

## **EXERCISE**

Please remember that your puppy when you first bring it home is very young and still needs time to grow. What many do not realise is the amount of time a young puppy needs to spend sleeping. It is fine for your puppy to sleep on your lap, or on your feet, etc. if it should end up there of its own accord, but family members and in particular children should not disturb the puppy to play with or cuddle it while it is asleep. Exercise for a young puppy should be confined to short periods where the puppy can dictate the pace and level. Access to a garden (season permitting) where the puppy can play is ideal. Try to limit playing on floors that are very hard or where the puppy cannot get a firm grip, particularly if bigger dogs are involved, as they can slide the pup around and knock it over.

As soon as your puppy has finished its vaccination course, you can begin taking it for short pavement walks on a lead. The purpose of these walks at this age is not to exercise the dog, but to train it to walk properly and to socialise it to other pedestrians and dogs. If you go on long hikes with older dogs, it is possible to take the puppy, but it should not be expected that the puppy will walk the whole way. The puppy can be carried in a bag or sling (the puppy must be able to curl up comfortably inside the bag so it can sleep in a natural position, and the carrier must be adequately ventilated) when it gets tired.

Refer to your puppy's socialisation plan for more detailed information on how best to socialise your puppy.

Do not begin any of the following activities until your dog is at least a year old: running/jogging, agility, or extended retrieving other than throwing toys in the house and garden. Swimming for young dogs is encouraged if you can find a safe place and the puppy will try it.

## **TRAINING**

When your puppy is old enough and it has finished a vaccination course decided on between you and your vet, it is strongly recommended that you take your puppy to a training class.

We teach the puppies basic things before they leave, such as response to name. Unless you have specified that you would like to show your puppy, it will have been taught the 'sit' and 'wait' commands (a show prospect puppy will have been taught to stack in place of sit). A foundation for house-training is established by reinforcing the pups' natural instincts not to foul their sleeping area by encouraging them to use a newspaper-filled tray for their business, which is gradually moved farther away from their nest. Please note that we do encourage pups to go outside when the weather is suitable, but it is not possible to house-train pups fully before they leave as this needs to be done on a one-to-one basis (it is impossible to monitor 6-10 pups who need to relieve themselves every 1-2 hours, and not safe for pups to have the sort of access to the garden necessary at certain times of year).

The best training reward to use for a small puppy is cheese cut into little pieces (you want to use small pieces ideally, because you will want to give your puppy lots of treats without unbalancing its diet). Keep the cheese treats in a greaseproof paper bag as you can put this in your pocket and carry it easily (they will get sweaty and unpleasant to touch in a plastic bag, although the puppy will not mind!), and can dry out or make your pocket oily in an ordinary paper bag) and reward your puppy regularly for correct response to instructions, and on every occasion the puppy does its business in the correct place. Refer to your puppy's socialisation plan for more information about the sorts of rewards that might motivate your puppy.

If the puppy bites or mouths at your hand while playing, take your hand away and stop playing. Puppies learn quickly from this that biting is not acceptable. It is not necessary to punish a young puppy with anything beyond a calm 'No' and the correct alternative (access to an appropriate place to eliminate, an appropriate item to chew, etc.) should be offered as soon as possible after the 'no' and the puppy should be praised for using it.

The easiest and safest method of controlling the puppy's behaviour and environment while you are training it is to use a crate (dog cage). There is no evidence that using a crate is harmful, and indeed there is ample evidence that wild dog-like creatures' puppies stay hidden in nests while they are not eating or interacting with other members of their family. The idea is to let the puppy out at set intervals to go to the toilet, and then reward it by playing and interacting with it, and afterwards encourage the puppy to sleep, rest, or play quietly in the crate by itself. Whenever your puppy cannot be supervised, it should be shut in the crate, in the interests of its own safety as well as your sanity. This will aid with house training a great deal and stop a lot of problems before they develop, as the puppy cannot develop a taste for chewing your possessions if it cannot access them while you are not about to stop it.

The general rule of thumb with using a crate is that your puppy can go its age in months plus one hour between needing to go to the toilet. So your 8-week-old puppy when you bring it home can contain itself for around 3 hours maximum, and you should not leave it in the crate for longer than this. If it is necessary that you have to leave the puppy for longer, it is important that you make it possible for it to eliminate outside the crate, as if you do not it will be forced by desperation to foul its bed, and if this happens repeatedly the puppy can unlearn its instinct to be clean and this can be very hard to repair later. In this case, put the crate with the door open in a contained area with a cleanable floor, such as a downstairs loo, and provide newspaper for the puppy to use on the floor outside the crate. This is not an ideal solution as the dog learns by it that it is OK to dirty the house, and so is not recommended for the puppy to be regularly left unattended for longer than it can hold. When the puppy is around 7 months old, it has a similar bladder and bowel capacity to an adult of roughly eight hours, and this is the maximum length it should be left alone for any time over its adult life.

When the puppy reaches 6 months old, it is usually mature enough to start to be trusted unsupervised out of its crate. Initially this should be for short periods and within limited areas of the house.