

## Puppy Training Basics

### Teach your puppy the training basics.

*September B. Morn*

**Banishing Bad Habits**Nip bad habits in the bud by learning to recognize unsavory behavior when it appears, and teaching your dog something else it can do for which it can earn a reward.

**Gentle mouth:** If your pup nips in play, fight the urge to pull away that will just make your puppy want to nip again. Instead, freeze and say Ow! in a serious voice to let your puppy know it has hurt you and the game is over. If your pup stops nipping, calmly praise, then help it find a puppy toy to keep its mouth busy.

If instead of taking the toy it tries to chew on you, say Ow! again, then leave the room for one minute without another word. Your puppy will discover that sharp teeth on skin causes playmates to disappear.

When you return, cue the pup to sit. Reward with a treat, then keep things low-key for a while so it can practice being calm. If certain types of play make your pup nippy, stop playing those games.

**Polite greeting:** Dogs jump on people because that's how they say hi to puppy pals. If you don't want to be greeted like a dog, teach your pup to sit for greetings. When your pup runs to greet you, stand tall and cue it to sit. If it jumps, say sit, cross your arms on your chest and look away. If it continues jumping, turn your back. You may have to turn away a couple of times, but when your pup finally sits, calmly pet your dog and praise it. If it resumes jumping, stop petting, cross your arms and stand tall until it sits. Eventually, your dog will learn that sitting causes you to pet it, but jumping does not.

**Wait at doors:** Stand at the door with your pup leashed, and say wait, then reach for the doorknob.

If your pup moves, withdraw your hand and wait for it to realize the door isn't opening, then try again.

If it waits, praise, then open the door and tell it, Okay, go out. When your pup can do this, say wait and open the door a crack.

If your dog waits, open the door fully and allow it out.

If it doesn't, close the door, pause five seconds, then try again. Gradually increase the opening, until your dog will wait at a wide-open door until you give permission. **Quiet, please:** Dogs alert pack members to things they notice by barking. If nobody acknowledges your pup's barking, it may continue until it gets a reaction. Instead of ignoring or scolding when your dog barks, acknowledge what it is barking at. Say something matter-of-fact, such as Yes, the kids are riding bikes. Thank you. Now hush. If your dog stays quiet, give it a treat. If it starts barking again, calmly say, That's enough. Hush. If your dog doesn't stop barking, gently carry or lead it to a spot where it can't see or hear what it was barking at, and stay there with the dog silently for one minute, then calmly release it. If the barking restarts, take the dog back to the quiet place and leave it there by itself for one minute. Your dog will soon realize that once you've acknowledged what it is barking at, it needs to stop or it will lose its sentry privileges. Next Step: Keep Training Fun