



Absolute Dogs[®]

SECRETS TO RAISING A PUPPY

The AbsoluteDogs Way

The First 7 Days
with your Puppy

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CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR NEW PUPPY

You have invited adventure, fun, and the best friend a person could ask for into your life.

So, before we dive in to how you can navigate the tricky, and potentially discouraging, struggles that might occur, let's focus on the amazing, and wonderful fact that you have a delightful (yes, delightful!) and unique bundle of love in your life.

We want to celebrate that with you, and thank you, for being the very best dog owner for your puppy. Reading this, looking for information, wanting to be in the know so that you can provide your puppy with the best life possible... That's incredible and that's worth celebrating.



BRINGING YOUR NEW PUPPY HOME

They are a baby. Wide-eyed, unsure, and the entire world is changing around them. Some puppies will come into their new home as if they've always been there, excited and full of curiosity and ready to take on the world with their exuberance and zest for exploration and fun. Other puppies may come into their new home cautious, not quite sure what is happening because they've left brothers and sisters behind, or perhaps they're from a stressful situation and you've rehomed them and provided them with their first, consistent setting.

Remember that they've just had a complete disruption in their life, regardless of their background. It is normal for puppies to be unsure. It is normal for them to be tired, actually. They will nap, and nap, and nap! If it helps, puppies are supposed to sleep 17-20 hours a day.

The first 3-4 weeks of having a puppy can be really hard. When asked what they wished they'd known before they got their puppy, many puppy owners reply, "I wish I'd known just how much hard work they are."

Puppies are adorable, absolutely special little beings.

OVER THAT FIRST MONTH, IT IS NORMAL TO THINK:

- **What on earth have I done?**
- **Have I made a huge mistake?**
- **Is this puppy going to cry all night?**
- **Is this puppy going to create havoc with my family?**
- **Will the puppy and my children ever get along?**

We're here to give you some tips and strategies that will help you navigate those moments of frustration and despair. Occasionally, there are puppies that are perfect and are a dream to have... but more often than not, a puppy will present you with a lesson you'll learn that you didn't quite realise you had signed up for... Look at it as a chance to learn something new!

PUPPY BLUES ARE A THING!

Puppy blues are feelings of depression in relation to the frustration and fear of doing things wrong when we bring a puppy home. Sleep deprivation can have that impact! You will wonder if it will ever get better! It will! It is very normal to feel overwhelmed by accidents, chewing, destruction, barking, and other behaviours. This guide will help you to reduce or completely eliminate the behaviours that can magnify the puppy blues. They are temporary!

Sometimes the dream is that you'll pick your puppy up and immediately will fall in love, and you will! Until the first (or maybe 5th) accident happens, or they're screaming in their crate at an hour into the first (or sometimes second or third) night. Sometimes it starts the fourth time you get up because they whimper, and you want to make sure they can go outside because you're being a great puppy owner and you're taking them out for frequent toilet breaks. In fact, it's not uncommon to wonder if a puppy was the right decision, especially when they've chewed something, or grabbed your hand instead of a toy with their sharp, milk teeth one too many times.

A RELATIONSHIP GROWS AND DEVELOPS

One goal for you as a puppy owner is to prevent rehearsal of undesirable behaviours or encourage implementation of a plan that will not only help you grow your relationship with your puppy... but you'll also feel successful, you'll feel like you're winning at this... and THAT feels good.



THE FIRST DAY YOU BRING YOUR PUPPY HOME

Your life together starts the moment you get your new puppy. They are gleaning information from you, watching you, observing every action you take, and they are learning every second that they spend with you. They are taking that information and compiling it into their baby brain, putting it together and trying to figure out the pieces of life's new puzzle, YOU.

The first thing we do when we have a new puppy is Ditch the Bowl and implement the Calmness Triad.

The calmness triad is a way of life, an approach that encourages calmness and will help your puppy learn how to regulate their emotions. We talk more on this starting on Page 11.

Get the Calm Badge!



WHAT DOES DITCH THE BOWL MEAN?

We feed our puppies every day. They need food to sustain them. In fact, food is seen as a primary reinforcer for puppies, which means that it motivates them because they need it in their life.

When we feed our puppies in a bowl, we are giving away value. Imagine, for example if a bowl of kibble was 20 pieces of kibble (not true, but for this example, we will make it work).

That is 20 opportunities to reinforce your puppy for making an amazing decision.

Your puppy chooses to:

- Lay on their bed
- Go into their crate
- Stay calm while the cat walks by
- Stand politely while you put a harness on
- Stand politely while you brush them
- Are calm when you pick them up
- Are quiet when the doorbell rings
- Rest on their bed while children play
- Grab a toy to play instead of your hand
- Naturally choose to sit or down
- Keep four feet on the floor in the kitchen
- Stay with you in the garden
- Respond to their name by looking at you
- Stay down even as you move around
- Give you eye contact without a prompt
- Stretch as they come out of their crate
- Hear sounds without so much as a woof
- See strange things outside and are relaxed
- Bring their toy to you
- Drop their toy as you present them with another

Get the Ditch the Bowl eBook

A puppy that receives information quickly when they do something correctly is more likely to do that behaviour again! Ditching the Bowl isn't just feeding your puppy with their daily rations (raw fed puppies can use freeze-dried meats as treats, kibble, or dehydrated treats).

In fact, you can also encourage them to have mental stimulation by providing them with food toys that can be stuffed, such as a Kong or Toppl. This is how you can balance rewarding them throughout the day with opportunities for relaxed calm while licking/chewing on an engaging and interactive food toy.

RELATIONSHIP BANK ACCOUNT

As part of the first 7 days that you have your puppy, developing and being mindful of a relationship bank account can make progress forward easy and achievable.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BANK ACCOUNT?

Your relationship with your puppy is much like a bank account, with deposits (good things!) and withdrawals (not so great things) coming in and out of it as you interact with your puppy throughout the day.

When you provide your puppy with feedback about something they've done correctly, you are depositing good things into your Relationship Bank Account. Your puppy is starting to understand that you are incredibly valuable to them, that you are relevant, and that being with and interacting with is fun!

When we get frustrated or unhappy with our puppy and scold

them, we are withdrawing from the bank account. We want to avoid these interactions so that our relationship doesn't become damaged at the very start.

When puppies make mistakes, they do not realize they have made a mistake. They do not understand the difference between right and wrong. All a puppy knows is that the ability to make that choice was available. It is your responsibility as a puppy owner to provide your puppy with the information they need so that they know which choices are the best choices.

When we focus on mistakes and on correction, we often cannot communicate in a way that makes sense to our dogs. In fact, correcting a behaviour can suppress the behaviour, and yet the reason it's happening can leak into another, even less desirable behaviour.

Our puppies do not make the connections with the discipline or punishment to the offense. They can get confused and worried about making mistakes. You want your relationship to be founded on trust and clarity.

This is why it is so important to be aware of your Relationship Bank Account and to emphasise the importance of depositing wonderful interactions and value into you and your dog's relationship. That way, when you have to make a withdrawal (trimming their nails or giving them a bath), they don't mind so much because there is such an amazing history of support and of you being the bringer of awesomeness and joy!



START AS YOU MEAN TO GO ON

When we first get our puppy, their size, cuteness factor, and hilarious antics can often encourage us to allow behaviours to happen that we would not allow if they were larger, older, or out of control. When you get your puppy, it is very important to start as you mean to go on.

What does this mean? Not allowing them to have opportunities to jump on people if the intention is that they won't be allowed to do so as an adult is one prime example.

Another example would be playing with every dog they see. As an adult dog they won't have the desire nor the ability to play with every dog and allowing it in puppyhood can create frustration or excitement behaviours that can be more difficult to work through as an adult with an established behaviour pattern.

HOW CAN YOU MAKE SURE THAT YOU SET YOUR PUPPY UP FOR SUCCESS?

Make sure that you utilise crates and ex-pens, or any small spaces that are puppy proofed, so that when you are not able to directly supervise your puppy, they are unable to behave in an unacceptable way.

Play games that encourage the behaviours you do want. Reward

your puppy for all four on the floor when in the kitchen or for staying on a bed or specific rug in the kitchen, rather than having free roam. These strategies will prevent the rehearsal of counter surfing before it even starts! No one likes counter surfing.

If you do not want your puppy to jump on guests, make sure that you've set it up so that they are away, or a gate prevents them from accessing your visitors. If they are unable to practice jumping as they progress in their training the thought won't even occur to them.

Discuss expectations with the family and those that will have consistent interaction with your puppy so that everyone is on the same page.

GROWING CALMNESS

Calmness Triad

Work on calmness from Day 1! Lack of calmness is the most common struggle in most households that are seeking training solutions for their puppy or dog. Some dogs struggle with learning how to regulate their emotions. Teaching your puppy how to be calm and what calm looks like can be the solution for avoiding a lot of frustrating behaviours.



It's not uncommon for a baby of any species to not understand how to communicate their needs effectively. A puppy not only has a language barrier. They also have a species barrier. They are trying their hardest to figure out how to navigate this world with you. Remind yourself of that when your puppy struggles.

They do not know when and how to communicate with us. They do not rationalize like we do. A puppy never does something out of spite or to demonstrate dominance. Their primary motivator is having their needs met... Like any baby of any species. When they whine, it isn't to demand your attention, but instead to communicate a need. It is important that you have addressed all behavioural wellness needs and calmness will be much easier to achieve.

WHAT ARE MY PUPPY'S BEHAVIOURAL WELLNESS NEEDS?

- **Mental Enrichment (Games/Enrichment)**
- **Physical Enrichment (Exercise/Games/Fitness)**
- **Relationship**
- **Nutrition + Health**
- **Active Rest**
- **Clarity and Effective Communication**

WHY IS CALMNESS SO IMPORTANT?

I have a crazy puppy...Don't they need to run it off until they fall asleep on their own?

Your puppy has a short attention span. They also might experience FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) and just like a child on Christmas eve that might be too excited to fall asleep for fear of missing out, a puppy is much the same. Every day, however, becomes a day of staying as wide awake as possible so that no

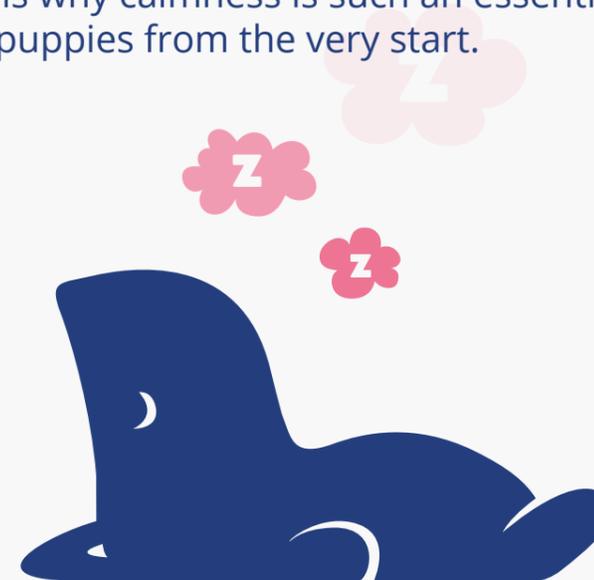
experience in life is missed!

A puppy will not wonder if they should take a nap. A puppy will not think, "I'm getting tired. I should go to sleep before I start biting everything." It's hard enough for humans, who can acknowledge why they're grumpy and overly tired, to make that decision themselves (Well, going to sleep, most don't bite). We cannot expect a puppy, who isn't even aware of the consequences of remaining overstimulated, to make the right choice.

And no matter how many times they don't fall to sleep, and they feel irritable and they start losing control of their emotions by biting and growling, and having what some could consider a tantrum, they won't ever make the connection that staying awake was the cause.

Now, we do want to say that there always exceptions. There are puppies that naturally have an off switch and will take a nap when needed. These rockstars are few and far between and usually are calm, in general, so the decision is easier for them to make.

This example is why calmness is such an essential concept to address with puppies from the very start.



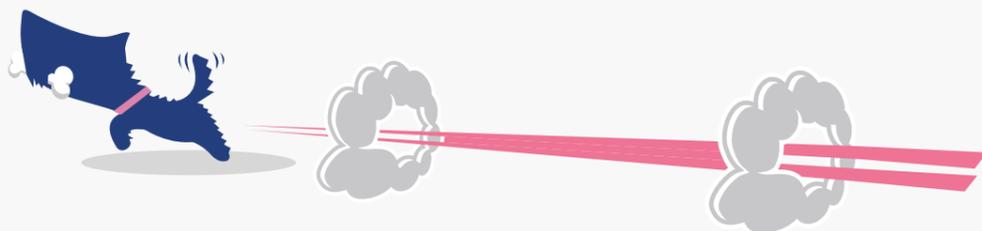
HOW CAN I DO THAT?

Start by rewarding your puppy for any calm behaviour. Set up the environment so that it isn't over stimulating all of the time. This can be done by providing them with access to the room you're in when they can be 100% supervised, and then when they can't be, putting them in a crate or ex-pen with a quiet selection of entertainment. Food toys that can be stuffed are perfect for this, as they engage natural calming behaviours like licking, sniffing, chewing, and in some instances, shredding.

Recognise the symptoms of over arousal and try to get ahead of it. Your puppy may become busier, frantic, and less purposeful in their behaviour. They may begin to gnaw on inappropriate things, or they may start racing around. It can look pretty cute if you don't realize what's happening. Sporadic, spontaneous bursts of energy that can be running, growling, barking, grabbing at you or things as they pass by, and more can happen every evening (and sometimes in the morning, too).

This is called the WITCHING HOUR, or ZOOMIES.

The scientific term for them is FRAPs (Frenetic Random Activity Periods) where your puppy is dispelling excess energy. This can look aggressive and like your puppy has lost their mind! Don't worry, it is completely normal and an indicator that Calmness definitely needs to be prioritized. The WITCHING HOUR at its worst typically lasts for just a few minutes, but the chaos and craziness can be discouraging and frightening for new puppy owners.



WHAT DO I DO TO STOP ZOOMIES?

One of the best solutions is to play games that focus on calm and providing mental stimulation prior to the typical time that zoomies start. Then, after a lovely session of games and a cool down (giving a stuffed Kong is a great way to encourage cooling down after an active training games session), put your puppy in their crate, ex-pen, or other area of confinement and let them use the enrichment as a form of self-soothing. Edible chews like Bully Sticks or a stuffed frozen dehydrated Trachea can also be great solutions.

Being proactive about making sure that your puppies needs are met and that you are ahead of predictable problems presenting themselves can be a gamechanger!

Remember, your puppy will become what they rehearse. A puppy that rehearses calm will become a calm adult dog. This brings us to showing your puppy off in the first few days after they've arrived and how that can contribute to lack of calmness in future situations.

WHEN YOUR PUPPY FIRST COMES HOME, YOU WANT TO SHOW THEM OFF

Very often, we want to show off our puppies after we've brought them home. We invite friends over to meet the little one and make a big to do. We want to share our gorgeous new puppy with everyone. We also want them to meet as many people as possible for socialisation purposes.

People come over and they immediately dote on the puppy, cooing and fondling, and telling the puppy just how adorable they are. Your puppy doesn't get an opportunity to take the situation in calmly. They aren't able to just observe.

And if they are able to, giving them immediate access to the person can set a precedent that encourages naughty, excited



DISCO PANTS!

It's easy when you have a really cute puppy to do everything that is fun and exciting. Playing constantly, running around with your puppy, and making everything the best time ever is so, so rewarding (until it isn't). Definitely have your disco pants on when you are playing games for recall that will require more excitement. For games that require calmness and thought, it may be better to slow your body down and your voice.

BE MORE VIGILANT

One of the key things to know when you bring your puppy home that first week is that they do NOT know that they can't get into things or chew mouldings. They have no idea how to exist in a human world and they will behave as they are: Like a dog!

Dogs navigate the world communicate with their body and their teeth. We often miss a lot of the subtle signals that puppies and dogs use to try to let us know when they are uncomfortable, when they have to go to the toilet, or when they are frustrated.

To set your puppy up for the most success, be very vigilant. If you cannot supervise your puppy, they should not be able to roam the house freely. This sets the puppy up for failure.

PUPPY PROOF your home.

Anything you do not want your puppy to access, you'll want to put away while you are working on their initial training. What are some things you might want to put away or organise differently to make sure your puppy doesn't chew or get into them?



- Shoes
- Charger Cords
- Children's Toys
- Chemical Supplies/ Cleaning Supplies
- Place any accessible medications higher
- Gate any areas you do not want your puppy to access

At first your puppy will only have access to the room you're in. The only reason options would expand (and very gradually) would be that your puppy is 100% successful where they're at... not "kind of" but TRULY successful. You want to make sure before you provide your puppy with more space to make decisions (good or bad) that you've established a clear set of expectations first. Your puppy's progress will provide certainty as to how clear those expectations have been.

If you notice there is a pattern of behaviour that you do not like, then take a step back. How could you set your puppy up for more success? What can you tweak in the environment to make sure that the good choice is the most obvious choice?



PUPPY SURVIVAL CHECKLIST



Collar and Lead



Your Puppy's Daily Rations



Longline



Puppy Line



Interactive Food Toys



Interactive Toys



Chew Toys



Water Bowl



**Crate/Ex-Pen and/
or Puppy-Proofed
Set Up**



Calm-K9



Probio-K9



Absolute Dogs.