

YEAR 2

Yearly Focus

Enjoy life with your dog and remember, learning is a lifelong activity for dogs and people both.

TIPS & TRICKS

For puppies, turning 2 years old is like a teenager turning 18 years old! It's an exciting time as they leave behind puppyhood and are formally young adults. Celebrate this milestone and reward yourselves for all the hard work you've both put in in the past 24 months.

Take pictures of your dog and compare them with your puppy pictures. This will highlight just how far they've come and remind you of their puppy days!

TRAINING

Maintaining – At 2 years old, your dog is emotionally mature and will no longer demonstrate the same behaviors he or she did as a puppy. They will be far less likely to chew up your shoes or have accidents in the house. Your dog will be less rambunctious and more attentive to training. Have fun with your dog, this is a wonderful age!

Games – Just because your dog is more mature it does not mean they don't want to have fun like a puppy. Introduce some fun games, here's a few examples.

Find the Treats: Toss some treats in the grass and let your dog hunt them down!

The Cups Game: Place 3 cups upside-down. Put some treats under one cup and mix the cups up. Let your puppy guess which cup holds the treats. If they get it right, reward them by giving them the treats under the cup!

Clean Up: Teach your dog to put away their toys. This is helpful for you and good mental stimulation for your dog. Spread out toys and teach them how to put them in a basket on command.

SOCIALIZATION & EXPOSURES

Seek professional guidance – If you have any concerns about behavior at this stage, do not hesitate to enroll in more classes, sign up for a board and train or setup a standing appointment with a dog behavioralist in your home. Your dog is nearly fully grown and approaching their full strength. If you have any suspicions your dog is nervous, protective or scared of anything seek assistance! The longer you wait to address growling around children or feeling nervous around bicycles, the harder it will be for your dog to re-learn a new behavior. Help them out by giving them the support, guidance and education they need to be their happiest, healthiest self, both inside and out!

Show your dog the world – Once fully trained, bring your dog everywhere you can! Show them the mountains, a wide-open field, low tide at the beach and everything in between. Bring them along with you and be sure to respect stores policies. If your dog is not a service dog, do not bring them in a food store, but you can certainly take them on your next trip to Home Depot! Sharing your life with your dog will be exciting for your pup and enriching for you. Dogs can show us a new way of looking at situations or places and keeping them home limits their exposure and your enjoyment with them.

HEALTH

Large size dogs typically reach their final height around 18 months old. As your puppy reaches their approximate adult height, you can begin to switch them from a puppy diet to adult dog food.

Once two years old, the growth plates in their body have found their fixed position and will not longer grow. This means the calcium and minerals surrounding his bones have hardened, making him better able to tolerate strenuous exercise without injury to his legs. This is the age when you can start increasing their exercise to include them on long hikes, increase their agility training or run further with them.

Your dog may be due for their annual rabies vaccine, consult with your vet about your puppy's schedule.

