



Early Puppy Training

Giving your pups a head start on life skills

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What do you sell when you sell a puppy? Just an animal of a specific breed and color? Maybe you've tested for temperament too. Or begun potty training. The best breeders sell an inquisitive young animal that is fond of human interaction and has already learned many commands that will help him fit into his new family. Let's look at the latest info on **early** puppy training.



In the past, puppy training started at 6 months. Potty training at 8-12 weeks. Before the age when they were ready to go to new homes, not much was done at all. At best, submission

training was recommended, in which the pups were simply taught to respect the superior strength of humans. Some still recommend this treatment, but it is now considered unnecessary and out of date. There are loads of positive reinforcement methods available now that will yield far better results and give your pup a lasting impression that good things happens when humans are around.

Some systems use praise and petting, most use bits of food, and some use an audible sound (with food at the beginning) to let the puppy know when he has done something appropriate. They rapidly learn to be people pleasers.

Most agree these days that it's important NOT to use force or intimidation with young animals. Any method that is considered "dog-friendly" will focus on reward, not correction. Tools such as choke, prong, or electronic (shock) collars are not necessary with these methods. An occasional correction is still okay, but should not be confused with a positive training session.

What can a 4-week-old puppy learn? Common lessons for 4-8 week old puppies include the commands for sit, shake, down, turn around, up, lap, touch (with nose), roll over, in/under, tug, speak, hold (object in mouth) and let's go (collar and leash practice).



Think you don't have time for it? Too many puppies? Think again! With just short sessions every few days, your pups will know quite a bit before it is time to go to that new home. What a joy for your prospective buyers to see what their new pet can do, and to have a starting point for their own training program. Consider this too... if a family is choosing between two puppies and one of them already knows 6 or 8 commands and is eager to please, which one are they likely to choose?

Busy kennel owners can also make arrangements with the local high school, 4H and other clubs to recruit student volunteers who can benefit from learning how to train puppies. They are usually more than happy to come in after school or on weekends to help prepare your puppies for a more satisfying life.

Not much is needed. First you need a puppy-safe area where you can work with one pup at a time. A few props are helpful, such as a low bench or stool (to teach up and under), interesting toys to encourage a nose-touch, a rope attached to a door knob (to teach pulling to open), a small bar-bell type toy (to teach hold-in-mouth/retrieve). Mostly what you need are lots and lots of tasty

kibble or other treat food, and a quick hand to get it in their mouth as soon as they do the desired action. And maybe a training video or book to help you get started and to train your helpers.

We are all truly alarmed and concerned about how many puppies end up abandoned in animal shelters by overwhelmed and unprepared pet owners. **Early** puppy training is one more solution to that problem, helping to guarantee that each pup we sell will be a blessing in their new home, and not a burden.

Some resources that come recommended by UABR breeders:

[The Natural Dog Training Method](#) (Joe Ardis dvd)

[Puppy Prodigies](#) (online videos)

[Cesar's Way](#) (Cesar Millan dvd series)

Do you have a favorite early training method? Do you offer a training dvd or book to your new puppy owners? Please post about it in our [Facebook Group](#)!