

The Common Sense Guide to Puppy Care

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STAGE 1: 2-3 Months old Puppy

Play

The pup that plays quietly is usually playing safely, whereas the one that tears around boisterously may be exhausting himself nervously and physically. This does not mean that the normal puppy is not lively, for he certainly is. But just as he gets enough sleep by means of short naps, so does he get his best exercise in short sessions.

Don't egg him on to play when he tires or wants to rest. When he is ready to quit, leave him alone. It is a great mistake to excite the resting puppy, or to permit children to urge him on. He will play when he feels like it, and when he is tired he should stop. Play is the young animal's instinctive method of exercise. He will find ways of playing by himself, too.

The age-old game of chasing his tail is usually puppy play; but if he actually bites at his tail, looks for matted hair, debris, or even a flea that might be annoying him. Since the normal puppy is chock-full of vim and vigour, he may exert himself beyond his strength. After a play period of twenty minutes or so, pick him up and put him in his box. Stopped in the midst of a boisterous game of chase and pull, he may rebel, but never mind! Shut him up and leave him alone. Before you know it, he'll be sound asleep. The puppy that plays quietly in his own place or box cannot come to much harm no matter how long he keeps at it His footing is secure because he is on his papers or his blanket. When taken out for play, however, he meets certain risks, not the least of which is slippery flooring. Many folks floor the puppy room with linoleum, or they let him scamper around the kitchen or bathroom, since these places suffer less from periodic mistakes. Nevertheless, the frisky pup is none too sure on his feet. He can easily slip and fall, injure a knee joint, or pull a tendon.

Therefore, the puppy that plays on waxed linoleum or polished hardwood floors needs the protection of some kind of carpeting. Especially suitable is a discarded cotton rag rug that can be washed as often as needed.

STAGE 2: 3-5 Months old Puppy

Message to Parents

Because so many puppies are purchased as children's pets, we are going to take time out to talk to parents. Some of them hesitate to add a dog to the household for fear it will injure the child. You need have no cause for fear. Without exception puppies are friendly creatures. Born with complete confidence in people, they cannot be anything but friendly unless their trust is destroyed by ignorance or neglect.

Of course, in playing with a small child, a pup may topple the child over—that is not the dog's fault and the bumbling puppy is sorry immediately. It is the fault of parents who, without thinking about it, gave the dog to too young a child. Actually, the dog risks the greater harm.

Quietly, he takes an unbelievable amount of pulling around and he'd give his very life for the child if he could. In addition to the physical protection he gives the child, the dog provides constant companionship. Rainy days present fewer problems for the only child in the house when the dog is around. Letting the youngster think the dog is his and his alone develops his sense of responsibility.

In caring for the dog he learns how to treat an inferior with justice and humanity. Such wholesome friendship can teach him the proper attitude toward any member of society who suffers physical or other misfortune. Failure to grasp this lesson causes some of the greatest evils of society. The child must learn that the world is not his, to do with as he likes; only when he treats others with kindness and understanding can he really grow as a human being. Without a shadow of a doubt the dog plays a big part in the social education of youth.

The dog will not teach the child kindness unassisted—you will have to help. By his patience the dog may even give the child an exaggerated idea of his own powers and privileges for the dog is unbelievably longsuffering. The slightest growl is a real exception. Ordinarily the dog merely gets up and walks away.

Sometimes children, and even grown-ups, tease a puppy because he is so “cute” when he gets angry and tries to bite with his baby teeth. This is a serious mistake. Besides the Cruelty of tormenting a pup, it is very likely to make him mean-tempered and snappish as he grows older.

What about the dog’s service to grown-ups? It is as great as that given the child. Let us disregard for the moment the war dogs, herding dogs, farm and factory guard dogs and leaders of the blind. Thousands of these have paid, and are paying, many times over for any favours man has extended the dog. Let us salute instead the millions of dogs in private homes where as pets and companions, by their response and love, they make life happier and less lonely.