

Puppy Class – Homework Week Six

Week Six Practice Instructions

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

1. **Tricks** – before we get to the important stuff, a word about the fun stuff! At graduation, we'll each share a trick we have taught our pup. NO PRESSURE! Truly. And be prepared for the likely possibility that no matter how much you practice a trick at home, your pup may not perform at graduation (remember, dogs don't generalize—a trick at home may not be a trick out). No worries. Just have fun with it. If you Google "dog tricks," you'll get all sorts of ideas, or you can try one of the ones we showed you in class this week. Also, choose something that is natural for the dog you have. A Lab or Golden will retrieve anything; a tiny dog might dance on his back legs for just a treat held a bit above his head. Beagles are great at sitting up with front legs in the air. Just have fun with this.
2. **Watch me** – continue practicing this at the usual times (while the pup is waiting for you to release him to his dinner, etc.) but keep some cookies in your pocket and ask for a "watch me" every once in awhile when he is near you. Combine this practice with the **name game**. When he is near you and you have a cookie in your pocket, call him by name and mark eye contact with an enthusiastic "yes, good watch me." Don't forget to smile! Dogs "get" smiling.
3. **Loose leash walking** – in addition to practicing in your yard or driveway, try taking the pup somewhere fun. In Port Orange, All Children's Park is a great choice – tennis courts, a boardwalk with benches, stands by the baseball field. This gives you a place to practice a little "crazy walking" while also interspersing "puppy push ups" and stays in fun places like on the benches. In other words, make your practice fun by changing the environment and mixing it up. Remember to **stand up straight, look straight ahead (not down at your puppy), LOOK LIKE A LEADER! And, most importantly, PRAISE every time he trots up near you!**
4. **Sit/stay** – the goal for graduation is a 20 second stay with you standing up straight one foot away. Remember to provide feed back—a quiet "good stay" every once in awhile as he holds, and "uh" the second he breaks, "good" as you gently put him back in place. When 20 seconds is up, step back, treat (as he continues to hold the stay—"good stay") and then quietly "release." NO TREAT OR PRAISE AFTER RELEASE.
5. **Down stay** – the goal for graduation is a 10 second down/stay one foot away. Same instructions as for the sit/stay but remember to treat on the floor between his front legs.
6. **Puppy push ups** – interspersed throughout the day, give him a quick session of puppy push ups with lots of well-timed praise and hopefully a treat or two from your pocket. Sit-down-stand-down-sit.....etc., etc., etc.
7. **LEAVE IT** – this one is easy to forget but it is SO important. Try once per day to do the "leave it" drill. Put something attractive on the floor (food or crazy toy). Make sure the pup is on lead. Command "leave it" and move toward the distraction. PRAISE every time the pup avoids, looks away, or looks at you. "Good leave it."

8. **Toy release** – Practice, practice as you play with your puppy. Keep it fun. Do the toy release exercise as it is described in the separate “Toy Release” handout, or simply toss one favorite toy and have a second one (or a treat) ready to exchange as he brings the first back. Remember to put no pressure on the toy in the pup’s mouth as you gently put your hand on it and command “give.” PRAISE the give. “Good give” and toss the other one (or give a treat). This exercise reinforces the idea that YOU control the play but that there is always more good stuff to come.
9. **CRADLE** – do this every day. Remember it is not about control; it is about you being there for the dog and his learning to be comfortable as you groom, examine, look after him. Go back to your instructions from week three if you need them.

GROOMING TIPS -- (nails, coat, teeth)

If you are doing CRADLE every day, grooming will be a non-issue.

1. **Nails** – when your puppy is standing on a hard floor, his nails should not touch the floor. If they do, they are too long. ***The secret to nails being “no big deal” is to get in the habit of attending to them regularly.*** For example, make Sunday morning (or some other good time for you) “nail time.” When the pup has had his morning play, get the clippers, cradle him, gently take a foot in your “off “ hand, put the clippers in your dominant hand. Now, gently press the bottom of the pad on one toe. This pushes the nail out where it is easy to see. Take the clippers and snip off a tiny bit at the end of the nail. If you do this every week, you stay on top of it, and you are certain to stay away from the “quick.” If you let a long time pass between nail trims, the “quick” grows down toward the end and you risk cutting it when you clip the nail. This is painful for the dog and can bleed profusely. If nails get too long, don’t try to fix it all at once. Just take off a small amount and then set your goal to do it every week from then on. Some folks prefer the Dremel to clippers. You can look on line to find all kinds of advice on how to do this. The two issues with a Dremel are acclimating the pup to the sound and vibration and also being very careful to be brief so you don’t hurt the pup (the Dremel can get HOT fast).
2. **Coat** – this varies tremendously by breed. Short haired breeds rarely need to be brushed at all. Long haired breeds like Golden Retrievers can develop mats in a few days. It is best to brush out your long haired pups regularly. **Never try to cut out mats.** The danger of cutting your dog is tremendous. The pet store sells little stripper combs that will enable you to work a mat out by starting at the bottom (the farthest part from the dog—much like working a tangle out of long human hair). The need for baths also varies tremendously. A dog who lives in the house (and ALL dogs should live in the house) do not get dirty and smelly. Don’t overdo the baths; it can cause dry itchy skin.
3. **Ears** – the need for ear care also varies widely by breed. Short eared pups rarely have issues because the light and air can get into their ears and also owners are more likely to spot a problem sooner rather than later. The secret to keeping your dog’s ears healthy

is to check them regularly. If they look reasonably clean and do not smell, leave them alone. If you notice debris in the ear, clean it out. The best approach is to ask your vet to sell you a good ear wash (pet store stuff is no good). Lift the ear flap (as the dog is giving you a good “sit/stay”) and fill the ear canal with flush. It is usually a little cool and the dog won’t like it at first so be prepared to restrain him gently. When the ear canal is filled to the top, put the ear flap down against the head to seal the liquid in and massage the whole side of the dog’s head to move the flush around and give it time to loosen the debris. Dogs LOVE this part and will lean into your hand. After a bit, release the ear and let the dog have a good shake (he’ll like that part—don’t do this next to a velvet couch). Then, using tissues and Q tips, gently clean the ear. A dog’s ear canal is an “L” so you can use Q tips with impunity; you cannot reach or damage his ear drum even if you put it deep into the ear. Keep an eye on the ear. Clean it for several days in a row if you need to. If the smell does not go away, call your vet. You may need some meds to put into the ear for a few days.

4. **Teeth** – teeth problems vary widely by dog also. Some dogs have constant problems with tartar buildup; others seem to stay clean and healthy with no attention. It is important that you keep an eye on your dog’s teeth. 90% of infections occur under the gum. What looks healthy upon inspection may not be. Your vet should examine your dog’s teeth at each check up. There are several things you can do to help keep your dog’s teeth healthy. First, feed dry food only. Also, chewing the right kind of bones can help to clean teeth. Ask your vet what she recommends. You can also brush your dog’s teeth (NO toothpaste! Human toothpaste will make your dog sick). Virbac makes a good enzymatic toothpaste for dogs which you can buy on line at Amazon or Chewy.Com. Dogs love it and it does a good job. Put a dot on the brush and let the dog lick it. He will quickly come back for more. You can use a regular dog tooth brush or you can purchase the kind that slips onto your finger. Just use the brush to gently cleanse the gum line. Your vet may recommend a thorough cleaning. This requires that the dog be anesthetized (dogs don’t hold still for cleaning, and one good “chomp” could destroy delicate and very expensive equipment). Obviously, there are pros and cons here – expense and the need for anesthesia vs. benefit. Talk to your vet and don’t hesitate to ask questions.
5. **Puppy teeth** – sometimes a puppy’s baby teeth won’t fall out spontaneously making room for the adult teeth. Sometimes the adult teeth don’t erupt on their own. Ask your vet to check to make sure that all is well with your puppy’s teeth during the early visits.