

# **Your New Puppy Guide**

## **Why and how to start training your puppy**

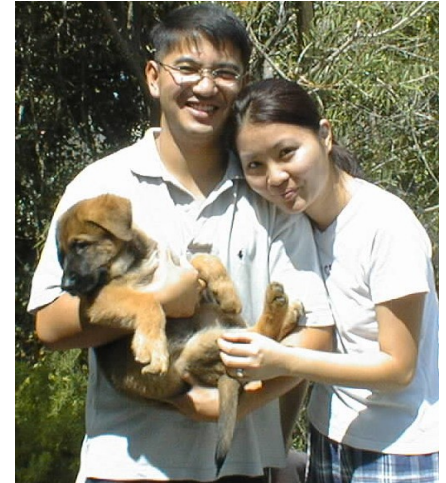


**The German Shepherd Dog  
Association of W.A. (Inc.)**

## Why Train Your Puppy?



### *Ready for home*



### **Now comes the training**

'Puppy preschool' may be a relatively new term but it is by no means a new concept. Dog owners have recognised the importance of puppy training for decades. Puppy training is usually taught to dogs between the ages of eight weeks (the usual age puppies leave their mothers) and sixteen weeks. The German Shepherd Dog Association of W.A. take puppies from 8 weeks of age for their socialisation and puppy classes at our headquarters in Southern River. This is a private ground not open to the general public. Also many vets run puppy preschools. This period is also a critical period in your dog's life as what it learns in this period will dictate the dog's personality as an adult animal - thus puppy training has two main purposes. The first is to introduce your new puppy to the world and to teach them that their home and the general community is an interesting, safe and fun place to be. Secondly, puppy training is about establishing boundaries for your dog and teaching them in a way that is easy for them to understand that a particular type of behaviour is required from them at home and in the general public. When you have achieved these two goals, you will have a confident, friendly German Shepherd Dog who is able to face any new challenges presented to it.

## How to Start Your Puppy's Education

Although most people do not realise it your puppy's education begins the moment you take it home. There is a great chance that the car trip from the breeder's home to your home is the first car trip your puppy has ever had on its own. So it is a good idea to get someone else to drive so you can nurse your new puppy on the ride home. When you get home you need to introduce your puppy to its new surroundings. Give your puppy a chance to look around one room of your home at a time, or alternatively, let the puppy view only one section of your yard at a time (keep it off the gardens to begin with for example). Spend time with your puppy with the two of you inspecting the puppy's new surroundings. Once the puppy seems at ease with the new surroundings you sit down and give your puppy time to explore on its own.

If you already have another dog it is necessary to introduce them before you introduce the puppy to its new environment. Take your puppy to a neutral place (such as a park or a neighbour's front yard). Have a helper bring your old dog, on lead, to meet your new dog. It is a good idea to put your old dog in a sit or down stay so they do not move too quickly and scare your new puppy. Taking the dogs to neutral ground prevents your old dog from feeling like it needs to protect you and your yard from the unknown intruder! Once the two dogs are confident with each other and you are able to let your old dog move around on the lead as it wishes take your two dogs home. Let the puppy into your yard first and give it a chance to look around for a short time, before bringing your old dog into the yard. Be sure to supervise your two dogs until they are no longer particularly interested in each other. Always be sure that your old dog has a place to go to get away from the puppy (such as a pen or kennel) and your puppy has the same luxury. This is particularly important if you have large dogs with puppies, as a puppy can easily get accidentally knocked over by large dogs. Baby gates are a fantastic idea to secure puppy into a room such as the laundry without shutting it from everyday life.



### *Meeting my big sister at the park*

## Beginning Formal Training With Your Puppy

Once your puppy has had a few days to adjust to its new environment, family, routine and food, you can begin formal training. Remember puppy training is a way of training your dog to be happy and confident in the world. So training should always be fun and short. No more than ten minutes at a time. It is a good idea to start training your dog by promoting its play drive. As German Shepherds were bred to herd sheep they usually have a strong play drive and have fun chasing and pouncing on things that move. A Kong, a ball or piece of dowel on a string is a great tool for playing these chase games, as you are also able to teach your puppy to bring the toy back to you, by not letting go of the rope and calling your puppy's name as you gently reel the toy in when the puppy has the toy in its mouth.

If you find that your puppy does not show a great deal of interest in toys and does not show any significant play drive find a small ball and roll it from on top of the puppy's head, down its muzzle and onto the floor. This will spark your puppy's interest in the toy as it touched your puppy first.

After a couple of days your puppy should be chasing a toy. This toy then becomes the reward and motivator for your puppy's good behaviour for the remainder of its training sessions.



## Sight Specific Temperament Training

Once your puppy is chasing a toy it is time to start introducing them to the wide world. This is the vital aspect of puppy training, as the more confident your puppy is in any environment, the more confident you can be in knowing that your puppy will not present any unwanted behaviours (such as barking, biting or fleeing) when it is young or in the future. To teach sight specific temperament development you need to present your new puppy with a number of controlled situations where the puppy is rewarded for appropriate behaviour. Appropriate behaviour is when your puppy looks at or moves towards something or someone in a relaxed manner, - without any hackles up, or any nervousness, or any attempt to flee. If your puppy does show these unwanted behaviours it is vital that you do not pick the puppy up or pat it and tell it that there is nothing to be afraid of. Doing this is rewarding the dog for its nervous behaviour and this may cause your dog to escalate into unwanted behaviours in the future. Rather than give the puppy time to come towards an object you may want to move towards the object and touch it or sit near it to give a nervous puppy the confidence to look at a new object. **Do not speak to the puppy while you are doing this.** Let the puppy work out for itself that this object is not a problem. Once the puppy has seen and moved towards an object, without any fear throw the ball as a reward for the puppy's appropriate behaviour.

There are many objects and activities you can use to allow your puppy to get used to unusual sights. Here is a list of good sight specific training ideas - however, the options available are endless:

Take your puppy for a ride in the car and drive through shopping centres or other places with a high population of people. If possible have someone sit in the back seat next to the puppy and pet the puppy once it has looked out the window in a relaxed and interested manner. If your puppy is very small you may have to hold it in your arms to enable it to see out of the window. **However remember not to pet or speak to the puppy if it is showing unwanted behaviours.** Wait till it settles for a few seconds and then praise.

Sit on your front porch and let your puppy watch the neighbour who is working in the garden or children in the neighbourhood playing.

Let your puppy see a large stuffed toy or other large toy and to investigate it.  
Let your puppy see many different sized balls rolling around in a confined space.  
Let your puppy see and play with many different shaped toys.





When your puppy is comfortable with stationary items or seeing people at a distance introduce them to moving and opening items in closer proximity:

Whilst nursing your puppy you can take it to places where it can see people moving around closer to it than in the car: such as shopping centres or schools at the end of the day.

Open an umbrella near your puppy—very slowly at first.

Let your puppy watch you cook - while you open and close many drawers and reach for items low and high.

Have your puppy watch while you open and close your garage door a number of times.

Let your puppy watch while a friend enters and leaves your home through different doors a number of times.

Let your puppy watch while you shake out your bed sheets or towels.

Bounce many different sized balls around in a confined space.

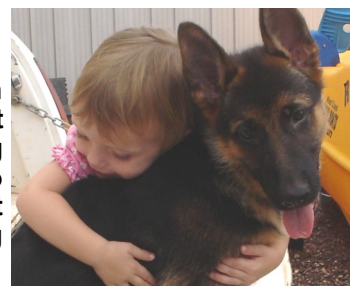
Sit beside a road and watch the cars go by.

Spend about a week on sight training before moving on. Once you move on remember to throw in a moving sight activity for your puppy every now and then just to keep them confident around moving objects.

### Touch Specific Temperament Training

Once your puppy has had a week of sight training, it is time to move on to touch training. You will find this is a natural next step— when you have your puppy out in public people find it hard to resist petting a puppy and so touch training begins. If your puppy struggles to get away when people pet it ask the person to just touch it once then take their hand away and gradually build up the amount of time the puppy spends being touched. Eventually, when it is confident being touched by a stranger, ask the person if they would nurse the puppy for you.

However, before you let anyone else nurse your puppy, you need to ensure that your puppy is comfortable in having you touch it all over. The best way of doing this is to give your puppy a “tick check” and to continue doing this on a regular basis for the remainder of your dog’s life.



A ‘tick check’ is a process where you are examining your dog for ticks. In Australia (on the East Coast) we do have the paralysis tick, which can kill our dogs in a very short period of time so it is a good idea to do this check after every walk and to do it regularly even if your dog has been in your yard. Ticks can blow in on the wind. You are looking for a bump about the size of a large pimple. If you think you find one seek veterinary advice immediately. To begin the tick check, have your puppy lie in front of you and you can lift up its ears and have a look in. Puppy’s ears, particularly in the German Shepherd, are fragile, and should not be touched excessively as it may damage them and prevent the ears from coming up. Only touch the ears gently and never pull on them. Look in the ears but NEVER put anything inside a dog’s ear and this can cause serious damage.

Just look and if it all is clear move on to the puppy’s lips. Lift the lips and look under them. Ticks prefer warm parts of a dog’s body so the mouth must not be overlooked. Once you have checked the lips look in the nostrils and near the corners of the eyes for any lumps. Once you have checked the face have your puppy roll onto its back and look and feel in its arm pits and check around its genitalia and under its tail.

Finally, spread each toe of the puppy and feel between its toes for ticks. You must do this from the topside

of the dog's foot—German Shepherds have webbing between the toes you cannot see from the under-side of the foot. Many dogs do not like to have their feet touched so hold the foot firmly until the puppy stops wriggling and then continue the check. It is important that your puppy allows you to do the tick check - one day it could save your dog's life. Again this is a gentle task—one toe at a time until puppy is comfortable—always try this when puppy has been laying and is tired.

Once you have done the tick check with your puppy, it is time to start finding many different surfaces for you puppy to touch or to pick up.

As puppy grows you can include:

Having your puppy walk over as many different surfaces as you can find such as linoleum, tiles, floor boards, carpet, decking, cement, exposed aggregate, loose gravel, wood chips, mulch, grass, loose grass, sand, dirt, rocks, bitumen, gravel roads, mesh, grates, shade cloth, aluminium sheeting etc. (Remembering not to let puppy slip or fall)

Have your puppy play in and climb over boxes, tunnels, children's cubby houses etc.

Have your puppy chew on and carry toys of many different textures.

Have your puppy carry a spoon, fork or other metal item.

Have your puppy play with a plastic bottle. Always supervise when playing with these objects to ensure they do not destroy them and swallow any pieces.

Have your puppy walk up and down small stairs

Have many people nurse and pet your puppy.

Allow your puppy to investigate new homes and places they have not been before.

Let your puppy walk on a wobbly table or along a plank with a rock underneath.

Let your puppy play with a balloon (but don't make it too big, as if it bursts and the noise is too loud, it may frighten the puppy).

Remember, the reward at the end of all these activities is to throw the ball for the puppy. Practice the touch activities for around one week before moving on to the next stage of training. However, continue to practice touch activities regularly to keep your puppy confident.



## **Sound Specific Temperament Training**

The final stage of training is very similar to sight and touch training; however, you may find that your dog does get a shock at some noises. This is understandable as we also jump at loud noises sometimes and dogs have far better hearing than humans. What you are trying to achieve is to have your dog not run away but to relax and even move towards an object that made them jump. This is often referred to as 'recovery' and you are looking for a dog that has a quick recovery. When introducing your dog to loud noises there are two ways of doing this.

The first way is to be playing with your dog and in the middle of the game have someone make a loud noise - such as a door slamming, or a nail gun in the back yard sound. Continue playing the game as if nothing happened so the dog will be more interested in the game than the noise. When you first do this have the noise be at a great distance from the dog and gradually move the sound closer to the dog all the time while it is playing.

Alternatively, if the noise is going to be an extended sound such as a lawn mower or vacuum cleaner then start the noise away from the dog and very gradually move it closer to the dog. For a vacuum cleaner— it is a good idea to start it then move away from it to give the puppy a chance to inspect it when it is still before having it move. Remember to do everything slowly and to only throw the ball for the puppy when it is relaxed and accepts the noise. Naturally with the lawn mower you do not want the puppy to inspect it as it is dangerous but you do not want to have the puppy afraid of it. So when you start it just let the lawn mower sit still and when the puppy moves towards it and is about three meters away from it, you can throw the ball. Always praise the puppy for being confident but for not going too close to dangerous items.

If you have a doorbell, use the game technique and have a friend ring it a number of times so the puppy is used to the sound. When the doorbell rings in an ordinary circumstance do not jump up quickly and run to the door as this may worry your puppy. Move smoothly and slowly towards the door and open it as though it was a practice session. Always throw the ball as a reward for the puppy.

Some other sound activities include introducing your puppy to:

Buses driving passed

Motorbikes (such as a Harley Davidson) driving passed, close to the puppy.

Phones ringing

Dishwashers and washing machines.

Power tools, particularly nail guns.  
Boat engines.  
Doors slamming.  
Loud radios or Televisions turning on suddenly  
Other dogs barking  
Squeaky toys  
Bells ringing  
Wind chimes  
Pots and pans being hit together  
People singing or laughing or clapping etc.



**It's a radio!!!**

Once again, spend about a week introducing your puppy to all these objects, and teaching them to relax. Once you have finished this section of your training remember to practice sound training regularly to ensure your puppy maintains its confidence.

### **Final Stages of Puppy Training**

Once you have finished the sight, touch and sound sensitivity training, it is a good idea to see how well your puppy has learned its lessons by having a puppy party. This is a party where you invite your friends and their dogs if they are vaccinated and friendly, to spend an afternoon in each other's company.



Remember, it is not good manners in the dog world for dogs to jump all over each other any more than it is good manners in the human world for a dog to jump all over a person. Keep dogs on lead and have them play with each other without getting too silly or out of control. If a dog does start jumping on your puppy or your puppy starts jumping on another dog, just walk your dog away from the situation calmly. Your dog needs to learn that it should remain calm in all situations and it can only do this if you are calm too. This will give your puppy the opportunity to experience many sights and sounds that it has not experienced before as well as being touched by many new people. By the time you have finished the temperament stages of puppy training your puppy will be around 15 weeks old.



In the last stage of the important imprinting period for a puppy between 8-16 weeks, it is a good idea to start basic obedience. You will find that your puppy is very confident, and may be so confident that it would rather explore than come to you when you call it! So the first command you should teach your puppy is a recall. Put a flat collar on your puppy and a light lead of about 4-6 feet (1.3 – 2 meters) in length. This is to stop the puppy from getting side tracked and running away. Sit on the ground, at the opposite end of the lead to the puppy, and call your puppy's name to get its attention. Call the command "Come" and hold your arms out like a funnel. If the puppy does not come pat the ground and encourage the puppy in with your



voice. Reel the lead in as you go. When the puppy gets to you, give it a small piece of food as a reward. You need to practice this exercise about three times a day, every day. Always give the puppy a piece of food, as you want the puppy to associate returning to you with something nice (the food). You also need to make the food a favourite of your puppy's, as the puppy needs to want the food more than it wants to go exploring. After a while try this exercise without the lead, but keep feeding the puppy when it comes to you.



You may also want to teach your puppy to sit.

You can do this using food. Hold the food about three centimetres in front of the puppy's nose and move it up and back slightly. As the puppy looks up at the food, its bottom will go to ground. As you do this say "sit."

Once the puppy sits give it the small piece of food. You need to repeat this about five times each day until – your puppy will sit when

- a) you say the word and
- b) when you are not holding the food in front of its face.

It is also a good idea to tell your puppy to sit and to get it to wait for its dinner. You will find that once you put the food on the ground your puppy will want to jump up and eat it. Tell your puppy to "stay" and place your right hand on its chest to stop it moving forward, and your left hand gently on its bottom to stop it jumping up. Count to three and then give it a command like "eat" and let it go. Do this at every meal until your puppy will wait without you touching it and for as long as you want it to wait (say around 30 seconds).

### What to do After Your Puppy Training

It is a good idea to join a German Shepherd Dog Club if you have one near you for formal training as the type of obedience you will learn there has been specifically developed for the German Shepherd Dog breed and you will find success in training will come quickly for you. *Alternatively research your local area for a suitable club.*

At obedience classes you will learn more about the natural tendencies of your dog and will also learn basic obedience so you have control over your dog in all circumstances. You will find that teaching your dog obedience extends the bond you and your dog have developed in its first few weeks even further and you will have a dependable friend for life. Even while you are attending obedience it is a good idea to continue introducing your puppy to the world and different sights, sounds and textures as this will continue to make your puppy confident and relaxed in public settings.

You will also be able to take your puppy places it has not been before or to put it on the ground in places it as been before because it is now safe from disease. It is important that you do this as the puppy must learn to accept the world from a dog's point of view.



**Good luck training your puppy—remember the development period is the age at which your dog develops its view of the world and its personality. You have the ability to ensure your dog perceives the world as a good, fun place to be and thus you can ensure you have a friendly, confident dog.**



**Good luck and have fun.**



**This handy booklet was written by Peter Belic  
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**We hope you find this information helpful and wish you every success in your life with a German Shepherd Dog**