



## Behavioral Vaccinations for Your Puppy

(Early training that builds resistance to behavior problems)

Dogs are, well, dogs. They bark, jump up, eat things off the street, and chew on pretty much anything. All are behaviors that get on human nerves. But it's hardly fair for us to get upset when a dog behaves like a dog. Especially when we don't teach them to replace their natural doggy behaviors with ones that we can live with.

The good news? With some simple, early training and guidance, your puppy can grow into a model citizen and be taught how to behave in a people-oriented culture. That's why it's equally as important to vaccinate your puppy against behavior problems as it is to vaccinate him against disease. Well-behaved dogs are more likely to remain lifetime companions, and less likely to be surrendered to a shelter or euthanized.

So, what is a behavioral vaccination? By behavioral vaccinations, we mean early training (< 6 months) that helps puppies build their confidence and develop resistance against behavior problems down the road. Behavioral vaccinations not only help prevent problems like stranger aggression and separation anxiety, they also help your puppy become a delightful companion you can be proud of.

Here are some of the natural canine behaviors that benefit from early behavioral vaccination training.

Dog	Person
Genetically programmed to become <b>wary of the unfamiliar</b> between 12–16 weeks of age.	Wants to be able to take dog with her to new places, have visitors to the home, travel and visit the local dog park.
<b>Can become anxious when left alone.</b> Social creature that strongly desires company, especially when young.	Needs to leave dog at home without him disturbing the neighbors and destroying the house.
<b>Uses teeth to communicate</b> , play and get what he wants.	Covered in fragile skin that doesn't handle rough play or sharp puppy teeth well.
Thinks the <b>world is his toilet</b> .	Thinks the toilet is the toilet.
Believes anything he sees has the <b>potential to become a chew toy</b> .	Wants to keep her furniture, shoes and



	coffee table intact.
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Dog	Person
<b>Easily becomes over-excited.</b> Barks at other dogs or people when on a walk, out the front window, or behind a fence.	Easily embarrassed or annoyed by barking that's difficult to stop while on a walk or at home.
<b>Doesn't like to share things he really values.</b> May growl, snap or bite when such things are taken away.	Needs to be able to easily take things away from her dog (especially dangerous things) without being growled at or bitten.

## Top 7 Behavioral Vaccinations

### 1. New experiences are OK

#### Why Is It Important?

Puppies need to learn when they are puppies that new experiences are okay. To achieve this, safe, early, and effective socialization is a must. Early socialization shapes the way your puppy will see the world as an adult. Poorly socialized dogs are difficult to live with because they can't handle situations that are out of the ordinary. Well-socialized puppies grow into dogs that are adaptable and enjoy new places, people, animals and experiences. That means you can enjoy things like having visitors to your home, going on a trip and boarding your dog, and exercising your dog at the dog park or daycare.

#### Why Welcoming New Experiences Doesn't Come Naturally...

Fear of the unfamiliar is a survival instinct, and a good one. Animals in the wild need to quickly learn what's safe and what's not. They can't thrive if they are scared of *everything* so they're programmed to accept new things for a short period of time, and then increasingly become wary of new experiences. Ever seen an antelope walk up to a lion? The fact that dogs have undergone years of domestication and are predatory in nature gives us more time to socialize them than many other animals, but their open and trusting phase begins to draw to a close between 12–16 weeks.

#### Behavioral Vaccination Training

- Socialize your puppy early, safely and effectively.
- Socialize your puppy to places, people, animals, sounds, objects and obstacles.
- Enroll in a puppy class and work with an OS Certified Trainer™.
- Focus on the essentials. Take your puppy to experience places, people, dogs and situations he's likely to encounter in his life with you.
- Go at your puppy's pace. Consult your OS trainer about what's right for your particular puppy.



- Focus on creating positive associations with our [Top Socialization Challenges](#) and follow our [Socialization Safety Guidelines](#).



## 2. Being alone is OK

**Why Is It Important?** It's hard not to spend every waking minute with your adorable, cuddly new puppy. However, having your puppy be the center of your universe can set him up for anxiety in the future. Puppies that aren't trained to slowly build tolerance to being alone don't develop the "immunity" they need to be well-adjusted. All of us have a life, and even if you work from home, you have to leave your dog unattended at times.

### Why Being Alone Doesn't Come Naturally...

Puppies usually spend their first 8 weeks with their littermates. Up until that point, screaming and barking serve as a strategy for their mom or littermates to find them should they end up by themselves. Since your puppy's early experiences revolved around 24/7 companionship, it can be hard for him to adjust to a new home where he's suddenly expected to go it alone.

### Behavioral Vaccination Training

Some simple strategies for teaching your dog that it's okay to be alone include:

- **Create a positive association with being crated.** The great thing about crate training is that it helps you potty train your puppy *and* teach him to relax when left alone. To begin creating a great association with the crate, make it a guaranteed source of good things. Feed your puppy his dinner in the crate, leave yummy stuffed Kongs in the crate, and offer the most comfortable bedding in the crate.
- **Practice confinement when you're home (crate or x-pen).** Your job? Ignore (yes ignore!) your puppy. Then frequently reward him with a bit of food or a tasty chewie as long as he stays quiet. You can start as close to the crate as needed to set your dog up for success and then gradually create more distance between yourself and your pooch. For those using a crate, having your dog eat meals and stuffed Kongs in a crate while you're home and relaxing near him can be invaluable settle-down practice.
- **Leave your dog with great things to chew. Be calm and cool when you leave.** If you have a screeching monkey of a pup, ignore and see if the dog quickly calms down. If not or if things are going from screeching monkey to screeching cheetah, talk to our pros or consult with a CPDT trainer; they can help!

## 3. Be gentle with your teeth

### Why Is It Important?

Dogs use their teeth to communicate, play, and get what they want. Puppies need to be taught some important rules about using their teeth around people—ideally before they reach 5 months of age. If



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puppies don't learn these rules when they're small and manageable, they can inflict pain and possibly fear when they grow into adults.

## Why Being Gentle With His Teeth Doesn't Come Naturally...

Puppies learn to play without hurting one another through interaction with their littermates and mom. If one puppy is too rough, the other puppy will often yelp and immediately stop playing. Since puppies normally want to continue playing, they learn to modify their behavior through repeated feedback from littermates and other dogs. However, puppies don't get feedback they understand from people. Often we inadvertently teach them to chomp away by continuing to interact (pushing them away, yelling at them, etc.) with them even after they have bitten us too hard.

## Behavioral Vaccination Training

Since puppies don't have a manual on how to use their teeth when interacting with people, they need to be taught 3 things:



1. **Be gentle with your teeth when you play with me.** When playing with your puppy, withdraw your hands, and your attention, when your puppy applies uncomfortable pressure with his teeth to any part of you. Wait 5 seconds and then re-engage with him. As long as he's gentle, continue to play with him and give him your attention. If he bites you too hard 3 times in one play session, end the session and walk away. Be consistent.
2. **Take treats gently from my hand.** It's critical that puppies learn to take things gently from our hands, especially treats since we use them so often in training. The first step is to teach your puppy to stay put when you give a treat. That means if he starts to move toward the treat while you're delivering it, you immediately pull it away. If he holds still, give him the treat. The second step is to give him the treat only if he doesn't snap or bite too hard to get it. If he's gentle, he gets the treat. If not, the treat goes away.
3. **Be careful with your teeth if you're frightened or upset.** Every dog, just like every person, has the potential to resort to aggression if scared or threatened. Sometimes dogs will simply lash out because they're in pain. By practicing #2 and #3 regularly with your puppy, you increase the likelihood that he will practice self-control with his teeth when put in this type of situation.

## 4. Potty training

**Why Is It Important?** No one wants to live with a dog that goes to the bathroom inside the house.

## Why Going To The Bathroom Outside Doesn't Come Naturally...

While it's not the case for all puppies, most spend the majority of their puppyhood indoors and learn to go to the bathroom on shavings, newspaper or maybe even litter. They aren't required to "hold it" and can go whenever they need to. All of these things work against new puppy owners who want their puppies to go outside, usually on grass.

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## Behavioral Vaccination Training

- Closely supervise your puppy when he's not safely confined. As a general rule, puppies should be taken out every 20–25 minutes when they first join their new home to begin good habits.
- Crate training is a very useful tool when potty training your puppy. When you cannot supervise your puppy, leave him in his crate where he doesn't like to go to the bathroom. The amount of time your puppy can be left in a crate varies depending on age and size.
- Always take your puppy to his potty spot after he eats, when he first wakes up, when you first take him out of his crate and after a play session.
- Signs that your puppy needs to go potty: sniffing the floor, circling, sudden restlessness.
- Reward your puppy with a play session or yummy treats after he goes to the bathroom.
- Punishment has no place in potty training. A newspaper swat or rubbing a puppy's nose in his waste teaches him not to get caught by you, but nothing about where he should go. If you catch your puppy mid-accident, scoop him up and run him outside to his potty spot instead.
- Teach your puppy to pee on a couple of different surfaces like gravel, grass and concrete in case he needs to potty somewhere unusual when you travel.

## 5. To chew or not to chew

### Why Is It Important?

All dogs chew, especially during the first year of their life. If you don't give your dog an acceptable outlet for his desire to chew, your home can quickly begin to look termite-infested. This can lead to problems with your landlord, your spouse and your personal equilibrium.

### Why Chewing Only On Dog Toys Doesn't Come Naturally....

Dogs and puppies chew to explore, exercise their jaws and clean their teeth. Unfortunately they don't know the difference between an appropriate chew toy and a Gucci handbag. Contrary to popular belief, dogs don't feel guilty when they chew up your favorite pair of shoes. In fact, they're probably wondering why you haven't chewed on them yourself!

## Behavioral Vaccination Training

- Closely supervise your puppy when he's not safely confined. Spray off-limits chewables liberally with a taste deterrent (for example, Bitter Apple) before your puppy develops a taste for them.
- Provide your puppy with plenty of acceptable chew toys. We recommend Nylabones and Kongs.
- If you catch your puppy chewing on something that's off-limits, gently direct his attention to something acceptable and praise him or give him a treat when he engages with the sanctioned chewie.

## 6. Curb your enthusiasm

### Why Is It Important?



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Dogs tend to be enthusiastic about the simple things in life, which is one of the reasons we love them. However, if dogs aren't taught self-control when faced with exciting events, their excitement can lead to frustration, frustration can lead to arousal, and arousal practiced over and over can lead to aggression. It's a slippery slope that can lead to a dog developing uncontrollable behavior such as barking, growling and thrashing when on leash, behind a fence or peering out a window.

## Why Self Control Doesn't Come Naturally...

Puppies come with an "on" switch pre-installed, but no "off" switch. Frustration is a natural response to not being able to get what you want, especially when it's just out of reach. When certain events are paired over and over with frustration they can become triggers of over-arousal and aggression.

## Behavior Vaccination Training

The 3 most common events that lead to over-excitement and aggression issues are: 1. Seeing other dogs and people on leash, 2. Seeing dogs and people through a window, 3. Seeing dogs and people over or through a fence. While all 3 are important, numbers 2 & 3 are easy to avoid simply by not putting your dog in that situation unsupervised. Walks, however, are an important activity for dogs and people to enjoy and deserve the most attention.

- **Seeing other dogs and people while on leash and out on a walk.**

**Step 1.** When out and about with your puppy, take along yummy treats or his favorite toy. When your puppy notices another dog or person, mark the event with the word "yes" and give your puppy a yummy treat (or play with the toy). Once your puppy begins to respond with quick anticipation to the word "yes" immediately after seeing another person or dog, move on to step 2.

**Step 2.** Begin to say your puppy's name immediately after he sees another dog or person. If he doesn't respond go back to step 1. If he does respond give him 4–5 small pieces of treat one after the other for keeping his focus on you.

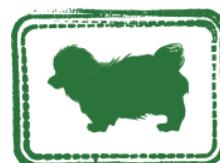
- **Seeing other dogs and people through a fence or a window.**

Keeping your puppy supervised when he has access to this type of set-up is very important. Otherwise a problem will develop 9 times out of 10.

Step 1. Follow Step 1 & 2 listed above.

Step 2. Begin to call your dog to you, mark with a "yes" and reward.

Step 3. Begin to call your dog to you, ask him to sit or lie down and reward.



## 7. Sharing is good

### Why Is It Important?

Dogs like to grab hold of things they shouldn't have, so it's important that we're able to take inappropriate objects away. Dogs also like to lie down with a chewie without being disturbed or worrying that someone is going to take their chewie away. If you don't vaccinate your puppy against growling or snapping at you when you get too close to a favorite toy or chewable, you can end up with a dog that has possession aggression.



### Why Sharing Doesn't Come Naturally...

Predators that easily give up resources (like food and shelter) don't last long in the wild. It's normal for them to become aggressive when something or someone tries to take their valuables away. It's unusual for them to give up valuable resources without protest or at the very least try to run off and hide whatever it is.

### Behavioral Vaccination Training

\*If at any point your puppy growls, snaps or bites at you when practicing any of these exercises, stop what you're doing and contact your OS Certified Trainer™ or CPDT Trainer right away.

- Teach your puppy to drop items like toys when asked and progress to his favorite things.
- Trade out something your puppy has for something even better. Sometimes give him the original item back and sometimes keep it.
- Never chase your puppy down and force him to let go of something he has in his mouth.

If in a pinch, create a Hansel-and-Gretel trail of treats away from the object your puppy is being possessive about.