

Two Easy Lessons

A couple of important lessons your puppy should learn.

Lets begin the puppys education with two basic but vital lessons. We are going to teach the puppy to come to you when called and to accept a collar and leash. The come lesson can be introduced and reinforced by playing games with your puppy. Games are a great way to entertain your puppy and yourself while subliminally teaching lessons in the course of having fun. Start with a game plan and a pocketful of tasty dog treats. Keep your games short so you don't push his attention span beyond normal puppy limits.

The puppy catch-me is ideal to teach the puppy recall (or come). With two people sitting on the floor about 10 or 15 feet apart, one person holds and pets the pup while the other calls him: Laddie, come! in a happy voice. When the pup comes running, reward him with big hugs and give him a tasty treat. Repeat back and forth several times, maybe adding a ball for the puppy to retrieve.

Another fun game that teaches the come lesson is hide and seek. Play this game outdoors in your yard or some other confined area. When the pup is distracted, hide behind a tree, a bush or another large object. Peek out to see when he realizes that you are gone and comes running back to find you. As soon as he gets close, come out, squat down with arms outstretched and call him: Walt, come! This is an excellent technique and teaches the puppy to depend on you.

To introduce your puppy to the leash and collar, rely on your positive training techniques. You have purchased a nice new nylon collar and leash and you're going to show them to the puppy. He's not going to be all that thrilled to meet his first restraining devices, but lets pretend that this is fun for him. Look, Walt. A collar! Good collar. See, good boy, good leash! Puppies are impressionable, so surely Walts tail is wagging by now. With no further fanfare, put the collar on the pup with the leash attached and walk away. Some pups will panic and try to remove the collar, but soon enough he'll stop squealing and fidgeting.