

## Puppy Class – Homework Week Three

*Ignore behavior you don't want: praise behavior you do.*

1. **Load your marker** – by now, your pup should be very clear on the meaning of “yes” if you are working hard on your timing – saying “yes” at the exact moment that the pup gives you a behavior (butt on the ground for sit, chest on the ground for down). But, still, it doesn't hurt to “load your marker” a few times just before practicing. Simply say “yes” and at that same moment, treat. Do this 5 to 10 times in a row.
2. **Sit/stay** – practice sit/stay in heel position as we did it in class. Lure your pup into heel position. As he comes to your left side, lift the treat to lure him into a sit, and say “yes” the second his butt hits the ground (pop the treat quickly into his mouth). Put your flat hand in front of his face, hold it there as you say STAY and slowly move til you are standing directly in front of him. Gently praise, “good stay” in a calm cheerful voice and **stand up straight**. After a few seconds (don't push it, go slowly) place your hand in front of his nose again, say stay calmly, and pivot back to heel position. Praise gently, “good stay” (pop a treat quickly into his mouth). Stand back up, then release. No praise or celebration after the release. **Praise and treats come only as the pup is doing the behavior**. If he breaks his stay, immediately but gently say “uh” or “no” at the moment it happens to mark the error (let him know what he did wrong). Gently put him back into position, praise, and move on.
3. **Down/stay** – instructions are the same as for the sit/stay. It's a good idea to put the treat on the floor between the pup's front legs. This really enforces the down.
4. **Loose leash walking** - read the article again; hopefully, the two rules are becoming planted in your brain – do not pull your dog and be a tree if he pulls you. Let's add a third, ***PRAISE him every time he “joins” (comes toward you)***. Every time he is on lead, you are practicing, like it or not. So, set yourself up for success. REMEMBER TO STAND UP STRAIGHT AND LOOK WHERE YOU ARE GOING, NOT AT THE PUP. Look (and feel) like a leader. You'll know your pup is nearby when the lead feels loose. Praise without looking....“Yes! Good boy!” as you keep walking. Avoid situations that are too hard for now – straight walks down the street, pet stores filled with distractions (young pups should not be in pet stores anyway – their immune systems are not mature). Restrict your on-lead time to situations which you can control so all his leash experiences are positive.
5. **Stand/stay** – the “stand” is a tremendously useful behavior. Ask your pup to “sit” and then, using a treat held just in front but a little under his nose (too high and he'll just stay sitting) pull the treat gently forward. As his butt comes off the ground, simultaneously, say a gentle “yes”/treat/keep your hand right against his nose. This prevents him from moving forward. You want him to hear “yes” and receive the treat as his body is fully balanced on all 4 legs and his feet are still. Immediately after you achieve this, gently say “release.” One or two seconds of holding a stand is plenty to begin with.

6. **Come** – you should practice this all day every day. Keep some treats in your pocket, and every time the pup is headed toward you for any reason, say “good come” and have a party! Catch him in the act of being good. Conversely, **(already headed your way)**. Teach the other members of the family to use **never use the word “come” unless you are certain he is going to comply** the same rules. Also, enlist someone in the family to play the two-person “come game” described in your week two homework and demonstrated this week in class. Start 10 feet apart, then go to 15, 20, etc. until you can even be in different rooms. Lots of praise (“**good come**”) and lots of treats as he runs happily back and forth between you. You want “come” to become an automatic response. The more you practice, and the more fun it is, the more *come* becomes implanted in the puppy’s brain.
7. **Wait** – using the instructions from week one continue to practice wait every time you go in and out of a door with your dog. If you have more than one dog, teach it to them all. Time put in now will yield great rewards in the future and will make your dog, you, and your family safer. Most importantly, it maintains your leadership position and makes life better for everyone. *This week, let’s add **wait** at one of his mealtimes*. Prepare the dog’s food and put it on the floor. As you do, gently command “wait” and put your flat hand in front of the dog’s nose (dog can be sitting or standing or lying down—whatever you prefer). Stand up straight, gently praise the wait, and then release. Slowly add a little more time before the release. When he reliably waits for your release, try pausing a little longer than usual. After a few seconds, he will look up at you. Be ready. At the moment he makes eye contact, smile and say “yes” then release. Expect a little longer eye contact each day before the release, and then add “good watch me” to your praise *during the eye contact*. This reinforces what you are teaching him in the attention exercise.
8. **Toy release** – holding a favorite tug-type toy in front of your pup, tell him to “Get it! Get it!” as you shake it in front of him. Have a brief play session and then release pressure on the toy as you command “out.” If the pup does not immediately let go of the toy, gently use your other hand to encourage him to release it. The secret is to NOT pull on the toy. This will automatically cause the pup to clamp down. As soon as he releases it, allow your hand to drop at your side. If the pup goes for the toy, **do not raise it up out of his reach**. You are in control. Tell the pup “no” or “leave it” and gently praise (“good boy”) as he does. After a few seconds, initiate play again with “get it get it” and then in a bit, release pressure and command “out” again. Etc. etc. This is a game your pup will love, and it clearly reestablishes your role as benign leader.
9. **Read** the two attached articles: *Cradle (calm & gently restrain)*, *Public Manners and Safety*, and also the separate *STAR Puppy* pamphlet.

## **CRADLING YOUR PUPPY**

Possibly the most positive and helpful thing you can do to increase your bond with your puppy (and make his and YOUR life easier during grooming and vet visits) is to learn to cradle him/her. The most important thing to remember is that, although the puppy may resist you a little at first, this **is NOT A DOMINANCE EXERCISE**. *Read these directions several times carefully before trying this exercise.*

The goal is for you and your puppy to learn an exercise which you will do together EVERY DAY which will calm, reassure, and relax you both. Most puppies quickly decide this is a great time for a nap. You are also establishing a daily routine which will enable you to examine your dog, to look through his fur for bumps or ticks, to look in his ears and mouth, to check his feet. Most importantly, you are dramatically increasing your **BOND** with the pup. Obviously, as he gets accustomed to being handled in this way, he is far more likely to happily allow you to clean his ears, trim his nails, check the pads of his feet, etc., etc..

The key words here are GENTLENESS and CONSISTENCY. Here's how to get started.

1. Choose a quiet place in your house and a time of the day when the pup is naturally pretty mellow (just had a good play session so he is tired or just woke up from a nap and is still pretty sleepy).
2. Decide where you will be most comfortable (on the floor, on your favorite couch, anywhere which will allow you to relax).
3. Gently pick the puppy up and carefully arrange him on his back on your lap with his head against your chest. If he struggles to get away, GENTLY restrain him. Use only as much pressure as you need to prevent him from flipping over. **TAKE A DEEP BREATH and RELAX. Breathe and believe.** He will follow your lead. Do not pet, talk to, or make eye contact with the puppy if he's struggling in your arms, whining, barking or crying. Simply gently tighten up your arms (so puppy can't squirm away), turn your head away and close your eyes.
4. As soon as the puppy relaxes again, praise, pet and make a gentle fuss over the puppy, telling him how good he is. You will also want to have a chew toy on hand to give him something appropriate to chew on, so he doesn't chew on your hands.

Don't do this for too long at first. As soon as the puppy relaxes, praise him quietly and put him gently down. *As he becomes better and better at this, make sure you are gently handling his feet, putting your fingers in his ears and mouth, touching his tail.*

Slowly increase the time that you hold him. Just be certain that you never release him while he is struggling. It is always your idea to end the cradling session. Ask for just a brief minute of relaxed acceptance and then quietly release him.

The biggest secret to success with this is to **DO IT EVERY DAY**. It will relax both you and your puppy and it will enable you to monitor your puppy's well being.

If you have a large breed dog, do this on the floor and as he grows bigger, slide him down off your lap into the space between your outstretched legs. Eventually, you can encourage a really big dog just to lie quietly on his side with his head down as you pet and examine him.

## ***Public Manners & Safety***

Dogs are becoming more and more welcome in our society. This is great news for those of us who love to take our dogs along, but here are a few words of advice for keeping your pup safe and for ensuring that you respect the rights of others.

**1. Always keep your dog on a leash in public:** People who have their dogs off lead in public are “showing off” pure and simple. No dog, no matter how beautifully trained he is, is safe off lead in today’s world. Just ask an emergency veterinarian. As they are examining the broken and suffering body of some poor dog, the owner is saying, “He never did this before.....” It only takes one squirrel, one loud motorcycle, etc. Life is unpredictable; don’t risk your dog’s life to show everyone what an awesome trainer you are. Also, although they are few, there are people out there who are ***terrified*** of dogs.....all dogs, no matter how small or “friendly.” Our world belongs to all of us; the simple consideration of always keeping your dog on a leash ensures that you will never be guilty of ruining some innocent person’s day.

**2. Never allow your dog to approach, or be approached by, another dog on leash:** Even if two dogs would, under different circumstances, enjoy a friendly visit, approaching face to face while being controlled by a lead is a stress inducing and potentially dangerous situation. No two dogs off lead would approach one another in this manner. It is true that dogs tend to be tremendously interested in one another, but this is NOT the way for them to meet. *You owe it to your dog to look out for him.* Unfortunately, the world is filled with people who believe that all dogs *must* meet one another. They will approach you with the usual “My dog is friendly. He just *loves* other dogs.” In this case, ***set your good manners aside and put your dog first.*** You are his *leader* and you owe him the good judgment to err on the side of his safety. Simply put your flat hand directly out in front of you (the universal sign for ***stop***), smile, and say something like “I prefer that you not bring your dog up to mine” and then *walk away*. No explanations are needed.

**3. Avoid dog parks:** It is true that dogs are social animals. It is true that exercise is good for them. It is true that many of us live in a home/apartment with no or very little yard. But in spite of all those truths, a visit to a dog park must be very carefully considered. Vets routinely have to deal with the wounded animals from dog park altercations. Any dog, not just puppies, can be seriously frightened by a dog park encounter which can leave you with a reactive dog—one who from that day on becomes the aggressor out of fear. Even if you find the park empty, or with only one prearranged friend waiting to meet you there, you have no control over who will arrive next. It is far preferable to arrange “play dates” with a friend who has a compatible dog. Try for a safely fenced yard. Tennis courts during non busy times are another possibility (just be certain to check that the gates are securely closed).

**4. Teach your dog to greet in a quiet and calm manner:** In class, we will practice “sit to be petted.” The instructors will approach your puppy after you have commanded him to sit. If he pops up and/or gets too excited, the instructor will immediately withdraw attention until he calms down and then try again. Until your puppy learns to greet quietly and calmly, do not allow him to greet anyone in public. Also, be particularly cautious with children. They can be unpredictable.