



Contents

1. Toilet training
2. Crying at night
3. Mouthing and nipping
4. Chewing
5. Gaining the pup's attention
6. Teaching the pup to sit
7. Teaching the pup to come
8. Teaching the pup to stay
9. Teaching the pup to go to its bed
10. Teaching the pup to walk on a lead
11. Puppy handling
12. Attention seeking
13. Separation anxiety
14. Preventing dominance



Toilet Training

A pup can be taught to urinate and defecate in an appropriate place by repeatedly taking it to a designated area (especially after eating, drinking, sleeping or periods of play), and praising it for toileting. Be aware of where the pup is at all times, and if you observe it sniffing the floor and circling, take it outside or to its litter tray.

- Use the “toilet” command when taking the pup to the selected area and stay with it, repeating the command “toilet” whilst it sniffs the ground, so that the pup can associate a command with the act, knows what it is going outside for, and be praised for compliance. Give the pup time to toilet and do not praise it just as it starts to urinate, as this may cause it to stop.
- You must correct the pup only if it is actually caught in the act of urinating or defecating in the wrong area. A correction consists of “no” (in a non harsh voice), followed by picking up the pup and taking it quickly to the designated area. Do not yell at, smack or rub the pup’s nose in its urine or faeces.
- If the pup is not caught in the act, do not correct it or draw attention to the urine or faeces by taking the dog over to show it what it has done. Instead clean the mess up without fuss, and in the pup’s absence.
- Do not toilet the pup immediately prior to going to bed or when leaving the house, as the pup will focus on the pending separation. It is often useful to toilet the pup several times in the evening to prevent accidents overnight.
- If the pup is to be confined indoors, then you should use a litter tray and train the pup to use it (by taking it to the tray and praising it for toileting). Use paper training sparingly as it only trains the pup to go onto another surface inside.
- You must give the pup regular periods on its own outside (day or night), so that it has the confidence to take itself out.
- You must ensure that the pup has regular, easy (no stairs) and obstacle free access outside, and is restricted from carpeted areas unless supervised.
- Two puppies together take considerably longer to house train. You must regularly toilet them independently, so that one pup does not become dependent on the other pup’s toileting pattern. The pup must also be toileted, on occasions separately from an older dog to increase its independence from this dog.
- Soiled areas must be cleaned with a non-ammonia based cleaner, and the area dried thoroughly so that a strong smell does not remain to attract the pup.

You must be patient as toilet training can take several weeks depending on the pup’s temperament, age of acquisition, frequency of training and ease of access to an appropriate area



Crying at Night

Most new puppies will cry or whimper at night for a few days as a result of being separated from their littermates, or being frightened in a new environment. It is important that the problem is dealt with early and appropriately, as the pup will soon learn to use the behaviour to seek its owner's attention. Crying may occur when the pup is put to bed, when it wakes up during the night, or if isolated for long periods of time.

- You must decide where the pup's permanent sleeping area will be (bed, laundry, shed or a kennel), and give it time on its own in this area for short and frequent periods during the day.
- To build independence you must give the pup time on its own when you are home. This could be outside, in its sleeping area, in another room, or behind a barrier in the same room.
- If the pup cries when separated from you it must be ignored, and only be brought in when it is quiet. However if persistent crying is accompanied by vomiting, diarrhoea, yelping or coughing, then veterinary attention may be required.
- Going in and yelling at the pup, or alternatively soothing it, taking it out of the room and bringing it in with you, will cause the pup to learn to cry for attention, a behaviour which may continue throughout its life.
- To help the pup feel comfortable and secure in its own area, you should provide it with warm bedding, toys, food and water, a ticking clock, a radio, and shelter from the weather if it is outside.
- You should toilet the pup and put it to bed at least half an hour before you go to bed yourself, and leave it there. You can play with the pup in the evening, but do not over excite it immediately before it goes to bed.
- If the pup is to sleep outside you should put its kennel or have its enclosed run in a sheltered area, close to the house, but away from neighbours.
- If the pup does not sleep well at night you should try to prevent it from spending long periods of time sleeping during the day. You can do this by engaging it in short but frequent sessions of play.
- If crying continues over a couple of weeks and the puppy develops an erratic sleeping pattern or if a neighbour complains, seek assistance from your veterinarian, as medication may be required in the short term.



Mouthing and Nipping

Mouthing and nipping in most instances are common and normal behaviours in pups when they play excitably, however if not corrected or discouraged they can become a serious problem as the puppy gets older.

- You must avoid making sudden and frequent movements with your hands near the puppy's mouth as this teaches the pup to mouth or nip.
- The pup should be taught to allow its head to be held, by cradling the head with one hand under the pup's chin and the other hand on top of its head.
- If the pup is mouthing, do not try to control the pup by pushing it away with your hand extended, as your fingers will usually end up in its mouth. Instead cup your hands and attempt to gently control the pup's head as above.
- You should also practise stroking the pup when it is not excited with an open hand over its head, down the side of its mouth and under its chin with a gentle upward pressure, so that the mouth closes as you stroke it.
- If the pup attempts to mouth as you are stroking it, correct it with a firm "no", and stop the movement of your hands. The pup will associate the cessation of praise with mouthing. Do not use "uh" or "baa" as these sounds are meaningless to the pup, and may frighten it.
- You must avoid harsh corrections, physical punishment or other actions such as holding the pup's mouth tightly closed as these may cause discomfort or anxiety.
- Nipping by the pup when it jumps up can be prevented by teaching it to "stop" on the move (refer to "stopping on move" check sheet), so that it will stop as it comes towards you when you give it the "stay" command. If necessary stand up when giving this command.
- If you are unable to stop the pup mouthing then it should be removed from the situation it to another room or outside, or be restrained in the same room.
- Children should not be left unsupervised to deal with an excited pup that may mouth or nip.
- If the mouthing or nipping is accompanied by snarling or biting, then an animal behaviourist or your veterinarian should be consulted.

These exercises should be taught to the puppy when it is quiet and relaxed, and then applied gradually to situations of increased excitability once it has learnt what is required of it.



Chewing

Chewing is a normal behaviour of puppies when exploring their environment, to amuse themselves, to relieve pain associated with teething, and when they are anxious or seeking attention. In many instances damage may result, so it is important that you prevent the behaviour from becoming a habit by teaching the pup to chew appropriately and preventing it from having access to objects that you do not want chewed.

- You should provide the pup with a limited number of good quality chew toys such as the “kong” or rawhide bones. Encourage the pup to chew these toys and praise it when you see it doing this. Do not give the pup toys that it can easily destroy or that have small beads inside or hard parts that can be broken off and swallowed.
- You must avoid giving the pup discarded socks, shoes, sneakers or other articles of clothing, as few pups learn to differentiate between these and your clothing and shoes.
- To encourage the pup to chew its toys you can play games with it or smear food (vegemite or butter on the toy to attract its interest).
- You can teach the pup to chew appropriately by “setting up” situations to catch the pup in the act of chewing inappropriate items, and then providing it with the correct items to chew on.
- You must restrict the pup’s access to areas where it can gain access to items you do not want chewed, and keep objects especially those belonging to or handled by family members, out of the pup’s reach. You must supervise the pup in such areas, or puppy-proof them.
- You must correct the pup **only** if it is caught in the act of chewing inappropriately and not after you have found the damaged item. Severe (such as yelling at, or smacking the pup) or delayed punishment will only confuse the pup and cause anxiety. A firm “no”, followed by praise when it stops, is sufficient.
- Once you have corrected the pup, remove the object from it and replace it with an appropriate toy or treat ball. You must praise the pup when it chews this.
- Chewing (or stealing) in your presence is likely to be an attention seeking behaviour. To avoid reinforcing the behaviour, you must ignore the pup, or not over react its chewing. If you cannot ignore the behaviour, simply remove the item, or the pup from the object.

If chewing only occurs in your absence or when the pup is separated from you, then it may have separation anxiety (to treat this condition refer to the separation anxiety check sheet or consult your veterinarian). Regular and appropriate exercise will help tire the pup and increase the likelihood of it resting in your absence.



Gaining the Pup's Attention

The sole function of a pup's name is to gain its attention. If you cannot get the pup's attention in the first place, then it is unlikely that it will respond to subsequent commands. These exercises should, where possible, be carried out off lead.

- Call your dog's name, and when it turns its head to look at you, praise it (good boy/girl). The pup should be praised as soon as it makes eye contact with you.
- The pup should remain where it is when its name is called. If it comes towards you ignore it, unless you have given it the "come" command.
- If the pup does not respond when you first call its name, repeat the name louder (but not harsher) and move closer if necessary until it looks at you. Allow a few seconds between each call, and keep your voice calm.
- A command such as "sit", "stay" or "come" must not be given until you have the pup's attention.
- Initially you should practise calling the pup's name when it is close to you and there are no distractions, and then gradually increase the distance you are calling it from.
- Once the pup responds without distractions, wait until it is distracted (low level distractions at first), excited or anxious and then call its name. By training the pup under these circumstances in the home, it will be more likely to respond when it is off lead outside the home.
- If the pup is on lead, and does not look when you call its name, gently flick its lead towards you and repeat its name.
- Your pup's name should be short and easily pronounced.
- You must use one name only, and do not abbreviate a longer name unless the change is going to be permanent.

These exercises should be carried out by all members of the household at various distances on a daily basis when the opportunity arises.



Teaching the Pup to “Sit”

“Sit” is not only a simple command to control a pup’s behaviour, but it can form the basis for preventing more complex behaviours such as jumping up.

Crouch beside the pup and place one hand on its chest, without pushing backwards and the other hand on the pup’s rump, near the top of the tail. Gently push downwards with this hand, or tuck the pup’s rear into position and tell it to sit. If the pup is on a lead, instead of touching the chest you can gently extend the lead up and behind the pup’s head (without the lead being taunt).

You should hold a treat in front of the pup’s nose and move it up and back over its head. As the pup’s head goes up, its rear end should go down. When this occurs tell the pup to “sit”, and once it is sitting give it a treat and praise it verbally (“good boy/girl”). If the pup backs away or jumps up when a treat is presented over its head, it should be positioned in a corner and the exercise repeated.

Next instead of bending over the pup, stand erect, and move your hand with the treat upwards, until it is level with your chest and against your body. Keeping your hand in this position, tell the pup to “sit”. Once it sits, give it the treat, a quick pat under the chin and praise it verbally. It may be necessary to repeat the command whilst moving towards the dog.

Once the pup is sitting each time for a treat, start giving the treat intermittently, and then without food, praising it with a “good boy/girl” only and not a treat.

Once the pup sits in front of you after you have raised your arm upwards, and without food, just walk around casually telling the pup to sit. You should do this when the pup is in front of you, to the side of you and when you turn around as it approaches from behind.

You should call the pup to you and when it approaches about a metre in front of you, raise your arm upwards and tell it to sit. Praise the pup verbally and with a quick pat under the chin.

When your pup has completed the above exercises you should teach it to “sit” at varying distances from you. Initially the pup should be stationary close to you, then tell it to “sit” at gradually increasing distances away from you. As the distance away from you increases your arm should be raised slightly higher and outwards. You should praise the pup verbally “good boy/girl”.

When your pup is able to sit at a distance, then tell it to sit as it comes towards you, as you go towards it, and as it goes towards another person. At first do these exercises without distractions, and then when the pup is excited or distracted. This exercise can be used to teach a dog not to jump up, by you or a visitor taking a step back as the pup is about to jump up, and telling it to “stop”



Teaching the Pup to “Come”

Getting a pup to come back to you when you call it is one of the most important commands that a pup can learn, and one of the most difficult to teach. However if you train a pup to “come” when it is called, firstly from short distances without any distractions both on and off lead, then from further away, and finally when it is excitable, distracted or anxious you will in time get it to return in all circumstances.

The pup should first be trained to look at you when you call its name.

Bend over or crouch near the pup and call its name. When it looks at you tell it to “come” and praise it as soon as it starts moving towards you. Initially you may need to use a treat in conjunction with your voice, or have it on a lead to teach it the command. If the pup is on a lead, gently pull this towards you as you tell it to “come”, stopping if the pup struggles. Gradually increase the distance it walks on lead.

As the pup comes towards you, repeat the command and praise it so that your voice draws the pup into you. A sideways movement of your hand (low and in front of you) may assist in keeping its attention on you. You should avoid patting your legs, clicking your fingers, waving your arms and running backwards.

When the pup reaches you, ensure that your hand is against your body, and positioned so that the pup’s nose touches the palm of your hand. When the pup stops in front of you (standing or sitting), then give a quick pat under the chin, praise it verbally and move your hand away. Don’t reach out to touch the pup, or lean over it.

The pup should stop close to and facing you, looking up if it has your attention. It should not turn around, jump up, sniff you, or go straight past. If the pup goes past you or is distracted when it is approaching you, then call its name to get its attention, and repeat the “come” command.

Regularly around the home when the pup is standing close by, call it to you. Do this when the pup is in front of you, to the side of and behind you. You should only use a treat if the pup will not respond to your voice alone.

Gradually increase the distance that you can call the pup to you, and then start calling the pup from various distances when it is excited, distracted or anxious.

If the pup does not come from one distance, then go a little closer and repeat the pup’s name and “come”. Do not repeat the command in an increasingly harsh voice, and allow a few seconds between each command.

If you are calling two pups, then call one dog into each hand to prevent them from competing with each other for your attention, or separate them by turning their heads outwards once they reach you. If one pup hangs back because it is wary of the other dog, then gently push first pup away, or put it on a stay so that the second pup has the confidence to come right in to you.



Teaching the Pup to “Stay”

The “stay” command is one of the most important exercises a dog can be taught as it enables you to stop your pup on the move, or keep it stationary in one location. The emphasis of these exercises is to get the pup to stop rather than remain stationary, and control it when it is standing or moving rather than sitting or lying down.

- When the pup is sitting, standing or lying down, hold it or gently place one hand on its back or neck. Tell the pup to “stay” and praise “good boy/girl” if it remains stationary. The “good boy/girl” releases the pup from the command.
- When the pup is lying down, walk towards it and tell it to “stay”, and then walk backwards away from it, repeating the command. You should carry out this exercise at the front, both sides and the rear of the pup, when it is lying down and praise it for remaining in position.
- Have the pup on a lead in the sit position close to you (side or front), with the lead held up and behind the pup’s head (not taut). You should then tell the pup to “stay” as you slowly walk around it, repeating the “stay” command and praising it if it remains stationary. If the pup moves, repeat the command and move a little closer. You may need to stabilise the pup (front and side) before moving behind it.
- Once the pup remains stationary with a taut lead, then move away from it to the length of the lead, keeping the lead loose and repeat the “stay” command. If the pup repeatedly breaks its stay, then move closer to it and repeat the command.
- It is important to stabilise the “stay” before moving away as the pup may have been taught to heel on lead, or if dependent on you will automatically follow as you move away and the lead becomes taut.
- Gradually increase the time the pup is expected to stay to about 30 seconds, first without distractions, and then with distractions nearby.
- Repeat the above exercises when the pup is standing.
- Once you have the pup stabilised on lead, then take the lead off and repeat the exercises when it is off lead, firstly close by with no distractions and then with distractions at various distances in different locations.
- Once you have the pup stabilised off lead, then teach it to “stop on the move”, so that it learns to go from a moving to stopping position, in any direction and from varying distances.

“Stay” can also be used to stop the pup when it is excited and is jumping up by telling it to “stay” and taking a step back. In addition “stay” can relax a pup when it is nervous and backs away, or when it is being handled, as the pup will take direction from its owners control and have the confidence to cope.



Teaching a pup to go to its bed

This exercise instructs a pup to go from one location to another (which can be a chair, a mat, the pup's bed or its kennel). Whilst these locations are different, the command "go to your bed" is appropriate for all of them. The command can be used to order the pup to a location in the same environment, to give it isolation after an inappropriate behaviour, or to build independence from you.

- You should have several "beds" inside the house, and one or two outside, such as near the back door or the front gate. A "bed" should be against a wall and only a short distance from where you are sending the pup to.
- The bed must be stable and the pup should not have difficulty climbing on to it. If the pup chews its mat or bedding, then a wooden bed with a piece of carpet attached may be appropriate.
- When teaching a pup to go to its "bed", you should gently push it from behind towards the "bed", rather than picking it up and putting it on. As the pup moves towards its bed, praise it.
- By teaching the pup in this manner you will be able to send the pup away from you to its "bed", rather than having to call it over to it.
- The command is (pup's name) "on your bed", "good boy". You should repeat the command (and praise) as it moves towards its bed, and when it gets there. The command must be positive, even if you have corrected the pup for an inappropriate behaviour in another location.
- Once the pup reaches its "bed", the "sit" or "stay" command can be given, so that it stops on the bed. If it gets off and does not carry out the behaviour that it was sent to its bed for, then there is no need to send it back to its bed. If you want to keep it on its "bed" then repeat the "stay" command.
- If the pup has difficulty going to a location, then food treats can be placed or thrown onto the bed to direct the pup's attention towards it.
- You should gradually increase the distance from which the pup can be sent to its Bed.
- Initially you should practise the command when there are no distractions, and then apply it to different situations where it is distracted such as ordering it away from the door when visitors arrive, or from the table when food is being eaten.
- Once you have taught the pup to "go to its bed", then the command can be built on, by sending the pup to other locations, such as outside, to the toilet or into the car.



Walking on a Lead

The objective of PUPi is for you to be able to walk the pup on a standard fixed collar (buckle or clip) in one hand with the lead loose and the pup on either side of your body. If the pup accepts wearing a collar and is trained correctly to accept and walk on a lead, then other equipment such as the slip chain or halti should not be necessary.

You must first train your dog to wear a collar. Initially just lay the collar over the back of the pup's neck several times before buckling or clipping it loosely into place. Tell the pup to "stay" if it struggles when you are putting it on, correct it if it tries to get it off, and praise it if it accepts the collar.

Leave the collar on for increasing periods of time over the following few days. Once it accepts the collar, then tighten it for walking so that you can only fit two fingers between the pup's neck and the collar.

You should then attach a light lead to the collar for short periods and allow the pup to drag it around. When it accepts this, then pick the lead up and follow the pup where it wants to go. You must apply minimal tension only on the lead.

Slip your little finger through the end of the lead and walk around, every now and then putting a little tension on the lead by gently flicking it sideways with your wrist. The clip on the lead should be at the lower end of the pup's neck, your arm straight by your side and the pup out from your body.

Do not say anything to the pup when it is accepting a little pressure on lead, except to praise it "good boy/girl". If the pup hesitates or balks at the lead, flick the lead and keep moving, using the "come" command. You must ensure that if you flick the lead forward that the lead comes out from under the pup's neck and the pressure is applied to the back of its neck.

The use of the word "heel" is discouraged as it only gives the pup a cue to your next action, rather than the pup watching you to predict this. The pup should be guided by the pressure on the lead.

Once the pup accepts the lead then gradually increase the distance that you walk it. If the pup pulls forward or out, gently flick the lead sideways towards you. If the pup is out from your body and your arm low, then the pressure is applied to the back of its neck, causing it to turn its head towards you.

If the pup is too close to you, then you can only pull upwards on the lead, or backwards if it goes in front of you causing the collar to press against the pup's neck. Pressure under the pup's neck will cause it to pull, or chew the lead. If it crosses in front of you, swing your arm outwards so the pup moves away from you.

You should then practise walking the pup closer on either side of your body, both out from, and close to you. To get the pup closer, move towards it, and fold the lead.



Puppy Handling

A pup that is regularly handled correctly from an early age will more readily accept a veterinary examination and permit basic procedures such as nail clipping to be carried out. These exercises also help build the pup's confidence in accepting restraint, and should not be used to dominate it.

- Prior to commencing any of these exercises you should give the pup the "stay" command in a calm voice. If the pup moves or struggles during an exercise then repeat the "stay" command. Once it accepts the exercise, then praise it.

- When the pup is standing, practise just leaning over it, or sitting beside it and placing your open hands on either side of its back and then its hindquarters. Draw the pup into you and lift one front paw off the ground and put it down, then the other paw and finally each of its back paws. The pup should not be grabbed, or held too tightly.

- Whilst you are still holding the pup lift both its front legs off the ground, for a short time and put them down again. Then repeat the same procedure with its hind legs. Hold the pup firmly and securely, telling it to "stay" if it struggles.

- Next lift the pup off the ground by tucking one hand under its hindquarters, and the other hand under its chest. You must first do this from a sitting position, then standing up, and finally pick the pup up when you are sitting on a chair and place it on your lap. When it is in this position hold the pup right up against you and cuddle it.

- Once the pup is comfortable with being picked up, position it so that it is facing you, and then place your hands on each side of its head and face. Once it accepts having its head held, stroke it over the top of its head, down the side of its mouth and under its chin, applying a little pressure to keep its mouth shut.

- You should gently roll the pup over onto its side and hold it down passively for a very short time with one hand on its hindquarters and the other hand on the side of its face. Tell the pup to "stay" if it struggles, and praise it when it relaxes. When you have the pup relaxed on its side, place your hand over its muzzle and press the muzzle gently towards its chest, before releasing it.

- Hold the pup in a comfortable position against you and gently stroke its ears, feet and genital region, around its eyes and under its tail. Open the pup's mouth, gently massage its gums and lift its lips to expose its teeth.

You must identify any areas where the pup is sensitive, and regularly touch these areas at home during the week after class. Gradually increase the frequency and duration of your touching of any sensitive areas.



Attention Seeking

Pups seek attention from the owners in many different ways (barking, pawing, jumping up, stealing or dropping a ball at their feet). In most instances attention seeking is a normal behaviour in pups but these behaviours can become a problem if they cause a nuisance, are directed inappropriately, or cannot be controlled by the owner. Attention seeking dogs can be very persistent as they have learnt in the past such behaviours gain attention.

- If your pup constantly seeks your attention with a particular behaviour, do not always give it attention, as you will reinforce the behaviour and cause it to continue. Sometimes ignore the behaviour or redirect the dog to another more appropriate behaviour, or order the dog away from you to its bed.
- Do not yell at or hit your pup when it is seeking your attention, for being told off is better than being ignored. Hitting the pup will also cause further anxiety and make frightened of you.
- If the pup does not respond to your correction (“no”) for an attention seeking behaviour or cannot order it away from you, then you should initially ignore the behaviour, and if it persists restrain it inside, or remove it from your presence. Physically preventing the behaviour is sometimes the only option.
- You will find that once you ignore an attention seeking behaviour, it will initially worsen, so you need to continue for more than a few days until the dog learns that it will not gain your attention by the behaviour. Praise the pup when the behaviour ceases.
- You should practise your off lead control exercises (gaining attention, sit, stay, come, onto your bed or specific commands such as quiet) so that you are able to manage the behaviour in the future by creating separation and distance with your control. To gain this type of control, it is recommended you use praise only and not treats to reward your dog.
- You should not let the pup initiate all of the interactions. If the pup repeatedly approaches for attention, then give it a command such as “stay” or “sit” before attention is given
- You should encourage desirable behaviour by giving the pup attention for being well behaved and obedient, instead of only when it is annoying you.
- If the pup steals an object and runs off with it, do not chase the pup or rush towards it as this becomes a game. Instead you should stop, tell the pup to “stay” and walk towards it. If the pup moves, repeat the command.

Frequently pups showing attention seeking behaviours are mistakenly described as dominant however attention seeking usually arises out of a strong need for the dog to have contact with its owner and is often associated with separation anxiety. It is often necessary to treat this condition before persistence attention seeking can be addressed, If attention seeking persists then seek professional assistance.



Separation anxiety

Many dogs are anxious when separated from their owner or another dog, and may chew, dig, or bark to cope with the stress of separation. Separation anxiety may occur when the owner is not home, when the pup is separated from them by a physical barrier, or when it is with its owner but does not have their attention.

You should give the pup repeated separations from you. On occasions stop it from following you, from it approaching you, or send it away from you to its bed. You should also give the pup physical separations from you by shutting it out of a room, putting it outside and shutting the door, or leaving it inside when you go outside.

It is your ability to create a separation and the act of separating the pup from you that builds independence, rather than separating the pup for many hours at a time. Once the pup is settled after a separation, then give it attention or bring it inside.

You should vary the pup's feeding and exercise times so that it cannot predict when these will occur.

You must avoid sudden changes in the pup's routine or environment. Gradually adapt it to confinement or restraint and if your lifestyle or routine changes, slowly reduce the amount and type of attention the pup is receiving until it reaches the level that will occur after the change.

You must avoid always giving the pup attention on demand. Instead, on occasions make it "stay" or "sit" a short distance away, before giving it attention.

You should identify cues that the pup associates with you leaving the house (shutting and locking doors, going out the door or picking up keys), and practise these regularly when you are home, but without leaving the house.

You should avoid going through the same routine each day prior to you leaving the house, and as far as possible prevent the dog from seeing or hearing you leave (have the dog outside, the car in the driveway and a radio on).

You should keep contact with the pup to a minimum at least 20 minutes prior to you leaving (no long walks or play sessions), get dressed after the pup is separated from you and do not give it a treat or feed it just as you are leaving.

You should give the pup minimal attention on returning home. Greet and pat the pup, then give it a brief separation before any periods of play or exercise.

When you are not at home leave the pup with a few good quality and safe toys, a chew bone or a treat ball. A radio near its resting area may prevent the pup from hearing cues associated with your leaving or background noises that it may react to in your absence.

If the separation anxiety persists, or obsessive behaviours such as tail or shadow chasing, or the excessive licking of paws start occurring frequently, then you should seek assistance from a qualified animal behaviourist.



Preventing dominance

Dominant behaviours may occur when a pup attempts to control or gain access to resources such as food, bedding or its owner's attention, and may be directed at its owner, another family member or a second dog in the household. Initially the pup may only intimidate by pushing or staring, however if not prevented or addressed early the pup may growl or bite when these actions are not effective in getting what it wants.

- Your pup should obey basic commands ("sit", "stay", "come", "on your bed"), without treats, and when it is excited, distracted or anxious.
- You should practise giving the pup a toy or ball, leave it with it for varying periods of time and then take it off it. When taking an object off the pup, tell it to "stay" as you approach, and "give" as you take it. Praise the pup when it gives it to you.
- You should gently pull the pup's collar upwards and sideways, and regularly take the collar off and put it back on. If the pup struggles or moves, tell it to "stay".
- You should be able to order the pup onto and out of its bed, off furniture, touch or move it when it is resting, and order it outside from inside the house.
- You should practise gently rolling the pup onto its side, enclosing your arms around the pup's neck and gently pull it towards you. Also practise lifting a large pup's front or hind legs off the ground and pick a small dog up and hold it. Ensure that you do not cause pain or discomfort during these exercises
- You should practise holding the pup's paw or its head in your hands, opening its mouth and examining its teeth, holding its tail upwards and examining its ears by opening up the ear flap and looking inside. The pup should also be brushed for short periods daily. If it struggles during any of these procedures, tell it to "stay".
- When the pup is eating, firstly stand near it, then touch its back and hindquarters before placing your hand in its food bowl (dry food then wet food). Finally remove the bowl from it. You should also practise taking a bone from the pup (after varying periods of time it has been in possession of the bone).
- If the pup growls at you, correct it verbally and remove it from the situation by carrying out actions associated with eating (open the fridge) or walking (rattling its lead), before calling it to you.
- You must avoid using a harsh voice, intimidating, scruffing or hitting the pup when you correct it, as these actions may be perceived by the pup as a challenge, and cause it to escalate its dominant behaviour to counter your challenge.

Early warning signs of dominance aggression include growling, snarling, curling of lips, tensing of muscles or a prolonged stare when the pup is being asked to carry out any of the above procedures. If such behaviours occur then the assistance of a qualified animal behaviourist should be sought immediately.