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MYTHS ABOUT PUPPIES AND TRAINING

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Puppies need training which should begin the day you take your puppy home. If you don't start training right away, you are allowing your puppy to learn bad habits. Those bad habits will take a lot of time, effort, frustration, and money to change into good habits. Prevention is the key with puppies. Teach them what you expect of them right from the start. Puppies may have short attention spans, but they can and will learn!

Unfortunately a lot of myths about puppies, dog and training are still being passed off as facts. My goal is to dispel a few of the more common myths that are being circulated – sometimes by veterinarians and trainers as well as your neighbor, the person you met at the park or at the pet supply store.

Myth 1 - You can't start training your puppy until she is 6 months old.

Facts. Your puppy can learn the day you take him home. This myth originated from when puppies were not inoculated and therefore not safe from disease until they were 6 months old. The concern that puppies would be exposed to deadly diseases such as parvovirus resulted in the advice that puppies be kept away from public places. Veterinary medicine has come a long way from those days. Puppies are vaccinated against deadly diseases earlier than in the past and are able to go to puppy classes as early as 10 weeks.

Another reason people were told to wait is because "old school" training involved choke chains, heavy collar corrections, and punishment. Therefore training was delayed until the dog was older and thought to be better able to withstand collar corrections and punishment.

If you wait until your puppy is 6 months old, you will have a lot of bad habits to undo. When you bring home an 8 week old puppy, that puppy is capable of learning so why let all that wonderful opportunity pass? Your puppy can learn his name, to sit and down on command, to walk on leash,

come when called, stay, sit for petting, wait to be released to eat his food and so much more. Yes, a 8 week old puppy can learn all of those behaviors and more.

Myth 2 - You must be the alpha dog and show your puppy you are boss by alpha rolling him and punishing all bad behavior. Otherwise he will take over.

Facts. Dogs are not trying to take over the world. You do not need to punish your puppy in order to train him/her. The alpha dog theory of training is based on flawed research.

David Mech is a wolf biologist who first came up with the alpha theory that spawned “alpha dog” punishment-based training methods. For the last 20 years Mech has been trying to dispel the alpha dog myth after he learned that his research of wolf packs was flawed. For some reason, people were quick to grab hold of the myth, yet many still refuse to let go of it.

Alpha rolling your dog only frightens him and does not teach. Punishment may seem to work, but at what cost? Your relationship with your puppy is at stake as well as your puppy’s willingness to try new behaviors. A puppy or dog trained using punishment is going to be afraid to try anything new for fear of making a mistake and being punished. Your puppy deserves kind, clear, and fair training methods. Your puppy deserves a kind and benevolent leader.

Today's enlightened methods of training are based on positive reinforcement and cooperation between dog and owner. Learning is fun for both the puppy and the owner. A puppy may have a shorter attention span which will require more patience on your part. However, there is no reason your puppy can't start learning right away. Learning can and should be fun for both you and your puppy. Reward your puppy for doing what you like and you will see an increase in those behaviors.

Myth 3. If your puppy bites you, hold his mouth shut, hit him on the nose, or stick your fingers down his throat.

Fact. This is bad advice and only teaches your puppy that you can punish him. Instead, try removing your attention from the puppy briefly. Stand up and ignore him. Then interact with him again. If he bites again, remove your attention again and repeat until the puppy figures out that biting results in losing your attention.. You can also substitute an appropriate chew toy for your hands and praise the puppy for chewing the toy. If you stick to these methods, biting will decrease with the only punishment being the loss of your attention. Physical punishment is unnecessary.

Myth 4. The best place to socialize your puppy is the dog park.

Facts. The dog park is the worst place to socialize a puppy. It is like throwing your baby into the pool to teach her to swim. Not all dogs at the dog park belong there – some of my clients’ puppies and dogs have been attacked at the dog park. Not every dog at the park has been properly

inoculated against disease. One bad experience at the dog park can traumatize your puppy for life and make her fearful of other dogs and even dog aggressive.

A well run puppy class or supervised puppy play group is the best place to take your puppy. A well run class/group will be supervised so that no puppy is bullied or is the bully. Shy puppies will not be thrown into the mix to fend for themselves and get over it.

Every day is an opportunity to continue to build your relationship with your puppy and continue your training. Enroll your puppy in a puppy class where you can socialize your puppy with people; dogs; and new sights, sounds and smells under the supervision of a trainer who uses positive training methods. Puppy class will teach you how to teach your puppy basic manners.

Make the most of this wonderful time in your puppy's journey toward becoming a dog.

For positive training information, visit the best source on the web: www.dogstardaily.com

www.secretlakedogtraining.com