

# PUPPY TRAINING & RAISING HINTS

**GENERAL INFORMATION:** Labrador Retrievers are very smart and learn very quickly, but without exercise, training, time, and attention they get into trouble. Walking them everyday and playing with them is a requirement. They learn quickly with positive reinforcement. Labradors are a very high-energy puppy for 2 years. They get into trouble when unsupervised and bored. They do not want to be left outside while you are inside. They want to be part of the family. If you put them outside all the time they will be wild and you won't want to spend time with them. If they get into trouble it is your responsibility and not the dogs. If things are left on the floor and they eat them or play with them it is your responsibility and not the dogs for leaving them on the floor. If they potty in the house, it is your responsibility and not the dogs because you were not watching them 100% of the time. If they tear up the furniture or destroy things than it is your responsibility and not the dogs because they were left unsupervised before they were fully trained. They are like babies that do not know what is right or wrong until you teach them. If you leave them in the yard and never give them attention or make them part of your family then they will be wild, jumping on everyone, and barking, and this too will be your responsibility and not the dogs for not spending enough time with them. Getting them in a puppy class and training class is vital and will make the puppy years easier. We don't "ruff house" with our puppies until they are older as we want them to be gentle and know the different between inside behavior and outside behavior. You can keep the puppy on a loose leash when in the house so you can catch them if you need to.

**FEEDING:** I feed the puppies Eukanuba "Large Breed" Puppy Food. Any good dog food with meat as the first ingredient will be good. Petsmart's "Authority" is a good brand and a little less expensive. Your puppy should be feed 3 times a day until it's 4 months old and then twice a day until it's 1 year. Keep your puppy on large breed puppy food until it is one year of age and then you can change to Adult food. Start with about 1 cup per feeding of food and increase or decrease based on the puppy's weight. I've been feeding the puppies around 7-8am, 12-1pm, 5-6pm (3 times a day).

**FIRST 2 TRAINING ITEMS:** (1) Puppies bite because biting is how they interact and play with their siblings. To correct this problem, hold their muzzle gently while firmly saying "NO BITE" every time they bite. After a couple of days of consistently correcting them, they should stop biting and will soon stop entirely. Once they understand this command, you can use it when catching them eating or getting into something they shouldn't. (2) Don't allow them to jump on you even as puppies. Don't give them any attention unless all four feet are on the ground, sitting, or laying down. If they do jump up on you, firmly say "OFF" while crossing your arms and turning and walking away. It's really cute right now but at 6 months and 50 lbs it won't be cute. If you have young children, you will need to train them on this as much as the puppy.

**POTTY TRAINING:** Puppies have to go potty after eating, sleeping, and playing. The first couple of days you need to take them out on a leash about every hour (during the day), after sleeping, and eating to where you want them to go potty. I usually say "go potty" (but any word will work) until they go and then give them lots of praise. After a couple days of doing this the puppy will go potty right away at the key word and right back into the house. After a couple of days you can gradually extend the time you take them outside to potty. If you don't catch the puppy in the act of going potty you cannot scold the puppy. They do not understand scolding or yelling later. If you catch them, then immediately take them outside while saying no. After they potty outside say, "good puppy" with lots of praise. If you want, weather permitting, after the puppy understands going outside to potty, you can leave a door or slider open a little and then they will go out and in as needed to potty. This works well until you both understand your puppy's cue it wants to go outside to potty. If you are very consistent they should be trained within a few days (with you watching for the signs).

**CRATE TRAINING:** Purchase a crate that will fit them when they are fully grown not a small one that fits now. They grow very quickly and it is a waste of money to purchase different sizes for them as they grow. I put the puppy in the crate the first night with an old towel (they will relieve themselves the first couple of nights until they get the idea), toy, sock that went home with them. Do not put any food or water in the crate at night. I use the crate for sleeping only,

but some people use it for additional training. Last thing before you go to bed let the puppy out to go potty. The first thing in the morning let the puppy out to go potty. They will cry and whine the first couple of nights so you might want to put the crate somewhere in the house that is away from you until they get used to it. This usually only lasts a little while and only a couple of nights. The crate should not be used for punishment.

**SAFE PLACE:** The puppy cannot be trusted alone in the house for quite some time.

If you cannot watch the puppy **100%** of the time then the puppy has to be in a safe area where they cannot get in trouble and it will be okay to potty there. This can be a kitchen, bathroom, gated area, crate, outside (anywhere they will be safe and not potty somewhere you don't want them to). If they are not in a safe place when you are busy then it is your responsibility and not the dogs they got into trouble. You can put their crate with the door open in this area, toys, food & water, and newspaper or puppy pads for going potty. Make it a pleasant and safe place for the puppy.

**LEASH TRAINING:** When you first put a collar on your puppy they will scratch it and pull at it until they get used to it. When they are used to the collar you can attach a leash for leash training. I recommend that for the first couple of times you follow them wherever they want to go and don't allow them to pull at the leash. DO NOT get the retractable leashes as they teach a dog to pull and you don't want a 60-80 lb dog learning to pull you down the street. Don't do any choke collar and healing training until they are a little older, you don't want to hurt them, but just get them used to going on a walk without pulling. Gentle leader collars are very good for teaching a dog that like to pull. It pulls on their nose and not their neck and they correct themselves much like a horse halter.

**TRAINING:** Consistency is the most important part of training. I cannot express enough the importance of training your young puppy. Most areas have puppy classes that get the whole family involved. If you cannot find an independent trainer there is always PetSmart. If you cannot find one check with your local vet and they usually know of someone. These are classes for the 2-6 month old dogs. It is basic training with learning sit, down, stay, come, etc. These are important commands to learn before they become 60-80 lbs. About 6 months or later you should enroll in basic training for larger dogs. They reinforce the basics with extras like healing, off leash, etc. Your dog will grow up fast and it is very important to have them under your control as soon as possible. The puppy is a little harder to train with very young children, as the puppy sees them as siblings and wants to play with them like puppies (biting, jumping and knocking them over). It's even more important to take them to training and being very consistent with the training.

**NEUTERING & SPAYING:** If you do not plan on breeding, you should spay or neuter your puppy between 5 and 6 months of age. It greatly reduces the chances of male and female reproductive diseases and cancers.

**DIARRHEA:** Puppies get into lots of things they shouldn't and get diarrhea. You might try giving them a teaspoon of Pepto Bismo and see if that helps. If it doesn't, you might want to take a stool sample to the vet to have it checked out. Puppies get parasites due to eating things they shouldn't.

**If you have any additional questions, please contact me anytime. Kathy Beck, 1386 Hetrick Ave, Arroyo Grande, Ca 93420, 805-481-4597, kab500@cs.com**