

WEEK 9

Weekly Focus

Bond with your puppy this week, build a relationship and show them they can expect reliable, consistent feedback from you.

TIPS & TRICKS

Set your puppy up for success and make it so they can't fail. Preventing them from making bad choices is the first line of defense. Supervise your puppy closely and redirecting them away from trouble and danger.

Bones and antlers are a popular favorite chew toy. Puppies' teeth need softer treats, but when they're a bit older you can introduce them to antlers. For now, try pink puppy Kongs or soft fabric toys. Rope toys can be a great chew toy too!

Take pictures of your pup! You'll be glad you have these when they're older!

TRAINING

Name – Ask others in your household to call and treat your puppy. Men, women and children are welcome! Their name should be the first thing your puppy learns.

Lure positions – Mime a command (still not using words) and give your puppy the opportunity to do the action you're asking for, either sit, down or come.

Leash – Practice indoors, walking down a hallway with a treat by your side or knee. Allow the puppy to follow and nibble at the treat. Give them the treat, take a break and repeat!

Chewing – Introduce appropriate chew toys to help your puppy channel their energy into a non-destructive toy. Soft fabric toys or soft rubber chews are well suited for puppies. Never leave them unsupervised with a toy or treat they could choke on!

Classes – Puppy training is a great resource to help you and your pup. Teachers not only teach your dog, but they will also educate you on how to communicate with your dog. Dog trainers can be well versed in behavioral signs to look out for and reading canine body language. There are several training styles, do your research and pick one that suits you.

SOCIALIZATION & EXPOSURES

People – Try to expose your puppy to men, women and children. These people can give your puppy treats to build positive associations. You can also treat your puppy for looking at different people and not reacting (barking, growling). Try "screensaver" training – watch people or dogs from a distance, letting your puppy soak in the environment before they are fully vaccinated.

Grooming – Simulate grooming behaviors by touching your puppy's paws, ears and lips. This will come in handy when they're older and you need to look inside their mouth or check their paw for cuts. For example, begin by putting the nail clippers on a surface where the dog can see them, and feed a small handful of treats. That's day one, done! The next day, hold the clippers in one hand while treating from the other. Day two, done! On day three, have someone else dispense the treats while you hold the clippers in one hand and gently lift one paw with the other. When it comes to socializing for grooming experiences, the slower you go, the faster you'll get there!

Fear Period #1 – Puppies go through two fear periods, where they will appear to regress and become less social. The first fear period usually occurs at ages 8 – 11 weeks. To help your puppy through this time, be sure to not overwhelm them or force them to do something they're unsure about. Schedule puppy classes, they can be a great way to build your puppy's confidence in a safe, dynamic environment as well. Avoid introducing your dog to unvaccinated dogs until your pup is fully vaccinated.

HEALTH

Take your puppy out to go to the bathroom every 2 – 3 hours at this age. Their bladder is growing but for now, they need frequent potty breaks to encourage good bathroom behaviors. The more often, the better! Take them out to potty when they wake up from a nap, after eating, after playing and before crate time.

Puppies tend to eat frequently since their bellies are small. If you are using their meals for training, then hand feed them continually throughout the day. If you are feeding them from a food bowl, puppies typically eat 3 – 4 meals per day. Ask your vet for feeding guidelines for your specific puppy.

Puppies have growth spurts just like people. Toy breeds have their biggest growth spurt between birth and 11 weeks of age, small and medium sized breed between birth and 16 weeks and large or giant breeds between birth and 5 months of age. Monitor your dog's body shape and adjust their food accordingly.

