

Darr Houssen's Dog Obedience School

- How To Pick Out The Right Puppy For You
- Puppy Proofing Your Home
- Obedience Training
- And Much More!



**Puppy Training
the
Natural Way**

Puppy Training the Natural Way

Introduction

Welcome to the fun, fantastic, thrilling and challenging world of puppy rearing. From very personal experiences I can vouch for all of the above emotions plus a few more as well. You are in for what could be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life. Within this publication, I hope to offer you some simple, down to earth methods and techniques to help you along in your journey. Some ideas you may have heard of before, some you may not. Remember, there may be more than one answer or solution for any one particular question or problem that arises. Consideration has to be given to your puppy's breed, personality, purpose of that particular breed, physical size and body structure when applying a method. I will give you as many options as I can in the various topics following this introduction section.

We stick to "Mother Nature's" methods of correction and praise when dealing with puppies or dogs since this is the language they will immediately understand, comprehend and respect. Mother Nature's way as we have seen fit to term it, works for all breeds. The intensity of this method will vary from dog to dog. You will learn more about this unique method we have studied as we progress. Why Mother Nature's method?

Simply, there has been over the years as many methods developed by different trainers as there are fads from the Beatles of the 60's to disco of the early 80's. We are not saying that these methods don't work but we choose to use the most natural of all.

Included in this puppy manual are such topics as:

- How to pick out the right puppy for you.
- Pre-preparations before the puppy comes home.
- Puppy proofing your home.
- Housebreaking.
- Biting or nipping.
- Proper and appropriate "Toys."
- How to make these "Toys" work as teaching tools.
- Accurate corrections
- Discipline.
- Energy burn off
- Training equipment.

and of course.....OBEDIENCE TRAININGso your puppy learns at a very early age to be an acceptable member of the family and reliable companion dog.

You must keep an open mind when dealing with your new puppy. Patience is crucial but you must also think about the method that will best work for your specific puppy's personality. Just as all people are different in character, so are puppies. What works with one pup may need to be adjusted a bit to suit your own puppy. The important thing to remember is to discipline the puppy for an inappropriate behavior and love them to pieces the moment the behavior is altered.

Just as the human child goes through various stages of development, so does a puppy as it matures towards adulthood. (ie. infant, toddler, elementary, adolescence, puberty and finally adulthood.) Good luck, have fun with your new puppy. The first five months will go by very quickly so start as soon as possible down that road of mutual "RESPECT" between you and your puppy.

Picking The Right Puppy For You

First and foremost, it's a great idea to research the various breeds you are interested in. The general look that interests you is a good place to start. For example, if you prefer a breed with stand up, perky ears, then you should eliminate the floppy eared and cropped ear breeds. Then you must decide for what purpose are you acquiring a dog. Will it be a house dog when mature, laying at the foot of your bed, or on your bed, or out on the doorstep being a guardian? Will you have the extra time if the breed requires extra recreational playtime? Are you willing to put the time into grooming that some dogs require, especially the ones with the long hair? Once you've narrowed the choices down, your next job is to locate a reliable breeder. One good breeder resource is to contact a few kennel clubs in your area. Ask them for a breeder referral list for the breed of your choice. Contact by telephone is more courteous and can give you a valuable and non threatened first impression than dropping in on the person or facility unexpected. These should be good, reliable breeders but don't be afraid to ask for names of previous buyers. Remember, any good breeder will check out their potential puppy purchasers before releasing a pup into their hands. This is a very common practice. Next, set up an appointment to go to see the litter and if possible both parents. They will give you a general idea of what you can expect from the puppy as an adult as far as the looks and size go. The breeders facility should be clean but keep in mind if you are going to see a litter of 10 German Shepherd puppies, you may see an unscheduled poop spot or pee puddle. First observe the puppies while standing back from the whelping box or kennel area. Watch to see which ones are pushy with their litter mates and which ones are content to observe from the corner. Which ones roughhouse play? Who makes the others cry by biting too hard in play? This puppy could be the tough guy or gal of the litter...or the ALPHA puppy. This would not be a great choice for a family with small children or first time puppy owners as it could want to control the family household and members. Ask the breeders if they could isolate the alpha puppy so you could observe the rest in a more fair environment. Now you are at the stage of deciding: Male or Female.

Once you have your puppy home, you will start to develop its personality the way you want. If you know which sex you want, ask the breeder to put the other sex away to give you time to observe all the males or all the females. Don't pick a particular puppy just because it is the cutest! There are easy tests you can do yourself to help you determine the best choice for you. Watch them to see which puppy is watching you, making direct eye contact with you. Take a couple steps backwards away from the puppies and look closely at who moves with you. Next, take a few more steps from the group and clap your hands, snap your fingers or verbally call to encourage the puppies to follow.

Open your arms in a wide fashion and call to the puppies in a higher pitched voice. Again, observe the followers. These pups would be the ones interested in human beings, thus making good companion dogs. Narrow your choices down to 2 or 3 from those couple of little tests. Next, take each puppy in your hands. Balance it's weight by supporting it under the rear and on the chest. Observe the pup's reactions at this point. Is the pup struggling to break free, growling or showing it's teeth. These are negative signs in inexperienced hands and definitely need to be corrected very early in the pup's life. If the pup is comfortable and relaxed, maybe even licking your face or hands, then those are positive signs and those of a more submissive puppy.

Another quick test is the "rollover test" where you gently roll the pup over in your arms into a cradle position. Again the pup should be calm and relaxed. If not, try a simple growl correction to test the pups submission level. If it quickly freezes in a still position, that means the pup will probably accept human discipline easily. However, if the struggle continues, be prepared for some headstrong behaviors in the future. After socializing with each puppy a few minutes, place it back down on the floor and repeat the "walk away and follow me test". Observe the pups for the quickest reaction to your leaving them. The quickest one to follow you could be the strongest bonding potential puppy from your choices. Repeat the procedures as a double checking system. If you're happy with the results and the pup is attractive to you, then that's the one for you.

PUPPY PROOFING YOUR HOME

For the first couple days when you first bring your new puppy home, it probably won't get into too many dangerous situations, but once he feels a bit at home, brace yourself, the curiosity level will start to overcome your sweet little puppy. Therefore, some preparations around your home need to be taken to insure safety for the pup and your belongings. Usually, a veterinary clinic can provide a list of poisonous house plants. Certain ones can be deadly to your puppy. The movement of the leaves of the plant is very motivating to your puppy, so it's a best bet to move all plants out of his reach, especially in the rooms where the pup would be unsupervised. Also, Place all breakable or valuable ornaments or treasures up out of his reach. Removing the items eliminates the possibility of frustration and destruction of these articles, however if you choose to leave them within reach, you must be prepared to make the appropriate corrections when the pup investigates. For correcting the pup for handling inappropriate household articles, I have found that sound and voice corrections work the best. When you see your pup interested or involved with an off limits item, stomp your foot, or clap your hands and use a very stern and growly "NO" command. The pup almost always will immediately stop the behavior and look at you providing you do the correction properly. If he's not leaving the item, then you must go to him and remove him from it. Urgent tones in your voice are usually enough to distract the pup from his own curiosity interests. However, if you're short on training time or patience, perhaps the prevention method would be best for the early stages of the pup's home life.

Puppy Proofing

Soft clothing articles like sneakers, leather shoes, socks and other assorted undergarments simulate soft animal like objects that are irresistible to your puppy. To a puppy, these are play items that if left laying around, are there for his or her enjoyment, so prepare the family members to keep things off the floor as they are fair game to the pup. Now remember we are talking about a puppy. As the dog gets older and starts bonding, these items begin to replace your presence when you are not home due to a stronger human scent that accompanies these items. Of course, there are many, many household items that need to be removed from the puppy's reach. Items such as pin cushions, sewing needles, household cleaners, soaps, candy dishes, pens, pencils, thumb tacks, paper clips, yarn, paint, modeling clay, crayons and the list goes on and on. Puppy proof your home for your new puppy in the same way as you would for a toddler aged child.

That would be the best guideline anyone could give you. Decide where you would like the puppy's bed to be. If you choose the mat beside your bed, that's fine. If the laundry room is your choice, that's OK too. The important thing is to have a plan before the pup comes home. Gather a few old blankets or large towels together so that you have a reserve stockpile to pull from. Don't choose your next to best linens (to honor the new arrival), as the puppy will probably eat them or at least chew interesting patterns in them. All puppies chew. It's nature's way of reducing painful cutting and growing of baby teeth. They also chew to relieve stress from built-up energies within themselves or from simple boredom. Depending on the breed you choose, puppies will chew anything, from toilet paper to gyp rock or wallboard. Preventative measures are the best method of correcting the problem, which leads us into the next topic of toys.

Proper and Appropriate Toys

You will find it very handy and convenient to have a toy box or basket in each room that the pup spends the majority of its time in. (i.e. Living room, family room, kitchen, bedroom, or the room where the pup sleeps.) One of these entertainment boxes may not be needed in all rooms, but certainly the most frequently used rooms do. Four or five articles in each basket is a good plan. The puppy needs a variety of textures and sizes to vent out different areas of canine instinct. For example, soft, plush type toys simulate small mammals to your puppy. Remove the toys eyes & noses for safety. If the pup was still with its mother instead of with you, she would be teaching it how to stalk, hunt and even perhaps ingest small mammals to survive. Those instincts are still active even though we humans provide them with an expensive, balanced diet. Therefore by allowing them to have access to furry, little stuffed toys it enables them to vent this natural instinct. You may see your puppy stalk or sneak up on this type of toy, then pounce on it, play with it by tossing it around the floor or through the air then pounce on it again. They can spend several minutes on this procedure at one time and literally be having a ball. They will mouth the object and may even shred it pretending to eat it. If this happens, remove the article and give him another. Certain breeds of dogs will exhibit this behavior much more than others, so experiment a bit with your individual puppy. Most puppies tend to go through several of these stuffed toys during the teething months so I suggest picking up several from garage sales, yard sales or second hand locations to keep the costs down. Rawhides are a good pacifier until the puppy starts eating them like candy sticks. When the puppy is under 6 months he probably will use them up slowly, but once the adult teeth come in, cut back on the amount you're allowing him, as this could lead to digestive problems. Rubber toys in

various shapes are available on the market as well. These come in all shapes and sizes and make super entertainers. Of course, no toy box is complete without a ball of some sort in it. Tennis balls, the orange ball hockey balls, soccer balls, footballs and big soft baseballs seem to be favorites to the medium to large size sized breeds. For the smaller breeds, squash balls and tennis balls seem to be their favorites. Certain breeds like border collies, labrador and golden retrievers, etc. seem to enjoy Frisbees as toys. This is not necessarily a favorite of all pups. Without access to the items mentioned above, your puppy will find his own toys amongst the families belongings. This could include slippers, mats, shoes, cushions, couches, chair legs, cushion flooring, woodwork, etc. We have all heard the horror stories of people coming home to find that "FIDO" ate through their living room sofa. Why?? Because he had free access to it, plus a reserve of energy that needed to be burnt off and no toys were left out for him to devour while mom and dad were at work.

How to use these toys as Teaching Tools

Try to keep in mind during your interactive playtimes with the pup, that every action, word or command carried out can become a valuable part of the pup's schooling and education. For example, simply tossing a toy for the pup actually has the potential to teach your puppy to retrieve on command, recall or return to you on command, sit on return to you and give up the article without a struggle or fight. All of these situations are basic, meaning that the pup will use these commands over and over again all through its life. The earlier you start to focus the pup on these commands, the easier you and puppy will slide through the puppy months.

Breaking Down The Segments Of The Retrieving Exercise:

1. Have a flat leather or nylon collar on your pup for this type of session. You also need a 30 to 40 foot energy burn off rope, (if playing outdoors) and attached to his collar (See energy burn off in topic #5). This is crucial to insure a safe playtime and accurate training sessions well.

2. Next, get the puppy excited over the toy or article. Toss it out a couple of feet from where you are to warm the puppy up. Command to the puppy "Take It", (while it is still moving), using a fun and energetic voice. As soon as he takes the article, turn and start running from him so that he has to run to catch you. Start off by making these catch-up distances quite short, about 10 to 20 feet. As he's closing in on you, turn and face him, calling out his name and the command "COME". Coach him with lots of "GOOD PUPPY" praise.

3. When he's almost to you, bend down to his level with open arms. Remember, if the pup gets too silly or out of control at any time, the long line is there to reinforce your commands. Should he refuse to come to you, simply reel him in like a fish line and praise heavily with voice and hands when he gets to you.

4. Once within arms reach, command "SIT" to the pup. If he's facing you, lean forward over him while he's still in the we are having fun frame of mind. If he still resists, just apply a bit of pressure on the indent spots near his hips. (Feel along the pup's backbone and just before the hip bones you will feel 2 indent areas. Place your thumb in one and your middle finger in the other, on the opposite side. These I refer to as the indent spots). Do not press straight down or firmly. Your pup's bones are growing and you don't want to put unnecessary pressure that could perhaps contribute to future problems. Rather than pressing, guide the pup's rear end back and down in a 45 degree manner towards the floor, into a sit position.

5. Once in a "SIT" position, command "GIVE" to the puppy. Now most puppies want to hang on to the article and start the tug-of-war process. If this happens just pry his mouth open, using your thumb and middle finger over the top of the muzzle. Push his own lip in-between the jaws and guaranteed, your pup will gladly spit out the article. This method eliminates the possibility of the pup putting tremendous bite

pressure on one of your fingers while teaching him the command "GIVE".

6. On the release of the article, instantly give tons of "verbal and hands on praise". Repeat the process a few more times gradually adding a bit more distance for the recall each time.

7. Depending on the breed that you have will determine the number of repetitions you need to do in a session. (i.e. a border collie can go on endlessly, where as a laid back personality may only tolerate 2 or 3 reps at one time.) The most important thing to remember is to keep this playtime fun for both you and your puppy. Stop when either of you have had enough so that neither party sours on the activities. There is nothing wrong with teaching the puppy the "ENOUGH" command. This is another verbal, growl type of command that your pup is familiar with as he has heard it from his mother at very early stage. When she had "ENOUGH" of the puppy silliness, she would growl in a disciplinary tone that basically told the puppy to back off and entertain itself for awhile. Hence the reason for the growling tone.

Now a good tug of war game is lots of fun for your puppy, However there is a right and wrong way to play the game. You can play tug of war type games with your puppy, if the article is a doggy type article. Not the towel off the kitchen stove. You see, you must win at the game and the trick to success is to force the pup to release the article to you with the "GIVE" command, then toss it away and allow him to retrieve the article himself. If you were to give in and release the article to the pup in the heat of the game, then you are teaching him that he is stronger than you, both physically and mentally. This is a terrible foundation to start the training process from. He would already disrespect you as a strong leader in his eyes. If you choose to play this game, ensure your winning then return the article to the pup for his use and amusement. Otherwise, avoid the game altogether.

ENERGY BURN OFF

Most all puppies have big bursts of energy at one time of the day or another. These energy burn off times can be a positive or negative experience. Lets analyze the positive first. If an energy burn off comes up when you are at home with your pup, it can provide you with an excellent opportunity to structure some really fun and educational use of a playtime. The results of this type of session are easy training, fun learning plus the added bonus of a tired out pup at the end of it all. A tired pup is a quieter and less destructive pet in the house. For this reason, I recommend working owners or busy families, to try at all costs to have an energy burn off session with the puppy before leaving for the day. Even 5 to 10 minutes will make a tremendous difference. Then place your puppy in the most puppy-proof room or spot available in your home. A garage is OK if it has been completely puppy proofed and the temperature is reasonable for your particular breed. Provide lots of chewy things, and an old blanket or towel. (OLD so that when you come home and find it shredded you can laugh as you sweep it into the garbage and replace it with another old one.) Remember, what you give him in that restricted area is his, so don't leave anything you are too attached too. Playing a radio also helps soothe the puppy and give him a feeling of not being left alone. Someone really should try to exercise the puppy at least every 4 hours if possible. In some situations this is impossible, but don't feel guilty. Your pup will adjust to whatever lifestyle you provide for it. Perfection is not what is important to your pup. Your mutual love and his respect for you are what really count. Now you actually have to have respect for your puppy as well but, don't forget you are the master, not the puppy. Like your children, you love them and respect their space but you still are the parent. And, to be sure, kids should love and respect their parents. At least that is the ideal situation. Ordinary walks are good for your pup but these are not energy burn off where the pup rips and tears around at full speed, being himself, a silly, clumsy, typical puppy.

NEGATIVE ENERGY BURN OFF

These are definitely not fun for you but your puppy will have a real ball. This type of energy burst happens when you have not removed the stored up reserves before leaving the puppy alone. Your puppy becomes very creative in his method of energy release. Even in a confined area like a laundry room or a kitchen, he will find all kinds of things to amuse himself. Things like chewing on baseboard or door frames, lifting up or shredding the cushion floor, clawing window frames or tearing curtains down. Do you see the picture. Not a pretty one at all. Probably for this reason, many puppies are given up, sold or placed in humane shelters for behavior that is really not their fault. Just simple lack of knowledge on the owners part can destroy many good pups. Can you imagine what giving free-roam to a whole house would do to a puppy energy burn off time. Pretty great party for the puppy but beyond comprehension for the owner. (How could our beloved FEE-FEE do this assault to the couch when we love her and trust her with the whole house to live in.) POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE. It's really up to the owners to provide the proper direction for the puppy.

HOUSE BREAKING

It is a good idea to find out if possible, exactly what the puppy's environment was before you brought him home. This will tell you what the puppy was accustomed to messing on in the early stages of life. (i.e. was it a newspaper litter box style, sawdust or shavings as in a barn or pet store, cement floor as in a kennel run, or maybe a grass bottom playpen.) This information will help to determine what will immediately work for your puppy. The most common method of house-breaking is paper training. When using this method, you will need to spread papers, a couple layers thick in a certain area of the puppies most used room in the house. Also, you will need to spread some newspapers in the area of the yard where you want the puppy to make his bathroom. (of course weather permitting) Weight these down with rocks or bricks in the beginning stages.

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Try to not allow the puppy to have access to the whole house as this is just too much territory for him to be able to handle in the early stages. This only reinforces long term housebreaking. Gradually over the first 4 months, after you have brought him into your home, can you start allowing him access to other areas unsupervised. When you catch the puppy in the act, but missing the papers, gather him up in your arms, scold him with a growling BAD PUPPY, OUTDOORS, take him outside to the designated bathroom area. Do this quickly. Move quickly so your body language give the right message to the puppy as a sense of urgency. Set him down on the ground and repeat in a command voice "Hurry up!" "Hurry up!" You could use other words rather than hurry up, words of your personal choice, but hurry up sounds better than "pee pee". Especially if your in a public place. When the puppy has done it's duty, and only then, start to praise. "Good boy/girl!", Outdoors -this is spoken in a praising tone. Even if the puppy has finished inside the house, praise him anyway. You are relaying to the pup that messing in the house is bad, messing outside is good. If your puppy doesn't do anything after 5 minutes, pick him back up and bring him back inside with you. Supervised housebreaking with proper correction and praise will be much more effective then if puppy is left outside alone after an in-house accident has occurred. With puppy out of sight, clean up the mess with paper towels to remove the access and then deodorize the area with an a neutralizer cleaner available at most veterinary clinics or pet stores. If the puppy is present during the cleanup, he will sense your hostility again and become confused. The positive reinforcement with praise outside could be lost.

Helpful Hints to make the task easier:

1. When your puppy wakes up from a nap, even a 5 minute snooze, almost every time he will have to relieve himself. Gather him up in your arms and take him outside to his spot. Repeat the word OUTDOORS to him as your on route to the spot. Place him on the newspapers or prepared area and wait.

He may move onto a grassy area near the papers. That's super, that's the goal. Encourage him with the key phrase that you want to use every time as "Hurry up". Whatever term you use, just be consistent. Do not praise with Good boy/girl until the pup is completely finished, then lay on the praise and continue on your way. Use this procedure after a playtime, meal, nap, confinement or first thing in the morning and last thing at night. Keeping a pair of slip on shoes by the door will make an emergency exit more effective for you and the pup.

2. Keep your puppy on a feeding and watering schedule. The best method for puppies 6 weeks to 4 months is to feed 3 times a day if possible. Early morning, late noon, and again in early evening (6 to 7). Allow him access to water during feeding times but restrict the amount so he does not intake too much and become stuffed or bloated. This could lead to a serious intestinal situation, requiring veterinary help. What he leaves in his food bowl, pick it up and place it out of his reach. About 1/2 bowl of water could be left with the pup for drinking between meals. His body will adjust to a feeding schedule very quickly, therefore making housebreaking very predictable. Simply realize that the puppy will have to relieve himself within 5 minutes after he eats so be prepared to make the trip outside to his spot. Be consistent with the scheduling and the task of housebreaking will be much quicker. If you need to change the puppy's food type, it is very important that you do it gradually slowly adding the new type to the old, small amounts at a time. Your pup could become ill if the change is made too quickly.

3. Crate training or room confinement of your pup while you can't be there will greatly help your goal of housebreaking. At first you may feel this is a mean gesture on your part but it actually can be the opposite for your puppy. He actually regards the crate as a den or his private territory. Two to 3 hours at a time is a long enough time span. Once accustomed to it, puppies will often retreat to their special den for a nap time even when you are at home. Do not feed or water the pup in his crate, however, do leave several small toys in there for entertainment and companionship. Most puppies will not eliminate in their sleeping quarters so they learn to hold on until they are taken outside. If a crate is not in your budget, use a small room like a laundry room, washroom or barricaded off den or kitchen. A whole house is just too much for puppy to respect in the early

4. When your puppy does get into a mess or does an undesirable behavior, no matter how cute he is in the situation, **DO NOT LAUGH AT HIM**. This will encourage him to do it again because he may interpret it as a positive attention getting action. Discipline the puppy first then afterwards when you are sure the puppy has an understanding that what ever happened wasn't a good thing, you can gently and slowly give soft pats and gentle hugs. As if to say, "I still love you but don't do it again". Don't get real excited and have too happy a face or the puppy may not get the feelings of your true emotions. Remember your puppy is reading body language as well as the tone of your voice and even perhaps the few words he is starting to catch on to. They do learn quick and what you wish to accomplish here is a level of understanding and respect on the learning puppy's part.

5. If your puppy is frantically struggling with you, perhaps he needs a break from the play or training, so a trip outside to his spot is in order.

Biting or Nipping

Almost all puppies want to bite, chew or nip at their owners hands while they re being handled. This would be a normal behavior if still with his litter mates because this is part of the process of determining the pack leader within the litter. It is now up to you as the puppy's new master to become the pack leader in his eyes. This will not happen by accident. You must begin at a very early age to establish the order of the pack within your own household. When your puppy growls at you or grabs your hands or fingers, immediately give him a scruff of the neck correction and a very stern growling command, "NO". The scruff of neck correction is taking the back of the pups neck in your hand, give a stern shake and suspend the puppy 1 or 2 inches off his front feet for a few seconds, then gently easing him back to 4 feet on to the floor. Calmly praise him as the nasty behavior subsides. This method imitates what the mother would do to her puppy to settle a bratty behavior. Her reward would be to lick the puppy's face sweetly as the behavior settled.

Do not allow anyone to play aggressively in a rough house manner. This only reinforces aggressive behavior towards people. Also, blowing in a pup s face will produce a snappy biter. Instead, teach the pup to play with toys such as balls, rawhide toys and other puppy articles. Often puppies will resort to

biting or mouthing during a play-time. This is not to be tolerated as it too becomes part of the play. The scruff of neck correction works well on most puppies, although very persistent pups may need a slightly stronger type of discipline. Using your fingertips, apply slight pressure to the top of the muzzle with a strong growl NO. This again is a mothers correction, therefore communicating clearly to the pup the error of his behavior. Some high energy pups respond very well to a high pitched OUCH sound. Its the shocking sound of the squeal type of voice that makes the pup take notice. They initially learn these sounds with their liter mates and mother and what they mean. Biting, mouthing and nipping all take time to stop completely. This is a learning process your pup needs to work through and it will take repetitions before he catches on. One of the above methods may work or you may have to apply all of them. It depends on your pup and his response. Be patient but remember, persistence removes resistance. If you were really fortunate, you picked up your puppy at an age of 10 weeks old directly from the mother's home or kennel. And, if the pups mother was a good mother like most, she would have taught the pup that pressing hard with it's teeth hurts. Usually, this kind of puppy, will mouth your hands gently in play knowing through it's litter mates that mouthing hard hurts. Now if you have a puppy that you purchased at a pet store and it's 6 weeks old, chances are that the puppy may have been 4 weeks old once it left it's mother so your job is a little more important because you have to replace some of those "mother nature" instincts normally taught to a puppy...naturally. We try to emphasis on this mother nature method everywhere we can throughout this publication. Even if your puppy arrived at your home over 10 weeks old this only means that your training job will be a little easier.

As the puppy's owner and master you will want to raise that pup to be the very best that it can be. This can only happen if the pup RESPECTS you. Respect does not mean that the dog trembles when you walk into a room. That's fear. Respect is a deep admiration for who you are and what you represent in your pup's life. When your dog respects you, he looks straight into your eyes and awaits your next command. He is willing to work or play, comfort and console when you need him. This type of respect comes from the early stages of handling him in the areas of love and discipline. They must go hand in hand through the early stages of puppy ownership. It is important to note that too much discipline and strictness without love will create a fearful dog and perhaps even a fear biter. On the other hand, too much unearned adoration and praise from you will cause your pup to grow up thinking only of himself as king of the house, very selfish and self-centered. This can happen all too easy if the balance is not maintained. Discipline is not smacking your pup for something he has done. It means correcting him in a method as close to nature as possible so that he understands clearly the errors he's making. Then bounce back with love and forgiveness once the pup shows signs of submission and sorrow due to not pleasing you. Forget the transgression and carry on.

ACCURATE CORRECTIONS

Various corrections have already been described in the other topics you have already read. Also, all the obedience corrective methods are explained in the obedience section of this publication. However the most important thing to remember about any correction is that you are direct, assertive, clear and quick to respond. Even seconds in hesitation to correct will give your pup time to become creative. This is why timing is so important. Your pup will actually start to believe that you know when he's going to do something wrong. When this starts to happen, your pup will begin to think out his actions before doing them, appearing to us as understanding right from wrong.

EARLY OBEDIENCE TRAINING

The methods and exercises you're learning in this puppy manual are designed to teach your puppy to respond to your commands, love, discipline and praise because he respects you, not because he's afraid of you or because he thinks he will get goodies if he pleases you. Do not use food as a reward for an obedience command, rather use it as a friendship tool especially in an abused puppy. Obedience training builds a bond between you and your puppy if mutual respect on both parties is established at an early age. With young puppies, attention span is very short, therefore, repetition of an exercise is more important than the length of time he holds the position. Once you start obedience training, your puppy may try temper tantrums to control you and the situation. These come in several forms ranging from the puppy crying out at the top of his lungs in protest to your command, to biting the leash, to laying flat on the floor, refusing to move. These are all temper tantrums and have to be dealt with as they happen. When they attack their own leash, give a quick pop on the lead and collar with a stern growly "NO". If the pup lays out flat, give a "Let's Go" command and use the body language of thumping your thigh or clapping your hands to get the pup up and moving. Your puppy is very capable of learning several obedience commands at a very early age. The earlier you start to structure their minds the better it is. Don't think that waiting until the pup gets older and not as hyper is going to make the job easier. Waiting allows the pup to decide for itself right from wrong, which usually means that a pup is totally out of control by the time it reaches 6 months old. The exercises your pup will learn are all meaningful. There is a logical purpose for every command. A brief explanation is presented on the next page.....

SIT: An exercise of control. The pup is in a sitting position, calm and under control. If his rear is on the floor, he cannot be jumping around, thrashing about, ramming himself into you or your friends. The pup is under control.

STAND: The pup is in an upright position, on all 4's. This exercise enables grooming, vet visits, bathing or nail cutting much, much easier because the pup learns to stand still for an examination.

RECALL: Your pup will learn to COME back to you no matter what is going on around it. The importance of this exercise goes without saying, IT IS LIFESAVING and extremely important.

HEEL: This is a movement exercise where the pup learns to walk quietly beside you without struggling, jumping or pulling on the leash. You will take your pup for a walk rather than the other way around.

DOWN: Another exercise of control. The pup is positioned in a lying down position. This is a calming exercise you will use repeatedly whenever you want the pup to settle down and have quiet time.

LET'S GO: This is the energy burn off exercise that will help save your house from destruction. As an added bonus, you are teaching the puppy to move from one area to another with you, within a certain perimeter of yourself. Taught properly, this is a handy command for later on when your pup is trained and ready to be off of the leash. Hiking trails, parks, beaches or just in-yard use would be the most likely places to use this. Perhaps dog sports are in your pup's future. This foundation command works well for keeping your dog with you in agility.

HOUSSEN'S PUPPY PRE-SCHOOL TRAINING

Opening Remarks:

1. The exercise and topics covered in this manual are designed for puppies 8 weeks to 4 months old.
2. A minimum of 20 minutes per day is required to practice the exercises. It is better for your puppy that you mix the obedience commands with every day activities throughout the day, but do the best you can and get as many family members involved as possible. The puppy will learn to accept and obey commands from everyone by doing this.
3. Training equipment required: leather or nylon flat collar, 6 foot leather or nylon leash, 30 to 40 feet of light nylon rope (metal snap on one end and a handle hoop on the other) a metal choke chain collar may be required for very dominant or aggressive pups.
4. Your patience and the pup's respect for you are the keys to a happy CO-existence between handler and canine. As a young child will try your patience, so will a puppy. Keep your cool at all times, but if the situation gets out of control, stop settle the dog, take a few minutes break and return to the exercise.

Always try to end the training session on a positive note. Now if you get frustrated and your pup just doesn't appear to be getting the command correctly, go back and you want and probably should quit for a while, do the following. Go back to an exercise that you know your puppy will do correctly. Do the exercise once. Then quit. In this way your puppy has pleased you and you are quitting on a positive note and the self esteem of your puppy is hopefully secured. On the other hand if the puppy knows very well what you are requesting and just has an attitude about listening to you then you should try to get your cool and continue until you win or your puppy may consider itself the winner. Every situation can be different so think about what is really going on in a situation before you choose the remedy.

5. Dress casual and comfortable whenever you train your puppy. Wear clothing you don't mind getting on the floor with.
6. Keep a mental leash on the puppy at all times. In other words, concentrate on your puppy and his actions. This will enable you to anticipate his moves and actions before he actually does them.

7. Body language is strongly used by dogs to communicate with each other, therefore our body language and posture are as important as our voice commands. Your pup will quickly learn to read your movements, signals and voice tones. One common mistake made is people sometimes laugh at their puppies disobedience because they are so cute. Don't laugh or even have a big smile on your face when your puppy isn't obeying as even that smile can be read by your puppy as a positive gesture.

8. The training is scheduled into 4 sessions. The suggested time frame for each session is 1 to 2 weeks. This may vary greatly by the breed of dog you have or the availability of time, so adjust the schedule to suit your pup and your lifestyle.

SESSION ONE

Step One: The Leash "Warm-up":

Attach the leash to the puppy's collar and you remain in place. If the pup is rambling and out of control, then you need to apply this little Settle Down exercise. Gather the leash up in your right hand and use your left hand for the corrective pop. Release the grip on the leash and let the pup wonder away as far as the leash will permit (6 feet), just until it is snug. When you feel the slightest tension on the lead, give a gentle pop on the collar using the leash. There really isn't any reason to say anything to the puppy at this stage as your puppy is learning all by itself that when it goes to the end of the leash and pulls, you give a gentle pop on the leash back towards you. The puppy may stop and look at you. When he does, immediately praise in a calm voice "GOOD BOY/GIRL". Repeat this procedure until the puppy has created an invisible circle around you, not struggling to push out past the 6 foot perimeter. Once you are sure the puppy is starting to understand, you can gather up three feet of the six foot lead and repeat the same thing with a three foot lead. This helps prepare your puppy for heel work where the puppy is on your left side on a loose lead. When he reaches this calmness, he is ready to carry on to the next step.

Step Two: The Let's Go Exercise:

With the puppy still on his leash and collar, you are ready to start out for a walk. Start walking forward, commanding "Let's" Go as you start out and allow the pup to have the full length of his leash to explore on. Of course, if you are not in an area to do this at full length, i.e. a sidewalk, simply shorten the lead by folding it over in your right hand.

Make this as pleasant an experience as possible. Some puppies will just sit there and refuse to move. This usually means they are confused and just need an excited voice to get them motivated. Squatting down at the end of the leash, while applying steady pressure on the collar towards you will help. Once he starts to move, get up and walk away from the spot. This will motivate him to keep moving.

This "LET'S GO" exercise can also be carried out on a long 20 to 30 foot light nylon rope. The long line was mentioned previously in the energy burnoff section. This long distance tool enables your puppy to have a safe and natural energy burn off time. He can be free to a certain extent, to explore and play in normal puppy ways without the danger of getting out of your reach, causing harm or injury. This will make him a better puppy in the house as well.

Step Three: "Let's Go" and "Recall" (coming when called):

During the "LET'S GO" exercise, whether on your 6 foot leash or the long line, you have the perfect set up to start the puppy on the recall exercise (come back when called). Try to pick a moment when the puppy is not watching you to practice this one. Call out his name first in a happy tone then in a command tone, "COME". Give the pup a second or two to respond by looking at you. "If there is no response, pop quickly on the leash or long line to get his attention." Repeat the command and start backing away from his direction. This body language movement is usually enough motivation for him to recall back to you, however, if there is still resistance, reel the pup into your reach.

This reinforces to the pup that he cannot win at this recall game. Start praising the moment the pup begins to move to you without resistance. After a few moments of praise and hugs, release the pup with an enthusiastic "OK" and start off again with "LET'S GO". By working the long distance recall, your pup learns to come to you no matter what he is distracted by.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE: While your puppy is in the early stages of training, use a long line or the 6 foot leash every time the pup is outdoors. It only takes one chase game to end the pup's life. Prevention is always better than correction.

Step Four: "SIT" on Command:

Place your puppy on your left hand side. Place your left hand on the puppy's shoulders and your right hand on his chest. Quietly praise the pup if he accepts your hands without struggle or mouthing. Give the command "SIT" in an assertive, matter-of-fact tone. As you command the pup, slide your left hand down over his back, tucking the hind legs under him, easing him into a "SIT".

To STEADY your pup simply means to hold the pup in the position that you have placed him into, using confident hands so he feels secure. Steady the pup for only 10 to 15 seconds at a time, during the first session of training and praise only with your voice while the pup is in the exercise. Release him with an enthusiastic "OK" and then apply hands on praising and petting. This can be repeated up to 4 or 5 times in a row but remember his attention span is very short at this age.

FREEZE STAY: Most puppies really want to please their masters, once they start to understand and respect the handler. We use a special technique to help settle the unruly puppy or one who may be a bit frightened or even high energy. If the pup starts to back off or leave the scene when you reach out to pick it up, give an assertive verbal command, "STAY". Not a yelling voice, but an assertive no nonsense tone. Use the "STAY" hand signal at the same time as you

give the verbal command. This signal is your arm extended towards the puppy, wrist bent upwards slightly with your fingers angled towards the ceiling. This signal visually resembles a STOP sign to the pup. Similar to the hand signal used by a policeman directing traffic and asking you to stop. Hold the signal as you quietly approach the puppy. This is a **STEADYING** technique which helps the pup freeze in the position until you can reach him. Use a gentle, calm praise voice as you move closer to him. Once he's in your arms or on a leash return your voice to normal tones. With a young puppy, several repetitions a day would be a great bonus in training for control over a very high energy or potentially bratty type of personality. By using this technique, you can turn this tool into an obedience exercise. Start this practice as early as 8-10 weeks of age. Hopefully, your puppy stayed with it's mother until that time since there are so many natural mother's training skills that helps prepare the pup for the real world. Certain high energy breeds such as Dalmatians, Border Collies, Beagles or most Terriers should be set up in the situation with a leash and collar on so that you can use them as STEADYING tools as well. This little exercise could very well save your dog's life someday. It may seem insignificant now but as your pup matures and you extend the distance between the pup and yourself, the voice control will come.

Step Five: Recall from a Sit Position:

A second application for the recall exercise is interacted with the sit exercise. Place the puppy in a sit position on your left leg as learned in Step 4. Keep your right hand on his chest and command "WAIT".. Swing yourself around to the front of the puppy so that you are facing him straight on. If the pup tries to get up simply steady him with 2 hands until he settles. Once calm, say the puppy's name and the command "COME" in an assertive tone. Remove your right hand off his chest and lean back. Encourage him to come to you with "Good Boy/Girl". Smile and allow the pup to come directly to you. If he is distracted or sluggish, repeat "COME" and use the leash to guide the pup to you, keep praising. Release with the magic word "OK" and set him up in another sit position for repetition. Four or five of these are enough for one session.

Step One: "LET'S GO", advance to "Heel":

The commands for this exercise are the same as in Session One, but with 2 significant changes in the positioning of the puppy.

First: Keep the puppy on your left hand side so that he no longer can cross over in front or behind you. This can be managed by placing the leash in 2 hands and extending your arms straight down to your sides. Should the pup try to cross over, in your corrective tone say "Heel", and praise once you have his attention. This is the starting point for heelwork.

Secondly: Only give him 1/2 the length of the 6 foot leash. This will help control where he is going.

Step Two: Long Distance "LET'S GO":

Continue to use your long line (as in session one) for energy burn off and long distance Recalls. This needs to be a part of everyday routine if possible. The difference will be obvious in your puppy.

Step Three: "Sit-Stay":

Place the puppy in the "SIT" position as in session 1 and give this hand signal: Place your right hand about 6 to 8 inches in front of the puppy's face then spread your fingers a bit. Don't hold the signal too long, just a couple seconds is enough time to get the pup to focus his attention and concentrate on listening. As you are giving the signal, command "STAY" at the same time. Steady the pup by resting your left hand on his shoulders if he's edgy or insecure and slowly rise into an upright standing position. If the puppy breaks, quickly replace him in the "SIT" position. Practice this for about 5 repetitions in a row for 10 to 15 seconds each time. When you give the hand signal compare it to shaking hands with someone. If the person's hand that is in your hand is weak and limp does that not make you feel like you are in control.

If the hand is firm and has an "I am in charge" kind of shake, isn't the message sent to you saying this hand is more powerful then the weak handshake? So, when you put your hand in front of the puppy, don't be weak, have a firm movement with your voice command. In a firm voice say "SIT" then "STAY" then slowly rise to an upright position with a confidence that your puppy will feel from you.

Step Four: "Recall" from the "Sit":

Place the puppy in a "SIT" position on your left leg and give the command "WAIT". This time when you leave to swing to the front, leave on your right foot first and take a big step so that there is a distance of about 3 feet between the pup and you. Recall him to you using the pup's name first and "COME". As you are giving the commands, bend down to puppy's level so that he has a target to come to. Now here is another "Mother Nature" trick. Open your arms out wide and touch the floor as your calling your puppy. Call your puppy by it's name in a happy higher pitched tone. At least higher than your normal voice. Why do this? When a puppy initiates play or wants to send a message to other puppies or dogs that is friendly and is accepting that other dog, what does it do? More often than not, it will bend the front part of it's body towards the ground and spread out it's front legs and perhaps bark in a higher pitched voice than normal to the dog or person it wants to play with. Now, when you use body language that the puppy instinctively understands, and use words from your language, your puppy will read this as a friendly inviting command. Once the pup is sure that the word "COME" used with these body motions is friendly, your puppy will start to move quickly towards you. Try it! When done properly it will work within 5 minutes....or less! You can speed up this process to even less than a minute if you start to go backwards as you call your puppy. If there is any hesitation start to reel your puppy in on the leash the first couple of times.

IMPORTANT: Keep the leash on for accuracy, safety and encouragement. If he does not have the leash on and makes an error, how can you correct the situation.

Step Five: The "Down" Exercise:

Place the puppy in a "SIT" on your left leg. Rest your Left hand on his shoulder blades and slide your right hand behind both front legs. Say the pup's name and command "DOWN". At the same moment, sweep both front legs gently out from under the puppy.

under the puppy. The pup should slide automatically into a laying position. To "Steady" him, just apply a bit of pressure to the front and hind ends of the pup. If he struggles, "tremble your hands" a bit while touching the pup and command "STAY". Hold the position "Down" for about 10 seconds to start then release with "OK" and let him up with lots of praise.

Step Six: The "Stand For Examination":

Place the puppy in a "SIT" position on your left leg. Keep your body straight beside the pup but in a kneeling position, at his level. Place the first 2 fingers of your right hand inside the collar, on the side closest to you. In an assertive tone, command "STAND", lean forward a bit and touch the belly of your pup with the back of your left hand. This is non threatening and is a "Steady" technique for the pup. Hold the position for 10 seconds or so and then release with "OK" and lots of praise.

This is the time and exercise to introduce grooming to your puppy. If the pup goes for the brush, comb, nail clippers or your hands, give his collar a shake with your right hand along with a strong growly "NO". For the first few weeks, keep the leash on for grooming so that you are prepared in case of mischief.

SESSION THREE

Step one: "Let's Go" -Using the Long Line:

Continue using this exercise at the beginning of every training session so that the pup has a chance to burn some energies off. It is also a good idea to end a session with "LET'S GO" as well so that the training session ends on a fun note.

Step Two: "Heel" On Leash:

In this session, shorten the leash so that the puppy is directly on your left leg. Place your arms in a relaxed position at your sides and hold the leash in two hands. Start off by saying the pup's name and commanding "HEEL", stepping out with your left foot first. Your pup will learn to watch your body language, even leg movements, if you are consistent from the beginning. If the puppy is trying to pull ahead, pop the lead sideways and command "HEEL". If necessary, stop moving forward and get control of the pup by resitting him and try again. The degree of correction depends on the puppy's pull as well as it's

temperament. If you have a shy soft puppy be careful you don't over correct. On the other hand if you have an huge strong German Shepherd that is too powerful for you, a choke chain may be required. When used properly your dog will learn to respond to the sound of the links as they touch each other when you are about to make a correction not after you make the correction. Apply what is needed to regain control and settle the puppy.

Remember to place the pup in a "SIT" position every time you come to a halt and stop walking. Praise the pup and repeat the exercise.

Step Three: "Sit -Stay", adding distance:

Your puppy should be responding to the "SIT" command on his own by Session 3. If not, coach and place him when needed. They still get easily distracted. Don't get frustrated and above all remember this is a puppy.

When the puppy is in a "SIT" at your left leg, command him to "STAY" and use the hand signal. When he is calm, step out on your right foot taking 1 big step, turn and face the pup. If he gets up, reach over him quickly and replace him in the "SIT". Steady him with "Stay" and back away from him again. In the beginning, 10 to 20 seconds is long enough to hold the Stay. Make sure you swing back beside your pup before you give the release word "OK".

Step Four: "Recall", adding distance:

"SIT" the puppy on your leg. Command "WAIT". With confidence, step out, right foot first and walk to the end of the leash. Turn to face him and wait a few moments then crouch down, calling his name and "COME" at the same time. Taking a few steps backwards will motivate him to come to you quicker. As he reaches you, command "SIT" and apply steady tension upwards to the leash and collar. This forces his rear to the ground and his body into an easy "SIT" in front of yourself. This needs to be trained from an early age so that the pup is under control when he greets you (especially in wet or dirty weather).

Step Five: "Down - Stay":

Place your puppy in the "DOWN" position as learned in session 2. Give the "STAY" signal along with the verbal command Stay. Steady the pup at first until he is calm and comfortable. Slowly rise to an upright position beside the puppy. If the puppy moves from the "DOWN" position, quickly replace him again with a gentle sweeping motion. When he calms again, return to the upright position. Hold the positions for 10 to 20 seconds to start then release with "OK" and praise heavily.

Step Six: "Stand for Examination":

Place the puppy in a "STAND" position as you learned in session 2. Once he is Steady, start to do an examination on your pup. Gently open his mouth, look into his ears, lift the eyelids, run your hand over the pup's spine, then down the tail. Feel each leg down to the foot, touch the belly, rib area and chest and the back to the head area again. Every once in a while go over the pup with a cloth or towel so that he gets used to material touching his skin and of course, grooming is a natural part of the Stand for Examination too. If your pup is still insecure with the grooming part, have another person do the "Steadying" while you groom. This is temporary coaching.

SESSION FOUR

Step One: "Let's Go" and Long Distance Recalls:

Continue using the long line for "LET'S GO" and energy burn off but try to change the locations whenever you can so that the pup gets used to being around different distractions. (mall parking lots, farm fields, parks, etc.) The more your puppy is exposed to the more balanced he will become.

Step Two: "Heeling on Leash":

What you have done up to now with "Heel Work" is basic forward movement, at a normal walking pace. In this session, you are starting with the speed changes. Add the FAST speed, which is anything from brisk walking to running or jogging. To do this, just increase your own pace and encourage the pup to keep up with you. Sometimes, puppies react as if it suddenly became party time because of the quicker movement and want to bounce and pounce around you with excitement. If this happens, pop the leash downwards, away from yourself. This tones the pup down enough to regain control. The other speed is Slow, where you bring the pace to a crawl.

This teaches the pup to adjust himself to your pace. Sometimes, a pup will become distracted on the slow speed, because of boredom. To help the puppy along just start chatting to him as he is getting used to this new idea. Use praise tones and convince him how great he is.

You need to mix all speeds in your daily heeling practice for a while until the puppy can read your body language clearly and react on his own without instruction from you.

Step Three: "Sit - Stay", adding the distance:

"SIT" the puppy on your left leg. Command "Stay" and give the "Stay hand signal". Step out, right foot first and go to the end of the leash, turn and face the puppy. If he breaks, lift upwards on the leash, commanding "SIT" as you do. This upward tension gently forces the pup's rear to the floor. Once back in the "SIT" position, command "STAY" and relax the leash. Hold the exercise for about 20 to 30 seconds, then return to the puppy, release with "OK" and lots of praise.

Step Four: "Down Stay", adding movement:

Place your puppy in the "DOWN" position, command "STAY" and use the hand signal. Slowly rise to a standing position and step out to the front of the pup, leaving on you right foot. If the pup should break the position at any time, lean forward over him and "Steady" his front and rear ends back to the floor. If the pup happens to get tough, pop your leash and collar as a backup correction. Remain in the front position for 20 to 30 seconds, then swing back to the original position and release with "OK" and praise. Gradually, work you way out to the end of the leash, little bits at a time.

IMPORTANT: Never allow the pup to release himself from the exercise before you have said "OK". This gives him permission to be second guessing you when he feels like it.

Step Five: “Stand-Stay”: Other People Examining:

Stand your pup as in session 3. Give the verbal and hand signal command “Stay”. As the puppy settles into the routine, gradually stand up beside him. At this point, if possible, have someone else do all the distractions on your pup that you have learned in session 3. This helps the puppy prepare for future vet visits, groomers, bath time, etc. Release with “OK” after the exam is finished.

Step Six: “ Recall”:

Place your pup in the “SIT”, give a “Wait” command and step out, right foot first and go to the end of the leash. Keep the puppy in the “SIT” - “Wait” position for at least 30 seconds. Call out his name and the command “Come”. As he comes in close, place him a “SIT” in front of your legs. Here's the new part: command “SWING” and Take a step backwards with your left foot. Your pup will follow the leg movement and walk past your left foot. As the pup does, take another step ahead with the same foot. This motion will cause your pup to turn around and face the same direction as you are. When you get him to this point, command “SIT”. You have just taught your puppy to complete a very neat maneuver called “Finish”. You will use this move on those rainy days when your pup is wet and you don't want him leaning or jumping on you.

This concludes our 4 session Puppy Pre-School training manual. We hope that you have a better understanding of your puppy now. At this time, after 4 sessions, your puppy should be understanding the various commands, tones, and body language cues that you have taught it. Keep coaching with these techniques until your pup reacts to every verbal command, first time, every time. Some puppy owners are satisfied with their puppy's knowledge after the puppy training, however, if you wish to carry on with further advancement, our 5 session dog training video series is also available.

Puppy Training the Natural Way

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**All the best to you and your puppy and
I really hope this manual helps you
train you...to train your puppy**

Houssen's Puppy Manual

Jim & Darr Houssen