



WOMEN'S
ANIMAL CENTER
America's First Animal Shelter

Managing Your Puppy'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 dogproofing the room, clean-up and supervision easier.
- Supervise like crazy: interrupt houstraining and chewing lapses as they start and re-direct the dog to the right place or right toy. Never punish a dog late: it is abusive.
- Help him get it right: provide chew toys and praise him when he uses them, take him out often (every 30 minutes for a young puppy) and praise and reward him immediately when he performs outside. Enroll in a reward-based training course. Find out about upcoming classes at: www.womenshumanesociety.org/dogtraining-classes.
- Don't reward barking when the dog is left alone by returning to the dog. Get him used to being alone by coming and going many times for very short periods the first few days you have him, all done very matter-of-factly. If you need to crate train him, do it right (see our handout on Confinement and Crate training). Please note that barking due to separation anxiety is treated in a different manner.
- Burn your dog's energy, both physical and mental. Tired dogs are well-behaved dogs. Teach him basic behaviors and tricks with treats, play fetch, tug and hide & seek with his toys, 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 dog-walker, or day-care. This way you come home to a happy, tired dog.