



Cardinal Animal Hospital

www.cardinalanimalhosp.com

2301 Fleming Road
Greensboro, NC 27410
336-668-9475

Good Behavior for Puppies

By living with your pet, body cues as well as verbal communication become very important to your animal. Paying close attention to your own body cues will help overcome the language barrier that exists between dogs and humans. Did you ever wonder just how a dog knows you are heading for the flea spray when the dog food is kept in the very same cabinet? The dog can sense what you are doing from your body gesture. For example, when you are heading to get the flea spray you may tip your hand differently from when you are getting the dog food. Since dogs are exceptional at reading body cues they are able to pick up on this type of gesture and distinguish the flea spray from the dog food.

Dogs are also very interested in determining who will be the leader of the pack. In your home it is important to help your puppy learn that he does not lead the pack within the family, but is a well taken care of member of this family. Listed below are some exercises that may help reinforce this aspect to your puppy. Please remember that you should NEVER try to frighten or intimidate your puppy and that all of these exercises should be done quietly, gently and patiently.

EXERCISE 1: Pick up the puppy by carefully supporting it under his chest. Hold the puppy for five counts. If the puppy is not wriggling or squirming, praise him lavishly and gently set him down. Continue progressing in small increments of counting (seven seconds, ten seconds, etc.) until you can hold the puppy for about one minute without resistance. Anytime there is squirming or wriggling, calmly ignore this behavior until it stops. When the puppy is still then give praise. Do not let the puppy down when there is wriggling behavior since this would signify to the puppy that wriggling or squirming is its cue to you that he is leading the holding session.

EXERCISE 2: This exercise is best performed when the puppy is tired. Sit on the floor or on a chair with the puppy in your lap. Gently turn the puppy on its back while in your arms as though you are cradling a baby. Speak softly and calmly. If the puppy is calm then let him up. Cradle him this way up to one minute in progressive moments as done in exercise one. Again be sure not to let him up while he is squirming or wriggling and remember this exercise is best practiced when the puppy is tired.

EXERCISE 3: At feeding time, sit quietly holding the puppy's food bowl and place a food treat in the bowl. Praise the puppy quietly as you are placing the treat in the bowl. After filling the food with the puppy's dinner, stand next to the food bowl while the puppy is eating. Place a food treat in the bowl every few bites. Progress to sliding the bowl away from the puppy and then pick up the bowl to place the treat in it. These steps can be done one at a time per day so that the puppy is not overwhelmed with changes in the feeding habits. Also, gently touch the puppy while it is eating, progressing to petting or hugging. This exercise is especially important if children will be around the puppy since children have a tendency to be active and excited around the pet. Once the puppy has learned to not be afraid of movement or disturbances while it is eating, occasionally revisit and practice this exercise.

EXERCISE 4: Practice handling the puppy's feet, ears and muzzle. Try looking in the puppy's mouth for practice, too. This exercise will benefit the puppy when it is time for veterinary visits. Also, combing or brushing will help the puppy get used to being groomed. Mostly, remember to use very gentle techniques and also lots of praise for good behavior. Again, remember to expect only a few seconds of cooperation at first, building up slowly to longer sessions.

What about all of that playful biting?

Puppies interact with their world by using their mouth sometimes. If your puppy bites one of his litter siblings there would be a shrill toned "yip" in response. This "yip" is teaching each other that kind of bite is too hard. You can

communicate with your puppy by using a similar yip. If the puppy is trying to bite you, it is important to NOT jerk your hand away quickly since this kind of response will encourage the puppy to try and catch your hand and possibly bite even harder. If your yip does not make the puppy stop nipping at you then stand up, turn and walk away. This reaction tells the puppy that he is being too rough and that you do not want to play with him anymore. If he does stop nipping at you when you yip then praise the puppy quietly. Be sure not to grab at the puppy's nose, wrestle, or play tug of war games with the puppy since this may encourage rough behavior traits within the puppy.

Suggested reading and video list: How To Raise A Puppy You Can Live With, Rutherford and Neil; What All Good Dogs Should Know, Volhard and Bartlett; Don't Shoot the Dog, Karen Pryor; Leader of the Pack, Baer and Duno.

Video: "Sirius Puppy Training", Ian Dunbar.

We hope this information on dog behavior will be helpful.

Thank you for your business and please contact us if you have any further questions or concerns.

Cardinal Animal Hospital