



THE DOGGY DIGEST

TRAINING TIPS BROUGHT TO YOU BY MUTTS WITH MANNERS

10 Ways To Be Delivered From Puppy Hell

In this article, we will discuss ten tips that will hopefully deliver you and your family from a phenomenon we call 'puppy hell'. We call it this for a reason, it really can seem like a hellish experience. However, it is very brief, so stay kind and take a lot of photos because your puppy will be grown up before you know it and you will be wondering where your cute little puppy went!

1. **Management** - Management is actually crucial when coupled with a solid training plan. If you aren't training, you should at least be managing your puppy's insatiable appetite for destruction. This may come in the form of tethering to you (not a post in the back yard), baby gates, crates, and a good fitting no-pull harness.
2. **Training Program** - Get involved in a positive reinforcement style of dog training as soon as possible. As trainers, we start working with our puppies as soon as they come home. Because of our kind and gentle techniques, there is no reason to wait until a dog is 6 months or older. Train for the first two years, even if it is just practicing the basics over and over again.
3. **Socialize** - Socialization is an important part of development for your puppy. This is more than just throwing a bunch of dogs in the yard to play. This includes exposure to men, women, children under the age of seven, and other species of animals you expect your puppy to accept as a part of the family.
4. **Control every experience** - Puppies go through a critical socialization period of life and also a fearful phase right afterward. It is important to control your puppy's exposure to stimuli that he could interpret as fearful and could evolve into a permanent phobia. If your puppy looks scared, take care in reintroducing him to that stimulus again, at a lower level of stimulation, and pair it with something positive like food or play. Never force your puppy to do anything he is clearly saying 'no' to.
5. **Potty Training and Puppy Proofing** - No matter how old your puppy is when you bring him home, it is always a good idea to pretend he doesn't know anything, and start at the basics. Pretend he is a 1.5-year-old toddler who is potty training without a diaper and explores everything with their mouths. This breaks down quite simply, 100% supervision...ALWAYS; 100% consistency...ALWAYS; and 100% positive reinforcement...ALL OF THE TIME!
6. **Exercise** - Adequate exercise is crucial for getting through puppy hell unscathed. For some breeds, you may get away with two thirty-minute walks, but for others, you may have to exercise with them!
7. **Adequate Chew toys** - Good quality toys can be an expensive investment, but replacing furniture can be even more expensive, or impossible. Galilea NyloBones, Elk Antlers, and puzzle feeders of any kind are a must-have for puppies.
8. **No-pull harnesses** - No matter what breed or breed mix you end up with, or how small or large they are, get a no-pull harness where the leash attaches to the chest. Mutts With Manners favorites are The Freedom No Pull Harness or Pet Safe's Easy Walk Harness.
9. **Spay and Neuter and Get connected with a local veterinarian** - It doesn't matter how beautiful your puppy is, or how many champions were in his bloodline, by choosing spay and neuter you give the dogs at Galveston Island Humane Society a chance. There are so many dogs in shelters who need good homes. The kicker is, a lot of full-blooded dogs can be found at our local shelter. Get connected with one of our island's very talented veterinarians.
10. **Play with your puppy** - Your puppy is a social animal. Your puppy is a natural-born athlete who requires mental and physical stimulation. He has been yanked out of the only family he knows, and now you are it. If he came from a shelter, he needs a lot of relationship-building anyway, and playing with your dog, or in some cases teaching your dog how to play is going to help facilitate a healthy bond. So play with your puppy. If you find him being too mouthy during play, remember to distract and redirect, even with hands. Refrain from playing with your puppy with your hands, only with a toy you are holding in your hands. If necessary, disappear behind a door for 3-5 seconds during play. These short time outs are a neutral way to let your puppy know the fun goes away when his teeth come out to play.

Until next time, keep it pawsitive!