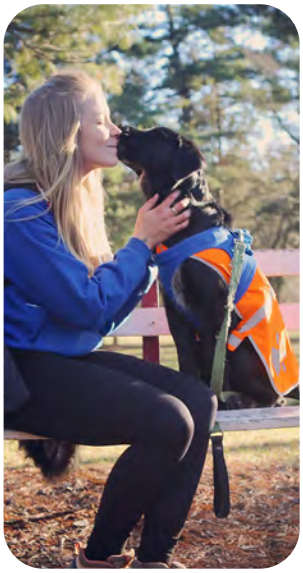
WELCOMING HOME A NEW PUPPY

Congratulations!
Bringing a puppy into your life is such a fun and rewarding experience. Even though puppies can be a lot of work, we're here to help make training and learning together simple, fun, and frustration-free. By having the tools to get things right from the start, you can breeze right through those common new puppy struggles, prevent future behavior issues, and have a blast building a strong, trusting relationship along the way. So let's start with some of the must-knows.



SOCIALIZATION

The first to 16 weeks of a puppy's life are the most important when it comes to their social and emotional development. During this period, a puppy's brain is rapidly developing and soaking in endless information about the world around them. The experiences they have during this period are critical as they are what will create the mental blueprint for what is safe and what should be flagged as potentially dangerous for them down the road. While in this socialization period, puppies are typically confident, brave, and very open to new experiences. However, as this window comes to a close, they can become fearful of things they either were not exposed to or of things they had negative experiences with during that period, which can result in more concerning behavior issues down the road, such as fear, reactivity, and aggression. So in short, the more positive interactions and experiences your puppy has during this time, the more well-adjusted, happy, and confident they will be as an adult.

Keys to success:

- **Learn their language:** Understanding what your puppy is saying and how they are feeling will help you know what kind of experience they're having and if it will be recorded as a positive or scary one. This will also be the key to building effective communication and a lifelong, trusting relationship.

- **Focus on positive experiences, not exposure:** Great socialization is about quality over quantity. The goal should be positive exposure, not exposure in itself. The risk of something bad happening or your puppy becoming overwhelmed at a dog park or festival is high. Instead, opt for quick trips to the park or a friend's house where you can keep things positive and carefully manage and control each experience.

- **Bring treats:** Bring treats everywhere you go and dish them out any time they see or experience something new. This will help you double down on the experience by making it even more positive and memorable.

- **Watch carefully:** Meeting a neighbor could be a great socialization opportunity, but if we miss a sign like them taking a step back or dropping their heads, continued physical contact could start to push them in the wrong direction. By watching and advocating for them if you see discomfort, you can make sure they walk away having the kind of experience that you want to stick with them forever.

- **Avoid forcing interactions:** Let your puppy approach on their own and allow them to move away if they are feeling unsure. By giving them the choice to retreat, they can learn that when they feel scared they can remove themselves from the situation and don't need to use signs of escalation.

- **Plan nap times:** Much like toddlers, when puppies start to get tired, they can go into super-mode as they fight the urge to rest. This is often misinterpreted as a need for additional high arousal play or fun, which can easily create a pattern that makes it hard for them to calm down when they're tired. Counter this by planning breaks throughout each exciting event or when they start to ramp up after a long play period. Create a quiet space away from the excitement and give them something like a Kong or bully stick to help them self soothe and calm down. This will help their bodies learn to regulate and take breaks when they need them down the road.

- **End on a good note:** Stop while you're ahead. Ending on a good note allows you to leave before they become overwhelmed, overstimulated, or exhausted. The last part of your puppy's experience and the most emotionally impactful part are going to be the parts your puppy remembers most clearly, so keep it short, fun, and positive.

POTTY TRAINING

For some puppies, potty training is fast and easy, while for others it can be a longer process. Though every puppy is different, you can expect them to be able to hold their bladders for around one hour per month they've been alive. Some of their learning will be automatic - the act of relieving themselves is inherently rewarding because puppies feel better when their bladder is no longer full, but training and careful management will ensure it's smooth, fast, and without too many hiccups.

Keys to success:

- **Create a schedule:** Set a schedule for meal and potty times. The consistency and predictability helps the puppy learn when they can expect to eat and potty, which speeds the process along and massively lowers the risk of having an accident.

- **Accompany them outside:** Take your puppy outside on leash for potty breaks, even if you have a fenced yard. Start by bringing them to the location where you want them to go, wait quietly, and reward heavily after they potty. By practicing these things, you can teach them to go in one location in the yard and ensure they actually go to the bathroom while they are learning.

- **Potty before play:** Teaching them that potty comes before play or exploration will prevent them from getting distracted and forgetting to use the bathroom. It'll also help them learn to go immediately when they go outside, which will help down the road for those times when you are in a rush. So save things like play or games for after they've gone to the bathroom.

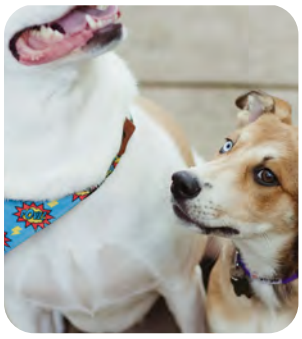
- **Know the signs:** The following behaviors may indicate your puppy needs to go outside. If you see any of these, it's a good time to take them out: circling; sniffing the ground; walking away from play; pacing; whining; whining; walking towards the door.

- **Be proactive:** There are times when you can bank on your puppy needing to go. Be proactive by taking them out: Immediately after waking up; 10-15 minutes after eating or drinking; after playing; or after they do something fun like meet a visitor.

- **Manage the environment:** Any quiet area with a porous surface is a good bathroom from your puppy's perspective. While they are learning, you'll need to monitor carefully at all times as they're most likely to go once they lose sight of you. If you do need to do something away from them, utilize a crate or x-pen with a chew toy or food puzzle to keep them busy.

- **Thoroughly clean up accidents:** Always use an enzymatic cleaner, such as Nature's Miracle, to clean up accidents. Unlike most cleaners, these are designed to break down the ammonia-producing bacteria and molecules that dogs can smell but humans can't. Those urine scents act as a sign to your dog that they've arrived at a bathroom, just a public bathroom sign, so it's critical to remove these scents to avoid accidents in the future.

- **Watch for medical concerns:** Keep an eye out for symptoms of common illnesses and infections that could be presenting as potty training problems. Talk to your vet if you see any of the following: eliminating multiple times consecutively in small amounts; straining; urine that has a foul odor or unusual color; blood in their urine or feces; accidents while sleeping or laying down; or lack of progress potty training, even with consistent training and management.



INTEGRATION WITH OTHER PETS

Ensuring current pets in the home are comfortable and have a low-stress transition into life with their new puppy friend is a critical part to the success of their future relationships. Knowing how your dog is with other dogs can help guide you as you create your initial introduction plan, but keep in mind that every dog is different and not all dogs do well with puppies. So even if your dog has had only positive interactions other dogs so far, take it slow. By going slow and setting up a clear plan, you can reduce the risk of conflict and set everyone up for a smooth, low-stress transition into their lives together.

Keys to success:

- **Meet outside:** Before bringing them into the house, go for a walk together. This will allow them to meet in a slower, more natural way and will give you a feel for how they feel about the new puppy. After they meet, put everyone away and repeat after they've had a change to process and relax.

- **Remove resources:** Having to suddenly share valuable resources, such as toys, water bowls, sleeping spaces, or their human's attention can add to the stress of a new pet in the home. Pick up all of the resources, like bones and toys, during any interactions until your dogs get to know each other.

- **Focus on positive interactions:** We don't want high arousal play to be the only way our dog knows how to interact with other dogs. Having fun and doing things side-by-side, such as exploring a new park on longlines or playing training games are great ways to help dogs get to know each other, bond, and practice something other than wild and crazy play.

- **Provide breaks:** Even for dogs who enjoy puppies, constantly being followed, climbed on, or bitten can be overwhelming and tiring. Building in breaks will allow them to calm down and reset between play sessions. Be proactive by using crates, baby gates, or X-pens to separate dogs during down time, which will give everyone a chance to get to know each other before they spend extended amounts of time together. During down time, provide enrichment, such as Kong or bully stick, which will help them self-soothe and relax.

- **Never let them learn through "corrections":** There is a widely accepted myth that puppies should learn boundaries through corrections from other dogs. However, we now know that those "corrective" behaviors are actually signs of discomfort, fear, and frustration. And although they may stop a puppy in the moment, it also puts the other dog in a position where they have to use aggression to get space, which can be stressful for them and damaging to the relationship overall. The puppy is also then practicing pushing until they see aggression, which could easily get them into a fight with a less tolerant dog in the future. Instead of relying on corrections, you can help your puppy learn in a positive way that produces better results and stronger communication skills. When you see those lower-level distance increasing signals, such as lip licking, yawning, looking away, sitting, checking in, or walking away, call the puppy, reward them for coming, and redirect them to something else. This will help them learn to walk away and do something else when they see signs of stress or conflict in another dog and sets them up to have a safe, cooperative relationship with the other dog in the home.

- **Give it time:** Building a strong relationships takes time, so slow and steady is the key to success here. If you're not seeing anything concerning, stop there and try not to push it. More than anything else, you want your dogs to have a happy, healthy relationship for the rest of their lives together and it's always better to go too slow than too fast.

- **When to get help:** If you are seeing concerning or persistent signs of fear, reactivity, or aggression, consider bringing in a Certified Professional Behavior Consultant to help you with your plan and introduction.

CHEWING AND MOUTHING

Chewing is one of the primary ways puppies have to explore their worlds, alleviate boredom, and relieve pain from incoming teeth. Even though chewing is a very natural and healthy behavior, we know it can become frustrating when puppies are in the height of those shark-teeth stages and are grabbing and chewing everything in sight. The good news is that chewing on things can be very easy to manage and direct to appropriate items with only a few easy and simple tricks.

Keys to success:

- **Puppy-proof your home:** You'll want to make sure that everything the puppy can reach is puppy safe and something you want them to chew down the road. Only allowing access to items they can have prevents them from getting into trouble and helps set their preferences while they are young.

- **Provide appropriate outlets:** Puppies should always have many chew options readily available and visible to them so they can independently make good, safe choices when it comes to chewing. The more appropriate options they have to choose from, the less likely they will be to go find something they shouldn't have.

- **Offer variety:** Since puppies chew for a variety of reasons, they'll need a variety of items. Puppies may want to grab something soft and fluffy for play, whereas they may seek out something like a bone or rubber toy to alleviate pain from incoming teeth. Having items that range in size, texture, and shape will provide options that meet each need.

- **Create a sense of novelty:** Rotating toys in and out of a drawer or closet to keep items remain novel and engaging, which will improve their success rate of choosing appropriate toys in the first place.

- **Calmly redirect:** If your puppy has something they shouldn't have, calmly approach and redirect them to something else. Avoid startling reactions, moving quickly towards the object, or chasing, as those things can cause fear or become a game. Instead, redirect them to an item similar in texture, and praise them when they engage

- **Mouthing or biting:** Puppies almost always go through a phase where they bite and mouth on things like arms, clothing, or dangling leashes. While working on this behavior, avoid punishment as the last thing we want is to create a negative association to greeting you, engaging with people, or being on leash. Instead, focus on preventing access during times of excitement, redirecting to appropriate items, and begin teaching incompatible behaviors. If they grab arms during play, have a stuffed toy during play time, matching the preference for something soft and fluffy. If they grab at the leash, reward them for walking or looking at their leash without grabbing. Make sure everyone who interacts with your puppy knows to never play with your puppy using their hands or arms as this teaches them to bite hands during play.

- **Avoid punishment:** It can be difficult to remain calm when you discover that your puppy has destroyed something, but puppies live in the moment. Punishment for past behaviors can quickly create a negative association to you approaching them or inspecting a toy, but is unlikely to be paired with their own past behavior. Instead of punishment, pick up the item and go back to your puppy-proofing plan so they are set up for success the next time around.

RECALL

When puppies are young, they like to remain close to safety as roaming before they can protect themselves would be evolutionarily risky. As they near adolescence, they develop a natural desire to explore their worlds more independently, especially in new or interesting places. So though your puppy may easily come to you now, prepare for that to look a little bit different down the road. The good news is you can take advantage of the window when they are excited about coming to you and save yourself loads of work down the road. Work on teaching a reliable recall long before you need it. This will make sure you don't have to work against the grain once they hit the age where they want to explore further away from you.

Keys to success:

- **Use high value treats:** When training recall behaviors, make sure you've got the good stuff. The goal is to reward your puppy for coming away from fun things with something even better than what they had. This will make them eager to leave something very fun down the road as they will anticipate that you've got something better.

- **Use a special word:** We tend to call our dogs using a variety of words. If you use their name casually in everyday interactions, you should choose something else as your cue. Choose a cue to only use during training, like "here!", as a more structured cue that tells them leaving the fun thing they're doing will result in something even better.

- **Make it a game:** You can practice your recall by calling your puppy back and forth between people, what we like to call "puppy ping-pong". Get a couple of people together and practice calling your puppy back and forth. When the puppy gets to the person, reward heavily before the next person calls the puppy to them. This is a great game for kids to play. Once they have the basics down, difficulty can be added by hiding and recalling from behind chairs or other rooms.

- **Be prepared:** There are many ways you can build training into your everyday life. Leave small tupperware containers around the house so you can reward your puppy for coming every time you call, especially for things like coming inside or walking away from a new person.

- **Keep it short:** The goal is for them to practice running at full speed and excitement when you call. Create a rock solid recall by only practicing for a couple of minutes at a time and by ending before they start to slow down or lose enthusiasm.

- **Avoid chasing:** Dogs love to be chased, and though playing a fun game of chase with your puppy can be fun now, it teaches them that running away from you is a game, which isn't so fun as they get older. Any chase games should be one directional where you run from them and they chase you, but never the other way around.

- **Reserve recall for the fun stuff:** Never call them to do something they won't love, like getting a bath or going in the crate. By saving the cue for great things, you can prevent them from becoming reluctant to come to you, especially if they think you're up to something.

- **Avoid punishment:** Remember that puppies live in the moment. If your puppy does get away or doesn't come to you, never punish them when they return as this will result in decreased motivation to return the next time.

GETTING STARTED WITH TRAINING

- **Join a class:** Though it's important to start training at home, puppies who enroll in a group class while they are young are typically better socialized and are less likely to develop behavior issues down. Help them get a jumpstart by enrolling them in a group class where they start learning and socializing when it matters the most.

- **Utilize the power of positive reinforcement:** How you teach your puppy is even more important than what you teach. Since science consistently tells us that punishment works by causing fear, therefore making dogs more likely to become fearful, reactive, or display aggressive behaviors down the road, it's critical to always opt for methods that do not cause pain, fear, or discomfort during the learning process. Avoid things like shock collars, prong collars, or choke chains and instead opt for tools that support your dog's ability to learn about their worlds in a way that is fun and fear-free.

- **Use a certified trainer:** When searching for a trainer, it is critical that you find a trainer who is certified through a third-party organization that requires they take a competencies exam and receive ongoing continuing education. Start by searching directories on the the CCPDT, IAABC, or Karen Pryor Academy websites.

AND HAVE FUN

As you're working to give your puppy the best possible start to life, remember above all else to enjoy this time together. Puppyhood is so brief and is such an amazing time to learn and grow with your new little buddy. No matter what skills you're building or what you're working on, always remember to have fun, and enjoy the moment.

K9TURBO TRAINING

Managing

Arousal & Excitement

Life can be both rewarding and challenging when you live with a dog who takes everything to the "next level". These fast-thinking, fast-acting dogs are crazy smart and can be so fun once you've developed their ability to also calm down and focus that energy. Here are some tips to help you get there.

Reward Calm Behavior

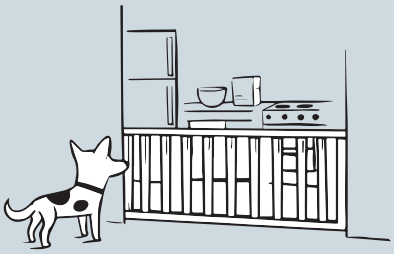
Keep small containers of treats around the house and reward any and all calm or appropriate behavior. If you see resting, playing solo, or behaving calmly, reward heavily with attention, treats, or invitations to play.

Meet Mental Needs

Feed daily meals and snacks from food dispensing puzzle toys, such as Kong Wobblers, snuffle mats, or frozen Kongs, which provide a healthy, appropriate way for them to work their body and brain each day.

Provide Healthy Exercise

Balance play and exciting activities with exercise and training that promote calm and thoughtfulness. Avoid repetitive games, like fetch, which spike arousal but require little or no critical thinking or self control.



Use Management

Until your dog gains better control over their impulses, avoid putting them in situations where they are likely to fail. If they struggle to remain calm in the moment, remove them from the situation before they tip over their limit.

Track Your Progress

Keep a log of each time your dog has an episode where they become overly excited or aroused. Identify any patterns around when, where, and why so you can track progress and adjust your training plan, as needed.

Be Patient

Your dog has really intense hormones kicking through their system during episodes of over-arousal, which can't just be turned off. Be patient, respond calmly, and avoid punishment as they learn to gain better control.

www.k9turbotraining.com • 248-733-5738 • info@k9turbotraining.com

K9TURBO TRAINING

Managing

Resource Guarding

Resource guarding stems from your dog's fear that a person, or another animal, might take away something valuable or necessary for their survival. Following these easy steps will help your dog learn that their resources are safe and not at risk, therefore reducing or eliminating their need to guard in the first place. Here's your quick, easy guide!

Pick up Valuables

Pick up anything that might trigger sudden guarding behavior. Scan your space for items that are dangerous, sentimental, valuable to you, or that you don't want your dog to have, and put them away.

Restrict High Value Items

Until your dog has learned their things are not at risk, avoid any high value item that have caused them to resource guard in the past. This will take a load of pressure off of you and your dog while you are working to address the problem.

Trade Fairly

When your dog has something they shouldn't, don't steal or trick them into giving it up. Instead, trade for something better, like small pieces of chicken or cheese, which will increase safety, trust, and cooperation. Without fully approaching, toss a handful of treats away from the item, calmly pick it up, and leave a pile of snacks in the area as you go.

Bring Out the Good Stuff

If you see them enjoying something of value, casually walk by, toss a handful of high value treats, and walk away without stopping or making a fuss. Increase distance or stop if you see signs of stress and only practice away from other animals. Keep it simple, quality is always better than quantity here.

Use Management

Avoid petting or invading their space while they are eating or interacting with items of value. Barriers, such as baby gates, crates, or separate rooms will help them feel safer and prevent unnecessary conflict with other animals.

Avoid Punishment

Dogs use behaviors, like stiffening or growling, to communicate when they are feeling worried or unsafe and act as warning signals that prevent further escalation. Increase distance and avoid punishing these key warning signals while we work to solve the core of the problem, not just its symptoms.

www.k9turbotraining.com • 248-733-5738 • info@k9turbotraining.com