



Puppy Intermediate • Week 1

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The Teenage Years

Consistency and daily training is needed more than ever during this time. The teenage period (also known as adolescence) begins around 5 months up until approximately 24 months. We tend to see inappropriate and stubborn behaviors reappear during the adolescent period i.e., jumping, play biting/mouthiness, pulling on leash, barking. Our young dogs tend to test our limits by displaying these learned behaviors that were once previously rewarded. For a dog, it's their way of saying, "This worked at one point-lets try it again!" For some, you may have even noticed an unfamiliar behavior appear such as fearfulness. Make sure to provide continued structure for your dog with consistent training, exercise (both mental & physical) and of course management (i.e., confinement). Most importantly, be patient!!!

Socialization

Although your dog is now past the critical socialization period (8-16 weeks) active socialization is still very important. Make sure to always be aware of your surroundings and environment; read your dog's body language and recognize any calming signals they may display (i.e., turning head/body away, lip licking, sudden sniffing or scratching)

If you see any concerning behaviors while socializing your young dog with people or other dogs, please seek additional guidance from your trainer.

Puppy Push-Ups

Your dog may have mastered a push up in puppy class, but as a friendly reminder one push up (or "rep") is considered a "sit-down". To obtain multiple reps, your dog must be able to accomplish sit from a down position. If you need to use a treat lure at the beginning that's okay, but quickly ween off the use of the lure with a hand signal.

- Try three reps of puppy push-ups using a treat lure.
- If your dog can do multiple reps with a lure, try one rep (sit-down) with just a hand signal and no lure. Make sure to "yes" and treat when they accomplish the rep!
- Gradually work up how many reps they can do for one tasty treat!
- Make sure to provide a release command (i.e., "break", "free") for your dog when you are finished with the exercise.

Do not eliminate the treats all together! Be spontaneous, we want our dogs to be motivated and continue working for us!

Stay

Introduce the verbal command, "Stay" to your dog.

- Put your dog in a sit position and say "stay".
- "Yes" and Treat for one or two seconds, then release your dog.
- If you had success, build up the duration before you release.
- Now repeat the same steps with the "down" position.

Only say the command *once*. Providing a hand signal (visual command) will help refrain from repeating the word “stay”. Remember to “release” your dog from the position.

Focus this week entirely on duration. Your dog must understand the meaning of the verbal command “Stay” before moving on to the next step.

Calming in Crisis

Continue to practice on your dog’s focus in midst of distraction and excitement by getting their energy up, and lowering it down. The more you practice this, the more likely you will have success in a real world situation. You can do this by either teaching a “relax” command or have your dog quickly drop into a “down” position.

(If your dog already knows “roll over” or is uncomfortable lying on their back I recommend using “down” instead of “relax”).

You can either build your dog’s excitement level by running or playing, or simply wait for the opportunity or distraction for them to get excitable.

Interrupt your dog’s play session and say “Down!”. At the start, you may have to use a lure to help redirect their attention from play.

Begin expecting more from your dog by building duration (how long they can remain in position) before you release them. Quickly seize the treat lure by using a hand signal.

To teach a ‘relax’ command...

- Have your dog in a “down” position..
- Wait until they are in a comfortable position and have shifted onto one side favoring a hip (you may need to treat them for the duration)
- Now put the treat in front of your dog’s nose and lure their head down the side of their body (opposite side of the favored hip) as if they are looking toward their belly.
- “Yes” and treat for every correct movement. Once their belly is exposed-jackpot time! A belly rub is a great reward!
- Repeat the steps and begin expecting more from your dog with shaping and eventually replace your treat lure with a hand signal.

Come/Recall

Practice recall when your dog is playing or having fun. When they come to you, reward and praise them, touch their collar and then release them to go play again. We want them to know the party is not over just because they came to us! During class and puppy playdates are great opportunities to practice this!

Tips for Recall:

- Set your dog up for success! Never use the name or ask your dog to come when you know it won’t work! The name and recall must be solid with minimal distractions first.
- Remember to always stay positive! Reward and praise as if it saved their lives!
- Never associate any form of punishment when you call your dog to you. There is a lower probability your dog will come to you the next time.
- Be exciting! Make it a game!