



# Dog Behaviour & Training

## Pack behaviour

To understand and train a puppy one has to appreciate that dogs are **pack animals**. This means that:

- Dogs live by a hierarchal system. The leader of the pack eats first and decides when and what the other pack members eat. The leader dominates their own territory
- They thrive on company
- They dislike being ignored or isolated

It is important to ensure that you are the alpha (dominant) male/female in the pups eyes. For instance only give treats when they have been earned, don't feed your pup from your plate and dictate which areas are 'out-of-bounds'.

## Training

Puppies learn by the responses they get from you.

**Reward good behaviour.**

**Discourage inappropriate behaviour.**

### Rewarding good behaviour:

- **Audible praise** - "Good dog"/clicker
- **Physical praise** - patting/stroking
- **Treats** - e.g. toys or biscuits

### Discouraging inappropriate behaviour:

- **Ignore** - puppies hate to be ignored
- **Scold** - say NO in a firm manner
- **'Time out'** - isolating a pup from the family group is the harshest punishment

**Two golden rules :** Respond immediately  
Respond consistently

## Chewing

Chewing valuable objects should be discouraged by saying **NO** in a stern voice. Remove the object and replace it with a toy.

## House training

Puppies should be let out at least every 2 hours. They should be rewarded for toileting outside but ignored when they foul inside. Expect accidents in the first few weeks!

## Play biting

This is normal canine behaviour but it is important to teach pups that it is unacceptable. When bitten, simulate pack behaviour by saying, "OW!" in a loud voice and provide a toy to chew on. Most pups will then normally loosen their grip. If this doesn't work, you may have to isolate your puppy for a short while until he/she calms down.

## Socialising

It is very important to introduce puppies to the outside world as early as possible. After about 13 weeks of age they start to become more wary of new things and socialising becomes more difficult. They are unsafe walking where unvaccinated dogs have been but should be carried outside to experience the day to day sights and sounds of people, cars, children, bikes, pushchairs etc. It is perfectly reasonable, and a good idea, to allow them to meet healthy, vaccinated dogs in your home or that of friends and family.

## Handling your dog

It is worth getting your pup used to handling. Every day try opening the mouth, touching the face, gums and teeth, feeling the ears, paws and claws. This will reduce the stress of being examined and treated in the future. It will also help you to recognise what is normal for your dog and to pick up problems early.

## KEY POINTS

- **Dogs are pack animals.**
- **Make sure that you are the Pack leader!**
- **Be consistent in your training.**
- **Socialise your puppy as soon as possible.**
- **Get used to handling your puppy.**