exercise to employ when the puppy has “lost it”: over-excited, over-stimulated, tired and grumpy, hissy fits, etc. You will be helping the puppy to learn how to calm his emotions in times of high emotional disorder. The puppy learns how to self-regulate his emotions. It is good emotional experience for puppies to become highly excited and then calm down again.

This exercise can be practised in the house, the backyard, the street, the park, etc. Start with minimal distractions, until you are competent at enforcing the control exercise. Then this exercise can be used to maintain calm in the most difficult circumstances.

Combining relaxing massage of the ears and long, firm strokes from the puppy’s cheek and progressing down the side of his body, with the control exercise will assist him to learn to self-regulate his emotions by calming down in the presence of highly stimulating stimuli.

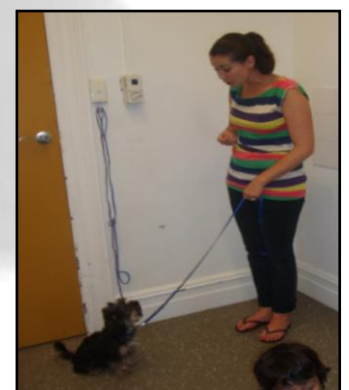
### Sit Happens!

Training treats should be something the dog finds highly appealing. I use tiny pieces of sliced-up hotdog sausage. Cut them small because the puppy’s tummy will fill quickly. Also, the treats are not a healthy, nutritional food source. We do not want them surviving on this rubbish food. They are doggy lollies!

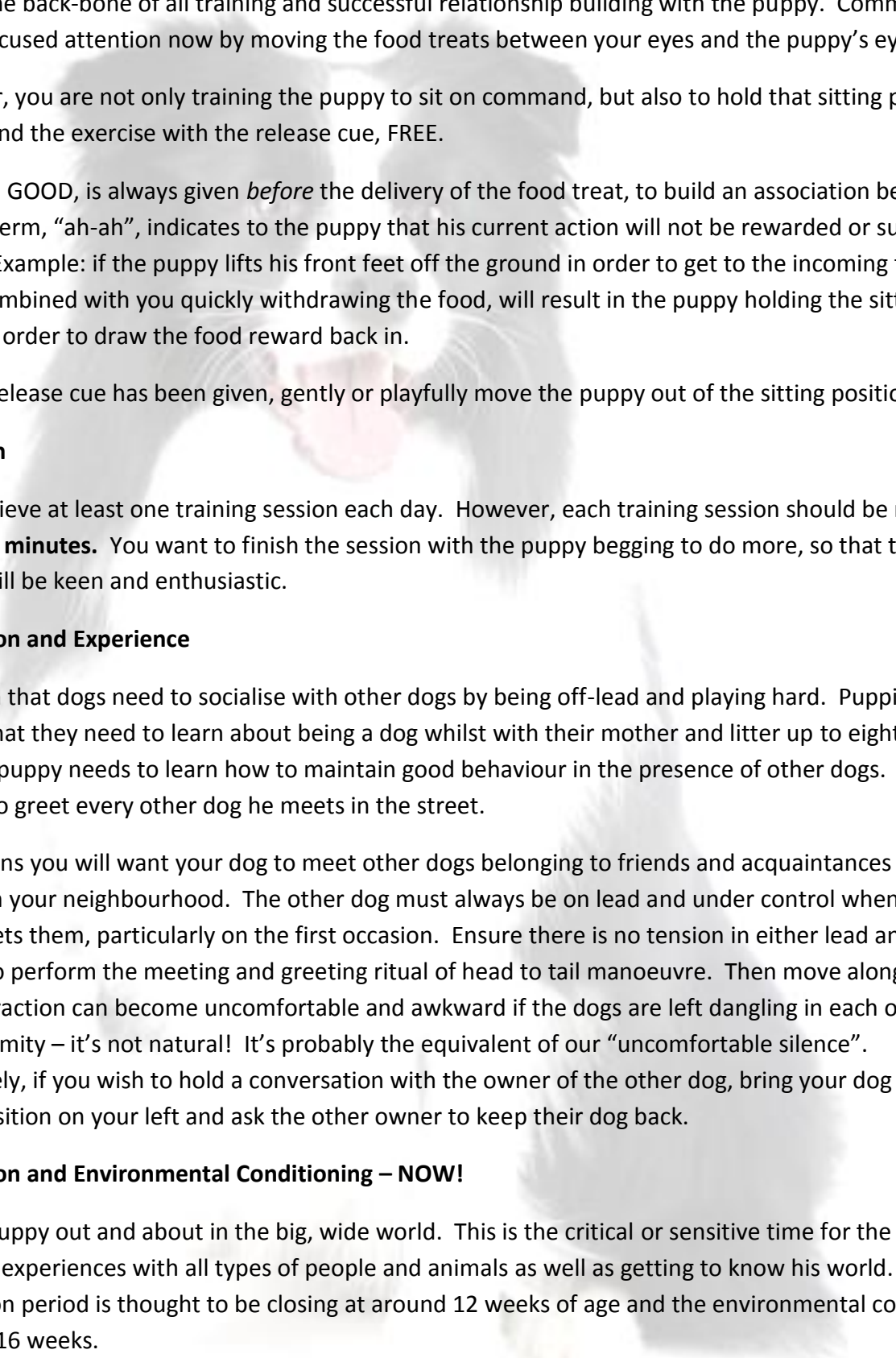


To commence or formalise the “**sit**” exercise take a supply of food treats (10 – 20) in your right hand and make a fist. Move one piece at a time to your finger tips. Keep it hidden between your thumb and forefinger so that the puppy cannot “steal” the treat. Take the food hand to the puppy’s nose and lure his head upwards and back over his shoulders.

Once the puppy has sat, say GOOD and *then* give him a treat of food from the fingertips of your right hand. Use your voice, the food, the lead or anything else to get and keep the dog’s focus and attention on your face. Immediately pay him again for holding the sitting position on a relaxed lead *and* paying attention to you. Continue to say GOOD and quickly deliver further rewards for continuing to hold the position and paying attention until the release cue, FREE is given. On the FREE, you may need to actually move the pup out of the sit.







Use the lead to block the puppy from being able to leave the sitting position. Focus and attention to the owner is the back-bone of all training and successful relationship building with the puppy. Commence building focused attention now by moving the food treats between your eyes and the puppy's eyes.

Remember, you are not only training the puppy to sit on command, but also to hold that sitting position until you end the exercise with the release cue, FREE.

The praise, GOOD, is always given *before* the delivery of the food treat, to build an association between the two. The term, "ah-ah", indicates to the puppy that his current action will not be rewarded or successful in any way. Example: if the puppy lifts his front feet off the ground in order to get to the incoming food treat, "ah-ah" combined with you quickly withdrawing the food, will result in the puppy holding the sitting position in order to draw the food reward back in.

Once the release cue has been given, gently or playfully move the puppy out of the sitting position.

### **Motivation**

Aim to achieve at least one training session each day. However, each training session should be no more than **three minutes**. You want to finish the session with the puppy begging to do more, so that the next time, he will be keen and enthusiastic.

### **Socialisation and Experience**

It is a myth that dogs need to socialise with other dogs by being off-lead and playing hard. Puppies learn most of what they need to learn about being a dog whilst with their mother and litter up to eight weeks of age. Your puppy needs to learn how to maintain good behaviour in the presence of other dogs. He does not need to greet every other dog he meets in the street.

On occasions you will want your dog to meet other dogs belonging to friends and acquaintances you meet on walks in your neighbourhood. The other dog must always be on lead and under control when your puppy meets them, particularly on the first occasion. Ensure there is no tension in either lead and allow the dogs to perform the meeting and greeting ritual of head to tail manoeuvre. Then move along! This social interaction can become uncomfortable and awkward if the dogs are left dangling in each other's close proximity – it's not natural! It's probably the equivalent of our "uncomfortable silence".

Alternatively, if you wish to hold a conversation with the owner of the other dog, bring your dog into the control position on your left and ask the other owner to keep their dog back.

### **Socialisation and Environmental Conditioning – NOW!**

Get your puppy out and about in the big, wide world. This is the critical or sensitive time for the puppy to have good experiences with all types of people and animals as well as getting to know his world. The socialisation period is thought to be closing at around 12 weeks of age and the environmental conditioning at around 16 weeks.

Play and training are the most effective means of bonding with a puppy during this critical time. Your puppy also needs to meet and become comfortable in the company of a variety of other people and animals. Include: babies, toddlers, primary school children, pre-adolescents, teenagers, elderly people,

disabled people, timid people, loud people, dogs, puppies, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, caged birds, chickens, sheep, cattle, horses, etc.

Environmental conditioning should include: vacuum cleaners, hairdryers, traffic, buses, trucks, motor bikes, different surfaces to walk upon, sudden slamming and thumping noises, loud music, shouting, cheering, car horns, trains, prams, skateboards, bikes. The list could go on forever.

Always start at a low intensity, such as being at a distance, in case the puppy is going to have a fearful reaction. Do not expose the puppy to experiences that are too intense for him to cope with. The puppy may well become sensitised to the stimulus.

Avoid allowing big, goofy, friendly dogs from galloping up and scaring your puppy. Other dogs must always be on lead and under control when your puppy meets them, particularly on the first occasion. The puppy must be allowed to interact only as he is comfortable.

**Off-lead dog parks are *not* a good place to take your puppy.**

### **Fear Response**

Your puppy should always feel able to escape from anything frightening. If their flight path is blocked, they may resort to defensive aggression and this may become their choice of defence in future.

Your reaction to their fear should be very off-hand – do *not* try to comfort or console the puppy. He may interpret your consoling voice as you also being nervous. Instead use a voice that sounds “jolly” and confident.

Keep the lead loose so that the puppy does not feel that he is cornered without an escape. Allow him to run to the end of the lead, but do not go any further with him – stand your ground and wait for him to voluntarily move closer. If you are able to interact with the fear-eliciting stimulus, do so, to demonstrate to your puppy that you are comfortable and safe with the situation.

If it is a person or another dog or puppy causing the fear reaction, do not allow them to force themselves on the puppy. Insist that they hold back and where possible, ignore the puppy until the puppy is ready to approach in his own good time.

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