

It's A Dog's World™

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PUPPY KINDERGARTEN WEEK 3

The goal for this week is to teach your puppy how to start walking on a leash politely, without pulling. We will also discuss ways to deal with attention seeking behavior.

LOOSE LEASH WALKING

As with the "Sit" command, you will start by placing a treat between your thumb and index finger. Put your right hand, with the treat, across your body by your left knee. Get your dog to follow you while you walk with the treat in this position while you repeat the command "let's go". Fold the leash twice in your left hand. You only need to walk a few steps, then stop and lure your dog into the sit position.

The hand signal for "Let's go" is patting the left side of your leg as well as stepping off with your left foot. You can start using the hand signal straight away.

By the third or fourth day, try to get your dog to pay attention to you by giving you good eye focus while you are walking. Do this by drawing the treat up from your knee to your eyes while you are walking. You should no longer need to bend over and you should be standing upright.

For the rest of the week, try to keep adding steps in between auto sits (sitting automatically in the heel position) and adding turns.

ATTENTION SEEKING BEHAVIOR

Puppies want nothing more than to have a playmate. In their litter, they usually have one or more playmates. Once they come into your home, it is now up to you to fulfill your puppy's need for playing. However, play time should be done on your schedule and not done every time your puppy demands it. Typically, your puppy will try to use attention seeking behavior to get you to play.

Puppies are frequently smarter than we give them credit for and they don't care if the attention they get from you is necessarily negative or positive. As a result, they will resort to many methods in order to get a reaction from you. Some of the more common methods they employ are grabbing your pant leg or shoe laces as you walk by, jumping, barking at you until you either "shush" them or pick them up, or even deliberately grabbing something or chewing something they know they shouldn't play with.

It is extremely important that you do not reward attention seeking behavior. As difficult as it may seem, it is best to initially ignore your puppy's actions (as long as the puppy isn't doing something dangerous for him or painful to you) until they offer a more appropriate behavior. For instance, if your puppy comes over to you and starts jumping on you (whether you are standing or seated), the best thing to do is either stand up and walk away or, if you are already standing, turn your back and walk away. DO NOT talk

to the puppy, give it a verbal correction, push the puppy off of you or give in and pick the puppy up. Doing any of these things will only reinforce and reward the puppy's attention seeking behavior and he will learn that if he jumps on you long enough he'll get you to pay attention to him.

You may also find that you may need to employ the use of some type of Interrupter, as discussed in Week 2. If your puppy is grabbing your pant leg as you pass by, you may need to carry a squirt bottle or squirt gun filled with water. The minute your puppy gets a hold of your clothing, give him a quick squirt and keep walking. Again, you want to avoid giving your puppy eye-contact or talking to your puppy.

In some cases, if your puppy is being overly persistent, then he may need a short "Time Out" in his crate or pen. Try to remember that your pup's crate is not a punishment, simply a place for your puppy to go and learn to settle. When you put your puppy in his crate, keep your voice as neutral as possible and give your puppy one or two long lasting toys to occupy him until you do have time to play.

It is very important that you do make time for multiple interactive play periods with your puppy throughout the day. Keep in mind, though, that in most instances you should be the playtime initiator and you get decide when the games start and end.

HOMEWORK

This week, continue practicing the "Watch", "Sit", "Stand" commands several times a day WITHOUT treats, but do remember to verbally & physically praise your puppy. Practice loose leash walking & remember to keep training sessions short – no more than 5 to 10 minutes. Try to do 3 to 4 training sessions a day. Remember reward your puppy for every correct response and keep your sessions positive and fun!