

UNDER THE WEATHER

Puppy Love: Part II

Taking off from where I left you, here is the concluding part of looking after a new puppy.

Some additional inputs on Training:

Dogs are essentially pack animals and it is important to establish a hierarchy early on. If you want your pet to listen to you, you need to be the alpha male or female. Reward good behaviour with praise and petting. Praise should be in a soft, higher-pitched voice. Bad behaviour should be corrected with a low, firm tone, and never by spanking.

Some independent breeds are resistant to training and might not accept your hierarchy above theirs. In such cases, you need to be patient, firm and consistent.

Puppies and chewing:

Puppies will chew at anything from the furniture to your child's homework. It's definitely a trying time, especially if your favourite Jimmy Choos become his favourite Jimmy Choos. At such times, the best thing you can do is to take a deep breath and say, "This too shall pass." Remember, puppies chew to



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explore their environment, and at this time their curiosity as well as teething pains makes them eager to explore anything or anyone they can sink their teeth into. Some puppies chew because of anxiety or boredom, so make sure they're adequately entertained and exercised (who said bringing up pups was easy?).

Offer your pet chew toys in different flavours and consistency to avoid boredom. Never give 'real' chicken or meat bones, they can splinter and damage intestines. Provide plenty of games and exercise, even if it involves hiring a dog walker.

Be consistent. Do not give him an old slipper to chew and then scold him for chewing your gym shoes.

Spray a commercial anti-chew lotion

on things you want to safeguard. If he goes after a particular object repeatedly, keep it out of reach for a while.

Grooming:

Start grooming your puppy at an early age. The earlier your dog gets to know the procedure, the more readily he will get used to it. Check for ticks and fleas daily, bathe weekly, and brush frequently (depending on the breed). Brushing of teeth is important from a young age - it prevents periodontal diseases, one of the most common problems we see in practice.

Exercise:

Part of the normal routine for a healthy puppy is regular exercise. The amount your dog needs will depend not only on his size, but also on his breed. Playing with your pup at home, walking him in the park will keep your pet happy and you fit. However, do not take your pup outdoors till all the necessary puppy shots are completed.

Health checkups:

When your puppy comes home, you should take him to the vet within the next day or so for an overall checkup. When your puppy reaches adulthood, at least one visit a year is required to ensure his ongoing good health and for vaccinations.

Socialisation:

Early socialisation is the best way to teach your pup to interact positively with other dogs as well as humans. Till the vaccinations are over, take him to friends' houses, especially if they have dogs, so that your pup learns puppy manners from an early age.

Raising a puppy requires a lot of love and patience. Educate yourself by reading, talking to other dog owners and communicating with your vet. This will eliminate many surprises along the way and will help you build a strong enduring relationship with your new furry little darling.



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