

MONTH 5

Monthly Focus

Prepare for your puppy to transition from childhood to adolescence. Reinforce your bond and practice general obedience.

TIPS & TRICKS

Group puppy training classes can be a great source for training in a distracting environment. All the dogs in the class will be up to date on vaccinations and safe for your puppy; the trainer will be able to provide guidance and direction for you both.

Keep those chew toys out for your pup! As their adult teeth are coming in, having appreciate chew toys around will feel good for your puppy and spare you some sanity. Molars can be particularly hard for teething puppies, consider freezing a Kong, filling ice cubes with dog treats or even wetting and freezing a plush stuffed animal.

TRAINING

Teeth – Clean your puppies teeth using either a finger brush or puppy toothbrush. Even if you plan to use treats like Greenies, be sure to acclimate your dog to people working with his or her mouth. This will be very important if they eat something dangerous, visit at the vet or get their teeth caught on something like another dog's collar.

Outdoor obedience – Take your indoor training outdoors! Practicing sit, down, and come will all be more challenging outside so be sure to have high-value rewards and keep your sessions brief. Leave time for puppy to roam and sniff around.

Heel/ Follow on walks – Practice calling your dog to a heel during walks. Allow them to wander a bit further and call them back to a heel. As you resume walking, keep them to the side of you or even just behind. You can lure this position by holding a treat in your hand and allowing your puppy to lick it as you walk. This position of walking at your heels reinforces that you are the leader and discourages pulling on the end of the leash. For toy motivated dogs, hold a tug toy at your side and walk. Your puppy can walk along with you, carrying the other end of the tug toy in their mouth.

SOCIALIZATION & EXPOSURES

Environments – Consider showing your puppy new places and spaces outside the home. Take them to the beach, a park, a pond, trails in the woods, everywhere! Do not do this all at once, spread it out over the course of the next few months. A good goal is 2 new places a week. Let your dog smell these places and do not rush them. The goal is for them to explore and broaden their horizon, so enjoy a nice stroll by the ocean as your puppy sniffs and romps around.

If your puppy is not yet vaccinated, bring them in the car and roll down the window so they can smell the smells, hear the sounds and see the sights without getting their paws dirty (literally). You can let them explore areas where not very many other dogs have been, just be sure to watch them closely and do not let your puppy eat animal feces on the ground.

Bring your puppy swimming at a lake, pond or pool. Somewhere with an easy entry and exit are ideal so the puppy can walk in and walk out of its own, rather than needing someone to lift him or her out of the water. If you don't have any bodies of water nearby, a backyard kiddie pool can bring your puppy tons of fun, while exposing them to a new experience and helping them cool off in the hotter months.

HEALTH

Dogs typically reach their 50% growth mark around 4 months of age. You can expect your puppy to double in size before it reaches its full adult size. Smaller breeds typically stop growing around between 6 – 12 months, medium breeds reach their adult size around 12 – 18 months of age and large or giant breeds finish growing around the 2 – 3-year mark.

It is common to spay or neuter a puppy during the 6 – 9 month old time frame, larger breeds delayed closer to the 1- or 2-year mark. Some owners choose to wait even longer, as it could possibly contribute to prolonged bone and muscle development. Delayed sterilization may also contribute to the formation of undesirable behaviors due to increased adolescent hormones. Have a discussion with your vet about when is right for your newest family member and plan ahead in the coming months. Ask your vet about any vaccinations that are due as well, possibly their DHPP, parvovirus and bordetella vaccines (optional).

