

Training the Beagle Puppy

Getting your puppy off to a good start is the path to good socialization.

When your Beagle puppy first arrives home, begin by getting him used to the members of your immediate family, allowing him time to take stock of his new surroundings and environment. If you have chosen wisely, you will have a merry little puppy, full of fun and afraid of little. He should be very sociable, but don't overwhelm him with too many visitors and strange faces until he has settled in to your home and knows exactly who his new owners are.

Depending on the age of your puppy, and whether his course of vaccinations is complete, you may or may not be able to take him out in public places immediately. Whichever the case, allow him to settle down at home for the first few days, before venturing into the world. There will be lots you can do with your Beagle puppy, so you both undoubtedly will have great fun, but please allow him to get sufficient rest, too.

If restricted to your home territory for a little while, you can play games with him with suitable, safe, soft toys. Check regularly that sharp or unsafe parts, such as squeakers, do not become detached from the toy. These can cause injury, and your puppy's teeth will be very sharp, so toys can easily be damaged.

Whether or not you plan to show your Beagle, it is always good to do a little early training, getting him to stand calmly on a table and to lie over to be gently groomed. Both will be helpful on numerous occasions, including visits to the vet when it is much easier to deal with a well-behaved dog, and you will be so proud of your clever companion!

Accustom your puppy to being on a lead, which is always a strange experience for a tiny youngster. Begin by just attaching a simple collar, not too tightly, but not so loose that it can be caught on things, causing panic and possible injury. Just put it on for a few minutes at a time, lengthening each period slightly until your puppy feels comfortable in this additional item of clothing. Don't expect miracles—this may take a few days.

Then, when your puppy is comfortable in the collar, attach a small, lightweight lead. The one you select must have a secure catch, yet be simple to attach and release as necessary. Until now, your puppy has simply gone where he has pleased and will find it very strange to be attached to someone restricting his movements. For this reason, when training my own puppies, I like to allow them to take me for the first few sessions, then I exert a little pressure, and soon enough training can start in earnest, with the puppy coming with me as I lead the way. It is usual to begin training the puppy to walk on your left-hand side. When this has been accomplished to your satisfaction, you can try moving him on your right, but there is absolutely no hurry. If you plan to show your Beagle, you will generally move your dog on your left, but there are occasions when it is necessary also to move him on your right, so as not to obstruct the judge's view.