

Managing Your Dog's Behavior

Puppies come with a set of pre-installed behaviors: urinating and defecating when they feel the urge, chewing anything they can put in their mouths, whining, crying and barking if they find themselves alone, eating any food they encounter (not to mention many NON- food items!), greeting by excitedly jumping up, and play-biting all living things. **These are all normal behaviors for any puppy or untrained adult dog.** Notice that there is little on this list that humans are likely to approve of.

In order to have a dog that chews only his own toys, eliminates outside, can relax alone quietly, greets without jumping up and plays without being mouthy, the onus is on us humans to mold the dog's behavior. Puppies need management and the safest policy with newly adopted dogs is to treat them as though they were puppies too!

HERE ARE SOME IMPORTANT RULES FOR MANAGING YOUR NEW PUPPY OR DOG:

- Confine any puppy or untrained dog to one room, like the kitchen, to make dog-proofing the room and supervision easier.
- Supervise like crazy: feedback about both housetraining and chewing lapses has to be immediate. Never react to an incident late: it is ineffective and abusive. If you don't have time to supervise (or train or burn energy etc.) don't get a dog.
- Help him get it right most of the time: provide stuffed chew toys and praise him when he uses them, take him out often (every hour for a young puppy!) and praise and reward him immediately when he performs outside, enroll in a reward-based training course to teach you how to communicate with him.
- Don't reward whining or barking when the dog is left alone by returning to the dog - this teaches him that whining works and that you can be manipulated. Get him used to being alone by coming and going ZILLIONS of times for very short periods the first few days you have him, all done very matter of factly.
- Burn your dog's energy, both physical and mental! Tired dogs are well-behaved dogs. Teach him basic commands and tricks with treats, play fetch, tug and hide & seek with his toys, take up a sport like agility or flyball, get him out daily for walks and runs, trips to new places and give him regular opportunities to play with other dogs. If you work long hours, consider a walker, or day-care.