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Puppy Foundation Course

These lesson plans are a guide to what we'll do over 4 weeks. It will take a lot of daily practise to achieve in 4 weeks. It is not a rigid timetable, I work more flexibly.

Week 1

Whatever you need to talk about

House training

Biting/mouthing

Name and eye contact

Sit

Understanding positive reinforcement

Come!

Week 2

Revision/questions from previous week

Off/ Take it

Lie Down

More recall

Walking beside the human

Week 3

Revision/questions from previous weeks

Introducing and walking on the lead

Recall

Stay

Go to bed

Week 4

Revision/questions from previous weeks

We may go off the lead today in the park

Perfecting that loose lead walking

Anything else you like.

Extras sessions can be booked as necessary.

The most important thing for you puppy - socialisation, socialisation, socialisation!

Socialisation is not just about meeting other dogs. Puppies need to experience as many different things they can in the first 3-4 months of life or they can become afraid. Let them meet dogs/cats/children/adults, allow them to experience different surfaces, sounds, sights, places and methods of transport.

House training/Outside/Cue Words/Reinforcement/Timing/The toilet walk!

Puppies go to the toilet very frequently because they have small bladders. When young they won't have full control of their bladders and will have accidents for the first few weeks. You'll need eyes in the back of your head to spot when they are about to go! Never punish a puppy for having an accident as they will hide to toilet and won't ever want to go when you're looking.

Biting/chewing/teething

All puppies bite to some extent, this is how they explore the world. We need to teach them that biting humans is not allowed, as soon as possible.

Body touch, claws, grooming, teeth

Get your puppy used to being handled whilst they are young, this will make the next 15 years much easier.

Relaxation and sleep (17-19 hours)

Puppies need a lot of sleep. Lack of sleep can cause behavioural problems.

Food manners

Taking food gently is an important skill for your puppy to learn. It will save you from years of bitten fingers.

Teaching your puppy its name and eye contact

If a dog looks at you when you call their name it's highly likely that they will do what they are told.

Use of markers/timing/hand signals

Good use of markers, hand signals and timing will speed up training phenomenally. This is a hard skill for humans to learn. We will spend a lot of time talking about this.

Positive reinforcement

Positive reinforcement is a well scientifically researched and the most effective method of training dogs/cats/horses/birds/etc. It builds a strong relationship between the human and dog. It makes dog training less stressful. Positively trained dogs work harder for their human and are happier and more confident. You'll never need to use the word NO.

Use the right treats to get the best results

Sit

This is the best way to give the puppy their first experience of learning and working for their human. You will learn through this simple exercise for the dog how positive reinforcement, timing, markers and reinforcers work.

Recall

The sooner you start training the better recall will be for the dog's entire life.

Introducing a harness, collar, lead, lampshade or muzzle without causing stress to the puppy.

Loose lead walking

No one enjoys walking a puller!

Stay or Wait.

Wait is a temporary pause, stay is a permanent and the dog will not move until told to.

Lie down

Sometime hard to train, but a useful way to calm a dog down.

Leave it/off/take it

'Leave it' means let go of that

'Off' means don't touch that.

These are vital skills to teach an inquisitive puppy.

Jumping up

It's annoying and embarrassing, we never allow it even if the puppy is tiny.

Appropriate play and toys

You're a puppy you love to play. As a human you have to set boundaries to prevent unwanted behaviours. Puppies need to tug, chew, fetch, chase and cuddles their toys. Let's get a variety to cover their every whim.

Age appropriate exercise

Too much exercise can be bad for young puppies.

Mental stimulation/company and affection

Puppies need exercise, mental stimulation including training and love. Love is 3rd on the list.

Withdrawing food from training

Because you don't want one of those dogs that only sits if you have a treat in your hand.

Go to bed (taught as a trick)

It's not a punishment it's just another trick.

