

4 Common Mistakes to Avoid When Obedience Training Your Puppy

Written by {ga=anita-watson}
Monday, 07 May 2012 12:39 -

By Anita Watson

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Have you ever lost your 'cool' when attempting to train your new puppy?

Have you ever reached a 'breaking point' or were overwhelmed with frustration, ready to give up on this obedience training stuff?

If you have - don't worry, you're not a mean 'master'; you're just human. What's more, you were going through what most new puppy owners go through when they first attempt to train their puppy.

We all know we should obedience train our dog, but it's not an easy process, and it requires patience besides the know-how...

So, while it's not OK to hit your animal or to shout at it, it is an absolute must for you to establish boundaries - and decide who's the boss in the relationship. Because if you don't - you will suffer down the line. I am not "scare-mongering" - the fact is that puppy obedience training becomes a common problem for most pet owners, either early on in the relationship, or much later, when puppy grows into a dig demanding dog.

Most owners have no idea on how to train their dog in the first place. And some owners resort to sending their pets to obedience schools as a quick-fix solution to their puppy training problems.

I say hold on to your money! There's no need to send your dog off to an obedience school. You can actually teach them yourself - all you need is the know-how and a lot of patience to build a lasting, loving relationship.

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First off, you should make sure to avoid the most common pitfalls of puppy obedience training. This will help you raise a loving and obedient dog.

Mistake #1: Letting your puppy chew on anything it can get its teeth on.

From the moment your puppy's teeth start to come out, he will need to chew on things. It's a normal puppy behaviour - in fact, it's normal for dogs of any age.

So, when training your puppy, don't try to stop him from doing what comes naturally - that won't make him happy. Rather divert his chewing habit - get him some chew toys. They are safer for him to chew on (as most dog chew toys are made from resilient materials), and he will be a happy puppy because he can still scratch his gums.

In the beginning your pup will still try to chew on just about anything. When you spot this, firmly say "No" (without shouting), pick him up lovingly, and take him to his chew toy. When he starts to chew on his chew toy - praise him by saying "good boy" or "good dog" - whatever suits you best. Now you're teaching him right from wrong, and you're establishing a caring relationship. Well done!

Mistake 2: Thinking that "Barking is a normal dog behavior when he sees strangers. This is not even a dog problem at all."

OK - barking may come naturally to a dog, BUT it becomes a problem when it happens all day long - sometimes for no apparent reason. You need to understand that barking can mean a lot of things from your puppy's point of view: he might be lonely, bored, hungry, needs to poo, etc. You need to establish why it is happening, and make sure to only encourage barking when it's needed - like to alert you of danger, or to tell you he is in danger.

Be careful not to fall into the common trap of responding every time your puppy barks. You will simply be teaching him, that every time he wants your attention (positive or negative) all he needs to do is bark - you see where I'm going with this...

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Start early on - as soon as you bring your puppy home for the first time - keep this in mind. If your puppy is well fed, entertained, exercised, and loved every day - you will have a lot of fun with obedience training him.

Mistake 3: Thinking "My dog is aggressive and mean because he bites. I need to send him to an obedience school!"

OK, some dogs have that problem and it is a form of aggression, but for most puppies, biting is simply a play in the beginning. Nipping is a common behavior and puppies do it to get attention and out of playfulness.

Regardless of the reason though, you need to train him that biting is not OK. If you fail to incorporate that in your initial obedience training, your puppy may grow up thinking that every time he wants his own way - he can just nip or bite you for it - that can become a big problem later on in your relationship.

It's easy to achieve the desired outcome, by just sternly saying "No" (without shouting) when he tries to nip or bite you. Also, make sure not to engage playfully or make a fuss of him when he's nipping or biting - or you will effectively be rewarding him with attention.

Mistake 4: Thinking "My dog eats his poop! I think I need to give him up for adoption because he's sick in the head".

Hahaha - poor pup, he never saw this one coming...

OK, listen, it's called coprophagia (when an animal eats its own or other animal's feces) and it's a fairly normal puppy behavior. Dogs and puppies do it when they feel they lack something in their diet. So the easiest thing to do is to make sure he's getting proper nutrition from his dog food. Then you need to let him know it's not a behavior you will tolerate. By being firm and consistent of course. Soon, puppy will know it's not cool to eat poo and that you don't approve.

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When you first get your new puppy home, you will feel overwhelmed by the multitude of things you need to watch out for. But take a step back, and prepare for the new arrival, just like you would for anything else new in your life.

Do your research, and educate yourself upfront, because not everything about obedience training your puppy is common sense - and you don't want to make mistakes in the beginning, that will cost you time later on to undo. Also, consistency is the key.

Don't give up because it takes a lot of dedication and motivation before your pup becomes an obedient angel. Your dog will learn from continuous training and proper routine. On top of that, shower him with love and appreciation and he will be the best the dog that you ever wanted.

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Article by Anita Watson

Anita Watson is passionate dog owner with years of experience in helping people raise and train their dogs, using real methods that work fast. Visit [Raise a Loving Dog](#) for more great tips and advice on [training your puppy](#) quickly and hassle-free.