

Puppy Class – Homework Week Four

Week Four Practice Instructions

Ignore behavior you do not want; reward behavior you do!!

- 1. Loose leash walking** – First, try to do a minute or two of *choose to heel every day*. Make him LOVE to be by your side. Second, when you get out the lead (hopefully, the sight of it makes him really happy), stand quietly for a second until he “get the idea” that *calm* is what you want. As soon as he settles down, ask for a “sit” and then put on the lead. Btw, if you have a fenced yard, be certain that you sometimes use the lead when you take him out to relieve himself. Some dogs who always go out loose into the yard become unwilling to “do their business” on lead. Try to do some loose leash walking every day. Remind yourself to *cheerfully* invite the pup to join you and PRAISE him when he does. Remember that *faster* is better from the pup’s point of view and *stand up straight*. If he hits the end of the lead, *stop immediately* and when he (hopefully) looks back to see what the problem is, take a “Hey, goof, remember me?” attitude, invite him to join you by backing up quickly a few steps, PRAISE as he approaches, and get going. Every once in awhile, stop and ask for a sit or a down. Maybe try a sit and then a stand. Mix it up, make it fun, PRAISE each time he gives you what you want—*not after*—but as he gives you what you want.
- 2. Wait** – Hopefully, you are asking for a “wait” at every door. Do not use treats here. They confuse the issue. Use your *body* to correct by stepping into the dog and moving toward him, saying “yes” immediately when he pauses. Remember that “release” should be calm. Ask for a wait every time he comes out of the crate also. If he starts to charge the door, just close it. The secret here is timing. Praise the second he hesitates (waits), say “uh!” the second he begins to break.
- 3. Sit/stay** – the goal for this week is a 15 second stay with you standing up straight *one full step back* from the puppy. Reread previous homework instructions for tips. It’s all in the timing. Praise and occasionally treat while the pup is holding. Give a quiet but well timed “uh!” if he breaks and gently put him back with an immediate “yes” as the butt goes back on the ground. Put your hand back in front of his face with a gentle “stay” and slowly step back and stand up. DO NOT REPEAT “STAY, STAY, STAY” if he is staying! That is nagging. Just smile and quietly say “good stay” every once in awhile. After 15 seconds, step back to the dog (you can gently remind him to stay by using your hand in front of his face as you move toward him). Quickly give him a treat as you say “good stay,” stand back up, wait a beat, and then say “release” with NO excitement. It is just “at ease.
- 4. Down/stay** – your goal for this week is another 10 second stay while you are standing up straight directly in front of the dog. Use the same tips for handling given for the sit/stay except remember to treat on the floor between the puppy’s legs. *You might ask, “Why all the emphasis on stay?”* Hopefully, you will continue to practice stay and get to the point where you can walk around the dog, even go out of sight...because it can be a fun game, it can save a life (a well-timed “stay” can keep a dog out of trouble), and it has

SO many uses (at the vet, near a frightened child, allowing an unsteady person to pet).

5. **Come** – practice, practice, practice. PRAISE every time he comes to you on his own. Run away and if he comes, PRAISE. Play the 2 person come game. Also, enlist the aid of a family member to hold the leash and restrain him like we do in class to build up his drive as you call him showing him the treat. Remember, you want his brain to hear “GOOD COME” as he is barreling toward you and about to receive a yummy treat. **Dogs are creatures of habit.** Create this habit, make it positive, make it strong, and the day is not far off when he will come on command. The secret is to practice, practice, practice.
6. **Never call you pup from a stay** – always return to your dog/praise/release. You may add this later, much later, but for now, always return/release.
7. **Toy release** – it is critical that our dogs know (Leadership Rules) that we are in charge. This includes the pup knowing that he must relinquish anything in his mouth if you tell him to “give.” Again, this is NOT a dominance thing. It is a gentle but clear leadership message. Have either two equally attractive toys or one toy and plenty of treats. Toss one toy, and as the pup retrieves it, **move away** from him. This will bring him to you. *Gently* put your hand on the toy as you show him the second toy or a treat and say “give” *as he releases the first toy and takes what you offer.* “GOOD GIVE!” Do this several times but don’t over do it. Hint: Remember that dogs are *hard wired* to resist any time we pull or push. If you put any pressure on the toy as you say “Give,” he will clamp down. Put your hand on it, but **do not pull**....not even a little bit.
8. **Leave it (step one)** -- this is another HUGELY IMPORTANT command. One human pill can kill a dog. Shards of broken glass on the kitchen floor can cut a paw. Your tone of voice when you give this command is not cheerful and encouraging as it is for “come” or “sit.” Your message is unequivocal. This does not mean loud. Loud, to a dog, just sounds like you are out of control. Your tone of voice for this command must be **firm**. Practice with the pup on lead. You must have control. And, yes, this is one time when you absolutely can pull you dog back if you need to. Put something yummy on the floor and have something even yummier in your hand. Take the dog up to where he is about a foot away (but cannot reach) the treat on the floor. He’ll lean toward it. Command “leave it”. Don’t say it over and over. Wait a second and tell him “leave it “ again. Now WAIT. In a few seconds when he realizes he cannot pull you toward it, he’ll glance back at you. Be ready. AT THAT MOMENT, say “YES!” and give him a treat. Walk away and approach again. He’ll try again. You command “LEAVE IT” and wait. The second he turns to you again, PRAISE and FEED. Carefully, pick up the treat that was on the floor and **throw it away.** ***The dog must NEVER get the treat from the floor.***
9. Teach your puppy to “**place**” (or “**park it**”) – see your extra handout for instructions. This is a tremendously helpful command, useful for keeping the pup out of the kitchen, etc.
10. Introduce “close” – (see extra handout) – start in sitting position. After that is solid, introduce it when you are standing.
11. **READ** the attached information on how to make sure your house is puppy proof and also tips on the use of an exercise pen.

Safe House Tips

Here are a few things to keep in mind in order to decrease the risk of the puppy doing damage to your house or to himself.

1. **Never leave the puppy unattended** -- you wouldn't think of walking out and leaving a two-year-old child unattended in the house. The same goes for young dogs. Most dogs need to be at least a year old before it is safe to allow them to be out of their crate when home alone. Even when you are present, a very young pup should be in the crate or ex pen (see next page) if you are not directly supervising him. Reserve some very attractive (and safe) "chewies" for crate time. Kong and several other manufacturers make sturdy toys that you can put some kibble in. Put that in the crate with the puppy as you leave and he'll be too preoccupied with getting to the treats to notice that you are leaving
2. **Be careful about bedding in the crate** – a well-made crate pad is fine, but be careful about towels or anything the pup can chew up. This is somewhat breed specific, but the larger breeds, especially the "mouthy" types like retrievers, will eat anything, including a towel, if they are bored. Foreign body surgery is expensive, dangerous, and no fun for the dog.
3. **Be careful about leaving anything on the floor the dog might eat.** Again, the larger breeds are the worst offenders, but some small dogs will chew up crazy things too. Dogs especially love socks, underwear, crayons, small plastic toys, little girls' hair bands. A neat house is a safe house. Put dirty (which makes it *especially* attractive to the dog) laundry in a closed laundry basket. Foreign body surgery is NO fun for anyone
4. **Cover outlets and try to keep wires out of reach** – you can use the same outlet plugs as you would for small children. Keep a close eye on wires. Replacing a computer charging cord is *expensive*.
5. **Make certain that wastebaskets are out of reach** -- secure your wastebaskets in a cabinet if possible. All the smelly things that go into our wastebaskets are irresistible and dangerous to our dogs.
6. **Teach your dog "leave it"** – so he won't grab the dropped ibuprofen (deadly dangerous to a dog) or go for the glass jar of peanut butter you just dropped and broke on the kitchen floor. *Leave it* (***well taught and practiced***) can also keep your dog from harassing an innocent gopher tortoise or, heaven forbid, a snake.
7. **Know what is poisonous to your dog and keep it out of reach** -- the artificial sweetener most often used in sugar free gum is extremely poisonous to a dog. Keep your purse UP out of reach. Do not give your dog chocolate, red grapes, or onions. Some of the new mulches are poisonous as are many plants. Antifreeze dripped on your driveway is deadly. Supervise your pup at all times and do not allow him to chew anything except carefully selected toys.
8. **Keep an eye on even "appropriate" chew items** – any chew toy or "safe" bone can become unsafe. If something chips off, or the item becomes too small, *throw it away*. This is difficult because that sterilized leg bone just cost you \$10, but the vet bill if the pup ingests that chip will be much more.

9. **Do not give your dog any type of fresh bones** – you can purchase large sterilized (sometimes filled) bones from pet stores. Some also carry elk antlers. These can be safe if you keep an eye on them. ***Never give your dog rawhides.*** They get soft, tear apart, and can become lodged in a gut.
10. **Put the 24 hour ASPCA Poison Control Hotline number in your phone** -- there is a \$45 consultation fee, but you will talk immediately to a veterinary specialist who will tell you what to do first and then be available to advise your local vet for the follow up.

ASPCA Poison Control Hotline (888)426-4435

A word about fences.....ideally, every dog will have a safely fenced yard to spend some time in. Be sure that the dog cannot get through or under any part of the fence and check gate latches every day. ***Never leave the dog in the yard unattended.*** Dogs left outside alone during the day are routinely stolen. And if you are considering a new fence, bear in mind that invisible fences, although they may keep your dog *in*, provide no protection for the dog against other dogs, or people, coming in to him.

Ex Pens

If you have a large house or lots of distractions (small children), you may want to consider purchasing an “ex” (exercise pen) to use while your puppy is young. This is a free standing, easily moveable, collapsible set of connected fence segments with a gate. They are reasonably priced, come in several sizes, take up very little space when stored, and can be a real life-saver while raising a puppy. They are available at most pet stores. The pup can be “out where the action is” and yet he cannot jump on the toddler or eat the Legos. Ex pens can be lifesavers also on a camping trip, in a motel room, or at a relative’s house. An ex pen can also be connected to the front of a wire crate so the pup has access to his bed.

Here are a few tips for using an ex pen:

1. Include something comfy for the pup to nap on.
2. Do not put water in the pen. Be certain that the pup has an opportunity to drink any time you feed him or bring him back in after a potty break.
3. Provide lots of toys and things to chew and rotate them every once in awhile so he doesn’t get bored.
4. When you first put him in, give him treats periodically ***through the side of the pen.*** This is so he doesn’t jump up on the side of the pen. All the “good stuff” comes down low through the sides.
5. Use the pen to practice “wait”; always have the pup “wait” before you take him out of the pen.