



Bringing up that
Adorable Pup

By Susan M. Botich

Puppies are adorable. Few people are able to resist the cute, cuddly, furry face of a puppy. But, just like people, puppies need proper care and management to grow up to be responsible and socially adapted.

PJ Wangsness, a certified professional dog trainer and owner of Dog Training by PJ in Reno, and Laurie Wagner, owner of Scraps Dog Company, also in Reno, offer some helpful hints on puppy management.

Puppy-Proof Your Home

“You will need to see things from the puppy’s perspective,” Wangsness says. “Sit or lie down and look at what the puppy sees. Electric cords, curtain draws, shoes, papers, books, magazines, etcetera, need to be picked up and placed high enough so that the puppy can’t explore these items through chewing on them. Remember, he doesn’t know what an acceptable chew is and isn’t, so have plenty of bones, digestible chews, and interactive toys to keep that puppy busy.”

Teach Your Pup Proper Behavior

“Management is the key to success for developing a well-adjusted, well-mannered puppy,” says Wangsness. “Puppies come with a set of pre-established behaviors: relieving themselves when they feel the urge, chewing anything they can wrap their mouths around, crying, whining, and barking if they find themselves alone, as well as eating anything they think might be food. Additionally, puppies greet

by excitedly jumping up and play-biting all living things.”

Wangsness stresses that these are all normal behaviors for puppies. How do we teach our puppy to not engage these annoying and even dangerous activities?

“Learn how to keep the puppy busy,” says Wangsness.

One way to keep a puppy busy is to give him appropriate toys especially designed to keep him occupied, according to Wagner.

“When you leave your puppy in its controlled play area with a Kong or a Treatstick, he will spend a lot of time trying to get the food,” Wagner says. “Also, there are interactive toys you can give him like Hide-A-Bees, Hide-A-Squirrel or a Hide-A-Bird that will keep him very busy.”

Wagner and Wangsness’ Puppy Management Rules

1

Puppy-proof one room and confine your puppy to it when you cannot actively monitor him.

2

Supervise your puppy. Use immediate feedback when teaching your puppy housetraining and chewing rules. Never punish your puppy! If you punish a dog for having “an accident” in an inappropriate place, what you are teaching the dog is, “Don’t ever potty in front of me.”

3

Help your puppy “get it right.” Direct his chewing instincts toward

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appropriate chew toys. Also, various soft, plush toys or rope toys will help redirect him to more appropriate things to chew and bite.

4

While housetraining, take your puppy out often—at least every hour during the day. Reward or praise him immediately when he potties outdoors or in the appropriate place. Small breed dogs may be trained to use a litter box. If your puppy has an accident in the house, do not punish him. He will not understand what he is being punished for. Quietly clean it up using an enzyme-based cleaner. If you catch him "in the act," calmly interrupt him and take him outside to his potty spot. Remember, if you use punishment, you will only teach your puppy to never relieve himself in front of you—he will seek out hidden places instead.

5

Don't reward whining or barking. When the puppy is left alone, don't return even to say, "no barking!" or "no whining!" Instead, ignore the puppy until he is quiet. Then, return to the room and praise him. If you run to the room, even if it's to punish him, that teaches him that whining and barking works because you came back once he got loud.

6

Burn off your puppy's energy. Tired puppies are less apt to do unwanted things. If you work long hours, consider hiring a dog-walker or a doggie daycare. Your puppy

puppyproofing



Puppies need exercise every day.

must play every day with high-intensity games like ball-fetch, tug-of-war, hide-and-seek or just free-play with other dogs.

7 Include a healthy diet in your puppy's regime. Proper training, exercise, and good nutrition will determine the puppy's overall health and behavior. Keeping your puppy happy and healthy, helps keep your home safe from puppy havoc. "Nutrition is big when it comes to behavior," Wagner says. "Behavior is helped by a good, natural diet. It's probably the most important thing about raising puppies. If you give your puppy food that's too high in sugars, that puppy will be bouncing off the walls. If you offer your puppy a diet that is rich in nutrients, his behavior will reflect it."

Susan M. Botich is a Minden-based freelance writer.

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