

Puppy Training Basics
by Judy Mautz
RJM Australian Shepherds

Introduction:

- A. Have fun. Play time for puppy is important as it builds confidence.
- B. Don't take good behavior for granted. Actively look for and praise desired behavior. This is the only way the puppy will learn what you want him to do. Set the puppy up to succeed. Most puppy behaviors are predictable, i.e., elimination, chewing, short attention span and puppies are easily distracted.
- C. Punishment/reward principlesNEVER hit the puppy!
Timing is everything. Reward/scold only during the act...never afterwards. When puppy stops the undesirable behavior, praise puppy. Praise ratio to scolding should be 4 to 1. The reprimand should be sharp and startling enough to immediately stop the undesirable behavior without causing the puppy to be overly anxious. When puppy chews on unacceptable items, substitute his toy and then praise puppy for making the correct shift to proper toy. Do not give puppy human items for play, as they will not be able to tell the difference between a good sock and an old one. NEVER play tug of war with puppy as this will give him the impression that he is equal to you in pack order. Animals can play tug together, but not with humans. This can also instill an aggressive nature in your puppy, as acceptable behavior. Do not tie or chain puppy/dog outside as this will definitely affect their temperament, in a negative way.
- D. Consistency is KEY in successful puppy nurturing.
 - 1. The family should decide which behaviors are acceptable and which ones are not. Desired behavior should always be rewarded and unacceptable behavior should always be corrected.
 - 2. Use one command for each behavior you teach, i.e., down can be used for lie down; off can be used when directing puppy to not jump up on things and people. The term NO is reserved for harsh correction...NO growl. Quiet is a term you can use for unacceptable barking. Leave it is a phrase you can teach for instructing puppy to ignore something and move on. Puppy's name should always precede the command.

Housetraining:

- A. We recommend crate training as an aide in setting your puppy up for success. Initially, puppy should sleep in his crate to further assist in successful potty training. Generally dogs will not void where they sleep, assuming crate is of proper proportion to size of puppy/dog. During your first few weeks you will be well served to carry puppy outside, otherwise he may want to stop along the way to relieve himself. Go outside with puppy every time and enthusiastically praise elimination.

Develop a training praise term ...Baby, Go Potty...and stay outside with puppy until his jobs are done.

Exercise stimulates elimination and also reduces anxiety/boredom. Minimum exercise is 20 minutes, morning and evening. You should be able to trust puppy's potty training after 16 weeks of age.

Watch puppy for signs. He will start to circle and sniff, giving you warning. In weeks ahead, watch the clock & get him outside every hour, on the hour, when you can supervise baby while playing & you will find this a fairly simple process to accomplish. Otherwise, baby must be crated when you are not able to supervise his activities.

- B. Maintain consistent feeding and elimination schedule. Offer food 2 or 3 times daily, at the same time time of day. Only leave food down for 20 minutes and employ diversion with food, such as hand feeding puppy, picking up bowl and placing it down, again. Initially, no food or water 1 to 2 hours prior to bedtime. As puppy grows older you may change this routine and keep water in kennel at all times and perhaps feed him in kennel, especially when there are other household companions. This can insure that puppy gets proper quantity of food and eliminates any disagreements between puppy and Fido.

Socialization:

Socialization is the process of developing confidence in interacting with other dogs and people. It is especially critical from 8 to 16 weeks of age, for your puppy. This is the imprinting stage and who he turns out to be later, is essentially formed during this stage. Puppy should be exposed to as many different elements as possible to further insure his long- term comfort level with life experiences. We believe formal puppy school and basic obedience training are instrumental tools for both puppy and you....setting you all up for total success. Remember, puppy will go through many phases until it reaches mental and physical maturity. Please remember that it is perfectly natural for the Aussie to be reserved with strangers initially. Keeping that in mind, try to be prepared with treats to pass off to new puppy greeters, so that puppy has reason to pay attention to them. NEVER FORCE puppy to greet a stranger as puppy will resist such an encounter. Do not reprimand puppy for not acting like a Golden Retriever...allowing ANY dog to survey situations and people first, is always better. The Aussie is sometimes a better judge of humans than are we. Puppies go through many stages and at times will be very confident and yet at other times appear uncertain. Puppy will attain its height status around 9 months of age and by no means will he be mentally mature, yet. You may experience a teenage stage between 7 to 9 months. By the time puppy reaches one year of age, you can start to trust him....and by two the light goes on!!!!

We are honored that you are part of our dog family and want to remind you that we are here for you always. We encourage your questions and consider them important in raising puppy.