**Bringing a Puppy Home**

When you first bring your puppy home, be aware that it is a HUGE adjustment for him. Up until then, he has lived with his littermates, and before then also with his mother. To a social animal like a dog, relationships with his family are a big source of comfort and security. In going to a new home, he loses all that and has to build new relationships. Spending quality time with the puppy, and understanding what he is going through, will really help him adjust faster. I don't recommend comforting or rewarding fear, but using understanding and patience, and setting things up to make him comfortable. He may feel real panic that first night or two, when he is left to sleep alone. If you can set up his sleeping area to be near a person or other dog, that can help. The nice thing about puppies is they adjust pretty fast, especially when younger.

 **CRATE TRAINING:**

If he is going to be crate trained, placing the crate near people especially the first few days or weeks, will help him feel less abandoned. Know that it's likely the pup will cry the first few nights, but as times goes by he will get better. In learning a new routine, he will know what to expect, and that also is a source of security.

 With crate training, I really recommend making it a positive thing. Put the pup in for short periods of time, with some really yummy chew toy that he only gets then, and before he is bored with the toy, remove him and the toy. You want to leave him wanting more. He only goes in the crate when he gets that high value treat, and isn't left in so long he becomes uncomfortable or unhappy. If you take time to build a positive association with the crate, you will set your puppy up to be comfortable in it at other times. It can be a lot of work at first, but is worth it in the long run.

**HOUSEBREAKING:**

Puppies want to be clean and not mess where they live, so that gets them started on the idea of going potty outside. I generally follow the rule of taking them out about once an hour at this age, and especially after meals, play time and naps. At night we go longer, maybe 3-4 hours at this age. If they have an accident, don't rub their noses in it. That teaches them to fear you, and to be dirty. Just clean it up. If you see them getting ready to go or starting to go, make a noise like "no" or "ack!" to get them to stop, and then pick them up and take them right out. I use the command "go potty" as we go, and if I see them doing the deed outside, I say "potty" as they do it, so they learn that is what I call it.

They will have accidents so I recommend a good cleaner and lots of paper towels. Just keep your cool when it happens, clean it up and watch closer next time. A lot of folks get mad at the puppy for it and all that does is make the puppy scared of you, or scared of going potty in front of you. Each week that goes by they get more control, and they will be house broken before you know it. Remember at this age they are just babies, and don't know they have to go until right before they HAVE to! The key is management (keep them on easy to clean surfaces) and prevention (take them out A LOT!)

**FEEDING:**

Also, feeding them meals on somewhat of a schedule helps a lot too. If you leave food down all the time, they eat whenever and potty more irregularly. If you feed top quality foods, the pups eat far less and also potty less often and less quantity. If you use a cheaper, grocery store brand they eat up to twice as much and their stools are bigger and messier. Also, the quality of the ingredients is lower, making the pup less healthy and robust, and more prone to skin allergies, excessive shedding and poor coats, and other health problems. Think of the cheaper foods as junk food for humans. You wouldn't raise your child on potato chips and candy bars, and that's all the better the lower quality dog food is. I worked in the pet food industry for years and have seen all the pros and cons of feeding certain foods. You don't want to know some of the ingredients in the cheap food! Puppyhood is definitely NOT the time to skimp on food quality. Expect to pay at least $2 a pound or more for the good brands. Some of the best are closer to $3-$5 a pound. In the long run you will save though, since they eat less and will have less health problems like skin irritations, allergies and other issues. I can't stress this enough. Feed those babies well!