



Puppy Homework • Week 5

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New Experiences

Continue to work on your puppy's socialization. Dogs go through many stages and changes in their attitude towards people, animals, and different places. One moment they may love everyone and everything and the next moment they may be scared or feel threatened. They need feedback from you on how they're doing and they need you to be orchestrating good experiences for them. Take them to the gas station and ask an attendant to toss them a treat through the window. Give plenty of praise while he eats it.

Stop by the vet's office with your puppy when you don't have an appointment and ask the receptionists and vet assistants to greet him and give him a cookie. If there is a scale in the lobby, practice getting on and off of it. Bring your pup and some treats along to your child's next soccer game or your weekly sports practice to have him get used to the shouting and running. Socialization is important throughout your dog's life and the best time to start is now.

Goal: I set up three new situations for my puppy where he got treats from strangers.

Wait

Wait and stay are two different commands. Stay means don't move a muscle, and wait means you must pause before entering or exiting a threshold. Wait comes in handy when you don't want your puppy rushing past you through doorways, gates, on the stairs, and in the car. Teaching him to wait is another great lesson in self-control. Start by having your puppy on leash, standing at a doorway. Slowly start opening the door. If your puppy starts to rush past you say "uh-uh", and close the door. (Don't smash his nose!) Repeat until your puppy pauses and the door is open, then release him, and the reward is going through the door. As he gets better you can add the cue "wait" before opening the door.

Goal: My puppy can wait at the front door for five seconds on the first try.

Play Doctor

Practice having your puppy feel comfortable with not only being touched by you, but by common objects your vet might use. Practice with eye droppers, ace bandages, T-shirts, or anything else you can get your hands on. You can also practice with toe-nail clippers to help your puppy become comfortable with them. Start by letting your puppy sniff the item first, and pair touching him with the item with a treat. Stay relaxed and be generous with the treats.

Goal: I can touch my puppy's toenails without clipping them and he is comfortable.

Food Dish Practice

Many puppies can become anxious when we put our hands near their food dish. Teach them that hands near their food can equal a better treat. Start by giving your puppy his kibble and then toss in a better treat. If he is comfortable with that, you can then toss in some even better treats. Repeat this a few times. If at any point your puppy freezes and/or growls, stop and talk to us. Another exercise practices self-control. Ask your puppy to wait and slowly lower his food dish to the ground. If he moves say “uh-uh” and pick it back up. Repeat until you can lower it the ground without him moving and release him.

Goal: My puppy can wait while I slowly lower his food dish to the ground.

Come (Recalls Past Distractions)

If your recall practice is going well, try adding a few distractions. Try placing some toys or objects (suitcases seem to be a big distraction) he hasn't seen before in your house or yard, and try calling him past them. The bigger distraction you are contending with, the closer you need to be to him and the better the rewards should be. When he comes, spend 10-20 seconds petting and praising him while giving him tiny pieces of treats. Remember to always be happy when he comes to you, even if you are frustrated with him.

Goal: My puppy comes when called past a new toy or object.

Practice Everywhere!

Practice at many different locations so your puppy knows the rules apply everywhere and start putting the commands together! The opportunities are endless! Check off the goals below and receive one extra Lucky Bone per goal.

Goal: My puppy can sit at the doorway while I hook up his leash and wait before exiting the door.

Goal: My puppy can walk on a loose leash to the car and lie down while I open the door.

Goal: My puppy can come away from an approaching dog when called and watch while it is passing.

Bring your homework back next week with all the goals checked off and receive five extra Lucky Bones!

Graduation it next week so don't forget your trick and Lucky Bones!