

NUISANCE BEHAVIOR

Since when did nuisance behavior like barking, jumping, relieving themselves indoors and mouthing become acceptable behaviors for a puppy? While this is normal puppy behavior it is far from acceptable. Puppies that are allowed to continue this behavior grow up to be nuisance barkers, bullies and markers (lift their legs on everything).

Why Puppy Training?

Puppy training was created as a way to teach good manners before bad manners become a habit. If you wait until your dog is 7 months old, yes, he can still learn but many of his bad manners are now habits. Habits are harder to break than teaching good manners from the start. Puppies are hard to train because their attention span is short but it is much easier to instill good manners and good habits in a puppy than to teach an older puppy to break habits.

Puppy Training:

I am highly in favor of early training classes for socialization; however I like the idea of more training and less playing between pups. Puppies learn just about all they need to know about how to interact with other dogs by the time they are 6 weeks old. After that, what puppies need to learn in order to be good pets is how to interact with people and how to behave appropriately around other dogs. Though I allow puppies in my class to socialize and play, that is only one quarter of the time that the dogs are in class.

Breaking Bad Habits:

It takes humans a full 30 days to break a bad habit, and sometimes it's not broken for good. It takes dogs at least 4 months to break their bad habits but it is up to you to make sure they are not able to complete the bad habit by:

- (1) Making it difficult to complete
- (2) Making sure your dog knows there are going to be consequences.

If your dog has a bad habit that you need to break you must re-create the behavior during training so you correct him and teach him a new behavior. Too many people do not re-enact the behavior so when the bad habit occurs, they are not in a position to correct. You can't correct your dog for jumping when you are having a dinner party, you must re-enact the situation when you are not entertaining. Avoid the problem (i.e. crate your dog) till your dog has conquered his jumping habit in training (i.e. you no longer have to correct) before you introduce it while you are entertaining. You know when your dog is going to act up, reading his mind his is like reading a short story, be on top of the

situation. Training should not be only sit, down, come and heel but training and retraining his bad habits.

The meaning of NO:

Whether you use the word ‘No’, ‘Nein’, ‘Phooey’, or ‘Bad’, your dog must realize that the verbal correction means to immediately stop his behavior. The only way for your dog to understand this concept is to be sure to correct him with a physical correction every time you say his verbal correction. Too many people say the word “No” but their dogs do not respond to it because there is no consequence. When I initially train a dog I always use the command “No” in conjunction with a physical correction with the leash. This way, the dog makes the association with the word and a correction. Eventually, the verbal correction is enough to stop the misbehavior.

No Hands Please:

Many books and trainer emphasize grabbing a puppy by the back of the neck and rolling him over to make him show submission. Their thoughts are that is how the mother dog corrects the puppies for misbehavior. We cannot duplicate the way the Mother corrects the puppies. I do not believe in using my hands on a puppy or a dog ever, the correction should be with the use of the prong collar and leash. I will only use my hands if I am caught off guard. Grabbing the dog in this manner will only teach him to be hand shy and cautious of you. Also, it cannot be duplicated by every member in the house and most of the time it cannot be duplicated on an adult dog, without the chance of getting hurt that is.

Conclusion:

Break the nuisance behavior but be sure that you don’t make your bark worse than your bite; make sure your dog realizes that a verbal correction is not a warning of a physical correction to come but a ‘second chance’ to respond.

Beth Bradley

Beth Bradley began studying animal behavior and dog training at 12 years of age. She became a New Jersey State Animal Control Officer in 1986. Beth graduated Rutgers University with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Criminal Justice. Throughout her schooling, Beth worked and studied under many well-renowned animal behaviorists and trainers. Beth formed her own company in 1989 and has made dog training her full time career since 1995. Beth is also a writer for the *Animal Companion*, she has produced CD-Roms and DVD’s on training and is author of a training book titled *Real World Dog Training*.

Beth is a member of the German Shepherd Dog Club of America, the German Shepherd Dog Club of America – Working Dog Association, the United Schutzhund Clubs of America, and she is Secretary and Training Director of the Greater Philadelphia Schutzhund Club. Beth actively competes in both American Kennel Club and Schutzhund Trials both in

the United States of America and Europe. Beth is a certified Canine Good Citizen Evaluator for the American Kennel Club.

Beth presently owns 3 German Shepherds and a Jack Russel Terrier. If you would like more information on Beth's achievements and qualifications you can view her extensive resume at <http://www.dog-trainer.biz>.