

Puppy Training

Learn how to make puppy training fun.

Cal Orey

You've been hanging out with your pup, and most of your interaction has involved feeding, grooming and health care. You're bored with the same old routine. You want to do something different, something silly. After all, enjoying fun activities is part of puppy care, too. "For most people, a dog is much more than a just a pet. It is a full-fledged member of the family which plays a critical role in today's society," says Michael Thomas, D.V.M., and past president of the American Animal Hospital Association. The catch is, it's important to both socialize and train your fun-loving pup from the get-goso that way you'll both be good to go, anywhere, anytime. To avoid doggy doldrums, and to bring you and your pup closer, here are 12 fun things to do that will tickle you and your pup's mind, body and spirit. Bring Your Pup to Puppy Kindergarten Classes: Family-oriented classes that include play periods are a fun way to interact with pup. "Puppy classes are based on positive reinforcement," says Wayne Hunthausen, D.V.M., of Animal Behavior Consultations in Westwood, Kansas. In other words, that means praising the pup for good-dog action. The Gain: By learning basic obedience commands, from sit to stay, and focusing on how to solve problem behaviors, such as housetraining and chewing, your pup will be much more pleasant to be with, explains veteran dog trainer Bill Scott in Corning, California. Kindergarten classes accept dogs that are 8 to 10 weeks of age up until they are about 5 months old. The Pain: The fact is, teaching your pup takes patience and persistence, particularly to get through those tough months of your pup's behavioral and social development. Cost Factor: Prices can vary from \$50 to \$150 for a weekly one-hour long, six- to eight-week course. Next Step: Take Puppy Smarts 101