



8 Things Your Puppy Wishes You Wouldn't Do

1. Being wishy-washy with the rules.

If you are determined to raise a dog that walks well on a leash, you must be consistent with the no-tugging rule every time. If you are too tired to work on leash etiquette during your morning walk, don't be surprised when your pup pulls in the

evening. Dogs need a clear, consistent picture of what's expected of them. If you don't provide that, it won't be your puppy that's to blame when the rules get broken.

2. Correct her behaviour too late.

If you didn't see your puppy shred the sofa cushion, it didn't happen. Scolding or punishing her while she is sleeping innocently on her bed does not teach her that shredding sofa cushions is bad. It teaches her that sleeping on her bed is bad. The same goes for rewards. If you don't praise her or offer a treat the instant she does something desirable, the moment will pass and all she'll learn from the experience is "free snacks!"

3. Rub her nose in it.

Puppies have accidents, just like kids. Even if you've just come in from the yard when the poop appears, "rubbing her nose in it" is *never* the answer. Your dog will only learn to fear you *and* potty time. However, if you catch her in the act, it's okay to say one firm "No," and then carry her outside to finish her business. Remember to give her lots of praise if she complies!

4. Leave her alone too long.

Before your pup came to live with you, chances are she spent 24/7 in a big, warm, noisy puppy pile with her mom and littermates. Any time spent alone is extremely distressing in the early weeks. Puppies need to gradually adjust to separation by spending only short periods of time alone.

5. Fail to socialize her with dogs and humans.

Much like young children, puppies need to socialize early and often in order to develop healthy interactive skills. Raising a dog in isolation can lead to disastrous behavioral problems that are very difficult to rehabilitate.

6. Overdo it on the treats.

Your puppy may think it's great when you overfeed her, but she is not aware of the long-term consequences. Dogs enjoy being active, and excess weight can make exercise painful or even dangerous. If she could talk, your puppy would tell you that food is not love. She'd rather have verbal praise or a pat on the head if it means more healthy years with you.

7. Neglect her puppy wellness visits.

Besides offering a great opportunity to socialize, puppy wellness visits with your vet set the tone for your best friend's lifelong health. This is the time that she is most susceptible to viruses and parasites, so routine care is important. Puppies also age faster during their first year of life than at any other time – the equivalent of 15 years! Those recommended vet visits are designed to catch issues – like heart murmurs and hip dysplasia – that rapidly-growing pups may develop.

8. Treat her like a tiny human instead of a tiny dog.

It's perfectly acceptable to love your new puppy as much as you would a child, as long as you realize that she is indeed, a dog. This distinction is vital because dogs have their own individual set of manners and expectations that do not match up to human standards. For example, you may force your child to "be polite" and greet guests, but doing the same with your pup could increase anxiety or even lead to a bite.

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