

Boxer Puppy Training

Training the Boxer Puppy

Although the Boxer is an affectionate and highly intelligent dog, he also has a mind of his own. He needs to learn that you are now the top dog, the alpha person in his life. The sooner he understands that, the fewer behavior problems you will encounter with your puppy and adult Boxer.

All dogs are pack animals and, as such, they need a leader. Your Boxer's first boss was his mother, now it's you. How best to teach him that you are now the chief in his life? Puppy kindergarten starts the day you bring your puppy home.

Before your puppy left his breeder, all of his life lessons came from his dam and littermates. When he played too rough or nipped too hard, his siblings cried and stopped the game. When he got pushy or obnoxious, his dam cuffed him gently with a maternal paw. Now his human family has to communicate appropriate behavior in terms his little canine mind will understand.

When you start the teaching process, keep this thought uppermost: The first 20 weeks of any canine's life is his most valuable learning time, a period when his mind is best able to soak up every lesson, both positive and negative. Positive experiences and proper socialization during this period are critical to his future development and stability. Always keep in mind that the amount and quality of time you invest with your Boxer puppy now will determine what kind of an adult he will become. Wild dog or a gentleman or lady? Well-behaved or naughty dog? It's up to you.

Canine behavioral science tells us that any behavior that is rewarded will be repeated (this is called positive reinforcement). If something good happens, like a tasty treat or hugs and kisses, the puppy will naturally want to repeat the behavior. That same research also has proven that one of the best ways to a puppy's mind is through his stomach. Never underestimate the power of a cookie!

This leads to another very important puppy rule: Keep your pockets loaded with puppy treats at all times, so you are prepared to reinforce good behavior whenever it occurs.

That same reinforcement principle also applies to negative behavior, or what we humans (not the dog) might consider negative (like digging in the trash can, which the dog or puppy does not know is wrong). If the pup gets into the garbage, steals food or does anything else that makes him feel good, he will do it again. What better reason to keep a sharp eye on your puppy to prevent these normal canine behaviors?