



HANDLING EXERCISES

Level 1: Basic handling

The goal of these exercises is to accustom your puppy to accept and enjoy all types of handling from friends and family members.

1. Begin by only working with your puppy when they are calm.
2. Grab your puppy's collar and give a treat.
3. Inspect all over their body - their ears, eyes, mouth/teeth, body, tail, legs, and paws (don't forget between their toes!).
4. Build it up slowly, one or two seconds at a time and give liberal food treats (your pup's dinner time is a good time to do this practice).
5. Anticipate your puppy's mood and reaction and always stop before your puppy stops you.
6. Repeat these exercises every day, gradually lengthening the interaction time.
7. Praise your puppy constantly whenever they don't resist handling.
8. Progress slowly. Don't ever force your puppy to endure handling, especially if they seem uncomfortable or stressed.

Level 2: Proofing puppies for more intensive handling

The goal here is to help your pup be happy at the vets and groomers.

1. Gently touch, pet, stroke, hold or massage various areas of the body and collar while giving your puppy food treats.
2. Gradually increase the intensity of touching, pushing, patting, and grasping different areas of the body (e.g., face, feet, muzzle, ears) as your puppy gets more used to it. Practice drying your puppy with a towel. Hug your puppy, grab their back end and tail.
3. Hold the puppy to restrain it as you might need to at the vets.
4. Always praise your puppy and give favourite treats whenever they don't resist handling.
5. Start with short sessions, anticipate your puppy's attention span and stop before your puppy gets tired of the exercise.
6. Consider your dog and lifestyle and adapt and progress with your handling exercises to cover whatever your puppy might one day be expected to encounter (e.g. brushing the teeth, lifting and carrying, bathing, grooming, cleaning ears, wiping feet, nail trimming, etc.).

FEEDING EXERCISES

These exercises are intended to teach your puppy to feel comfortable and to learn to enjoy the presence of people while they are eating or near his food bowl.

If your puppy shows ANY signs of aggression around food, ask for help immediately.

Food bowl handling (teaching that the hand is coming to give, not to take away).

1. Walk by your puppy while they are eating and drop a piece of canned food, meat, or cheese into the food bowl. Ask visitors to do the same.
2. Occasionally reach down toward the bowl and put a food treat in it.
3. Place the bowl in your lap or on the floor in front of you. Feed the puppy. Handle the food, gently pet the puppy. Act jolly.
4. Take the bowl away. Put a highly desirable food treat in the bowl and give it back.
5. Gently touch and handle your puppy while putting food treats in the bowl.

Finally, ditch the bowl! Make your puppy work for their food by doing some training, using the food to reward toileting outside, or when your puppy comes when they are called. Food is a valuable resource – use it wisely.