

PUPPIES FIRST MONTHS---REVISITED

I have decided to go into this subject in a little more depth having been asked so many questions by people over the last months. Puppies are like children, they do not come with a manual, it is not a case of turn them over and read the label. Just as it is scary when you bring a baby home, it is scary bringing home a puppy.

Obviously, before you get the puppy you will have thought long and hard about whether you have the time for a puppy and questioned whether you will still have time in 12 years -----
----the time and energy, not forgetting the money, to cope with an ageing and maybe sick dog.

Preparation is important, decide where the puppy will sleep, there is little point in spending lots of money on a bed in the first couple of months-----it may get soiled or eaten!! A box and blanket is fine. Make sure you have food, bowls, plenty of newspaper and disinfectant. It is wise to keep the pup on the food it is already eating during the initial week or so if possible. Please note that when you change puppy over to a food you have researched and chosen, do so very slowly. As I have previously said I consider an inside cage to be invaluable. Puppy has its own territory, a space where it feels secure and can escape the noise and hassle of its new and unfamiliar surroundings. I have had mixed success with my cage in the 15 years I have had it. Two have loved it, one tolerates it and one hated it and I gave up using it on day 4 for her!!! You will need a puppy size collar and lead, as much as anything to get the puppy used to having them on.

Once you have the puppy home, what next!!! Sheer panic often. Puppy has been taken from the security of Mum and siblings, put in a car, a cage and transported away from all it knows. At the new house there are scary noises, new people and possibly more pets who will no doubt wonder exactly what has just come through the door. Introduce to present pets very carefully, the pack order will have to be sorted. Always feed and give attention to the new member of the family last. It is hard as the pup is all fur and adorable but it must realise where it stands in the house.

Try and limit visitors for a couple of weeks as this will just frighten the pup even more.

Toilet training, puppies are naturally clean but they need to be trained, they need to know where the door is---most important. A tip I was given was to place newspaper on the floor, the pup will probably use it, slowly move the paper nearer to the door until you can place it outside. In the beginning, ideally pups need to be placed in the garden, in a set area, every 20 mins, defiantly after food and after play. Because all puppies want to do is please, lots of praise is needed. They soon learn. When you put them out in the garden it is important to remain with them, to reassure them.

I believe that while they are small they need to be with one person all the time, this can be shared between a couple if both are home all the time. They need to know they can trust you, that you will protect them against everything, you are their security blanket, that trust will remain throughout their lives. Yes, they need to function without you but they need to feel protected. Cleo follows me everywhere, she goes where ever I go.

Socialisation and training I have covered before, it is time consuming but worth every moment in later years, when you have a well behaved dog that you can take anywhere with you. It is generally accepted that a lot of aggression in dogs is literally caused through fear of a situation, by putting the puppy in as many 'situations' as you can when you are with it to protect it can only benefit it in later years. I have found with mine that a situation they fear (lorries, tractors, buses, dustbins, metal grids) within a very short time with reassurance from me they have conquered it. I have previously recommended the Kong toys which are invaluable for amusing bored puppies, Haltis for controlling walking sensibly-----the list is endless. For puppy parties---a joy and training just ring Laura on 913 351 835.

I can recommend a couple of useful books, invaluable is The Perfect Puppy by Gwen Bailey, for health issues on pets try reading Holistic Guide for a Healthy Dog and Complete Guide to Natural Health for Dogs and Cats. We have them at Paws4Pets.

I am not 'trained' but I have attended professional training classes in the UK with two puppies, but over many years I have picked up a lot by experience. I did not train my first two dogs efficiently, I was young and had very young children and little time. Big mistake., My last four have been trained and they are well behaved dogs. We travelled Europe with three of them, one of them was only 5 months old at the time.

If I can help anyone out there who may be despairing having got the puppy home and not knowing what to do next, it will be worth me having written this. Please ring me for any further help.

Copyright © 2006 Paws 4 Pets